

South Portland Economic Development Strategic Plan  
Community Meeting | Breakout Table Notes | November 17, 2015  
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Strategy 1: Business Attraction & Retention

**Next Stage Business Center**

Timeframe: MT, 2017-2018

Implementing parties: City staff, Economic Development Committee, Private Developers

Resources/funding required: City (all citizens) must decide if it wants business growth, tax incentives

Key tasks:

- Identify Business friendly zones
- Survey businesses – what do they want and need?
- Community education

**Business Retention**

Timeframe: ST, 2016

Implementing parties: South Portland-Cape Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Director, Economic Development Committee, Commercial Real Estate Brokers, Buy Local

Resources/funding required: Full Time Economic Development Director

Key tasks:

- Survey businesses that left South Portland for elsewhere
- Events for business networking and collaboration
- Space locating service for businesses wanting to come here

## Strategy 2: Entrepreneurial Development

### **Business incubator/Hub**

- Facilitate the development of business incubators

### **Small business “ambassador” to connect firms to regional resources**

Timeframe: Immediate

Implementing parties: City with a governmental position but possibly by a nonprofit, quasi-governmental agency. Should be a full time, fully funded position.

Resources/funding required: taxpayer dollars, partial funding from city Economic Development Corporation

Key tasks:

- Visit businesses; discuss quality of life and business connection to South Portland
- Develop and direct businesses to potential mentoring opportunities
- Provide guidance navigating government processes, such as permitting
- Maintain and distribute an updated “Doing Business in South Portland” guide
- Provide connections to available financing mechanisms, including grants, loans, that are aimed at business start-up
- Independent website

### Strategy 3: Workforce Development

#### **Connect SMCC resources to employers**

Timeframe: ST, 6 months – by May 2016 before summer, so curriculum planning can take place

Implementing parties: Economic Development Committee, City (as convener)

Resources/funding required: Space, SMCC, USM, PATHS, employers, business director

Key tasks:

- Planning and convening a meeting
- Software platform to help sustain communications and act as information clearinghouse between employers and SMCC. (Possibly to be modeled after the new Work/Live/Play/Maine website)
- Develop an updated business directory, relying on the Chambers, Buy Local, Maine Department of Labor, to help with this within the short term to support this overall project

#### **Connect SMCC to overall economic development plan**

\*Note, table did not have time to discuss, but wanted to include this

## Strategy 4: Develop Underutilized Sites

### **Incentive Program to Catalyze Mill Creek Redevelopment**

Timeframe: MT, two years

Implementing parties: Economic Development Committee, Consultant, City Planning and Development Department, City Council

Resources/funding required: Funding to hire consultant, communication with existing property owners and potential developers, TIF funding for incentives, community and city council deliberation

Key tasks:

- Economic analysis of financial viability of planned zoning and density
- Density analysis to identify options to add density if needed to make plan work financially
- Review use TIF as development incentives
- Amend TIF plan to allow use for incentives

\*Note: This proposal followed discussion of consultant's preliminary analysis that several redevelopment scenarios in the Mill Creek Master Plan would not provide a financial return to developers.

## Strategy 5: Economic Development Corporation

### **Create an Economic Development Office**

Timeframe: MT, 1-2 years

Implementing parties: South Portland – Cape Elizabeth Chamber, Planning and Development Department , City Council, Board of Trustees (if EDC is nonprofit/quasi), Economic Development Committee

Resources/funding required: Public/private (businesses), TIF, staff, office space, marketing funding, event sponsorships

Key tasks:

- Real estate inventory
- Identify available funding/development incentives
- Business outreach (i.e. annual event)
- Cultivate partnerships
- Support workforce development and needs
- Coaching small businesses: contact SBA, loan sources, SCORE