Goals and Information Sources

- Better understand internal and external factors shaping economic development strategy
- Connect strategy choices to specific assets, liabilities, opportunities and risks
- SWOT analysis informed by:
  - City and regional demographic and economic trends
  - Local and regional real estate market conditions
  - Interviews with diverse groups of residents, businesses, developers, real estate professionals and civic leaders
  - Consultant observations
## Summary Analysis

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South Portland: ED Strengths

- Diverse economic base with strong retail, health care, corporate HQ and financial sectors
- Educated workforce with diverse occupations
- Multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- Good interstate highway access on western side
- Maine Mall: major regional shopping destination
- Proximity to downtown Portland
- Waterfront: amenities and underused real estate
- Attractive neighborhoods, some with commercial areas
- High quality of city government services
- Effective development and business permitting process
South Portland: ED Weaknesses

- Job growth lags region, Scarborough and Westbrook
- Lost jobs in many services sectors over past decade
- Little market ready land for new development
- Problem property owners not seeking highest and best use
- Unattractive gateways and commercial areas
- Poor quality and outdated industrial properties
- Outdated city image as blue collar and home of Maine mall
- Differing priorities and views for city’s future growth
- Perceived lack of transparency/distrust of development approval process
- School system rating and performance disparities
- Growing low-income population
- Limited economic development capacity
South Portland: ED Opportunities

- Spillover business growth from Portland
- **Regional growth: health care, professional & technical services, restaurants, corporate HQs**
- Demand for traditional mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented communities
- **Enhanced and expanded neighborhood commercial areas**
- Tight industrial real market: demand and limited supply
- **Development of undeveloped and under-used land**
- Regional tourism and large base of visitors
- **Educational resources at Southern Maine Community College**
- Growing higher income and baby-boomer population
Threats

- Political climate and conflicts over business growth and development
- Perception as a difficult city for development and businesses
- Competition for new businesses and development from communities in region
  - Greater capacity and active economic development corporations in several communities
- Growth in on-line retailing and new retail formats may impact shopping center oriented retail base
- Stagnation in city property tax base
- Tax base reliance on large properties and companies
Economic Development Strategy Options

- **Main Street Program:**
  - market, improve and attract enterprises to neighborhood comm. areas.

- **Business and Development Attraction:**
  - actively market South Portland for businesses and projects; maintain real estate inventory; assist new firms and projects to locate.

- **Develop Underutilized Sites:**
  - outreach and assist owners to plan for reuse; find partners to implement plans; brownfield cleanup; assemble and improve priority sites.

- **Entrepreneurial and Small Business Development**
  - connect entrepreneurs and firms to regional resources; effort to identify and foster resident entrepreneurs; youth entrepreneurship program.

- **Community Education, Engagement and Leadership**
  - Ongoing info on econ. development plans and projects; institutionalize community review of projects; civic leadership training with SMCC

- **Workforce and Employment Initiative**
  - Partnership to employ low-income residents; school career initiative with local companies; work with SMCC to address employer needs
SWOT Analysis: Strategy Options

Strength
Leverage historic neighborhood centers
Proximity to Portland
Effective business permitting & city services

Weakness
Balance mall and strip centers
Shared vision
Helps attract young workers

Opportunity
Improve image
More attractive gateways & centers
Add ED capacity

Threat
Demand for walkable mixed use areas
Leverage regional food sector and entrepreneurs

Main Street Program
SWOT Analysis: Strategy Options

**Strength**
- Effective permitting processes & city services
- Proximity to Portland
- Workforce assets
- Build on existing centers

**Weakness**
- Lagging job growth

**Opportunity**
- Change city image
- Create demand for vacant space & underused land
- Tap tight industrial market

**Threat**
- Respond to competition
- Diversify economy
- Grow tax base

**Business and Development Attraction**
SWOT Analysis: Strategy Options

**Strength**
- Waterfront land
- Effective permitting process & city services
- Workforce assets

**Weakness**

**Opportunity**
- Grow tax base
- Diversify economy
- Develop Underutilized Sites

**Threat**
- Address underused, outdated properties
- Engage problem property owners
- Attract regional growth industries
- Process advantage over Portland
- Create new economic asset
SWOT Analysis and Strategies Options

**Strength**
- Educated workforce
- Effective business permitting & city services
- Proximity to Portland

**Weakness**
- Entrepreneurial & Small Business Development
- Change city image
- Address poverty & raise income via microbusiness

**Opportunity**
- Diversity economy
  - “Grow your own” response to competition
- Leverage regional food sector and entrepreneurs
- Spillover from Portland
- Regional tourism market
- SMCC Entrepreneurial Center

**Threat**
- Entrepreneurial & Small Business Development
- Change city image
- Address poverty & raise income via microbusiness
**SWOT Analysis and Strategies Options**

**Strength**
- Enhance civic capacity and government services via resident skills

**Weakness**
- Help address political conflicts
- Improve perception of “business climate”

**Opportunity**
- SMCC educational resources
- Build on comp plan success
- Engage increasingly active residents

**Threat**
- Balance/resolve varied priorities
- Build trust in permitting decisions

**Community Education, Engagement and Leadership**
SWOT Analysis and Strategies Options

**Strength**
Address competition via workforce services

**Weakness**

**Opportunity**
Address poverty & raise incomes
Improve schools

**Threat**

**Workforce and Employment Initiative**
Connect residents to diverse local jobs
Enhance workforce assets
Expand city business services

SMCC resources
Expand mixed use areas
Leverage regional food sector and entrepreneurs
Next Steps

- Incorporate feedback from Economic Development Committee
- Complete resident survey
- October 1 community workshop to share analysis and engage residents to set priorities and inform decision on strategy options
- October City Council meeting to share analysis and review outcome form community workshop