



A Message from the Chair of the Economic Development Committee

To My Fellow Residents and Neighbors:

Thank you for your interest in this report! Our home, South Portland, is a vibrant city with a large and diverse economic base. We possess a highly skilled and educated workforce, beautiful and historic neighborhoods, and many cultural amenities. We are home to The Maine Mall and a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs. As a maritime city we have geographic advantages that cannot be duplicated, and our multimodal transportation infrastructure – with access to rail, air, a seaport, and highways – is second to none in Maine. For many years we have enjoyed economic success because of these factors. Our competitive advantages and our reputation as a favorable place to live and conduct business have served us all well. This is a great place to live, work, go to school, and raise your family.

These are all facts that this report bears out. In broad consultation with the public during the latter half of 2015 South Portland's Economic Development Committee heard again and again that people love living here. They love their neighborhoods. They love the recreational amenities of South Portland. They love the diversity of our city. Our task is to preserve that diversity and build on economic successes. Looking to the future we must acknowledge the need to be innovative and find ways to increase our capacity to cultivate more good paying jobs and economic development. We need to attain a proportionate share of the economic growth being realized throughout the region. We need to brand and position ourselves as an attractive city to live, and to start and grow a business. We need to actively foster entrepreneurship and small businesses development. If we do those things and if we take full advantage of our many economic strengths, our people, and our educational institutions, I have no doubt that our future is bright. Economic prosperity is a rising tide that lifts all boats.

My strong hope is that this report is the beginning of an important conversation about the future of South Portland, about what we all want our City to be. I hope that everybody will read it, consider it, and participate in this process as it moves forward. Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Little", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ross Little, Chair
Economic Development Committee