



## Overview

*Portland in Focus: Building on assets for collaboration and growth* is the work of MIT urban planning graduate students, under the supervision of Professor Karl Seidman. It provides guidance to the City of Portland and business leadership on strategies to enhance the city's economy and quality of life. The report draws on three months of socio-economic data analysis, input from over 100 Portland stakeholders, and research regarding best practices in other locations. The final report was submitted to the Office of Economic Division May 18, 2010, and can be viewed upon request.

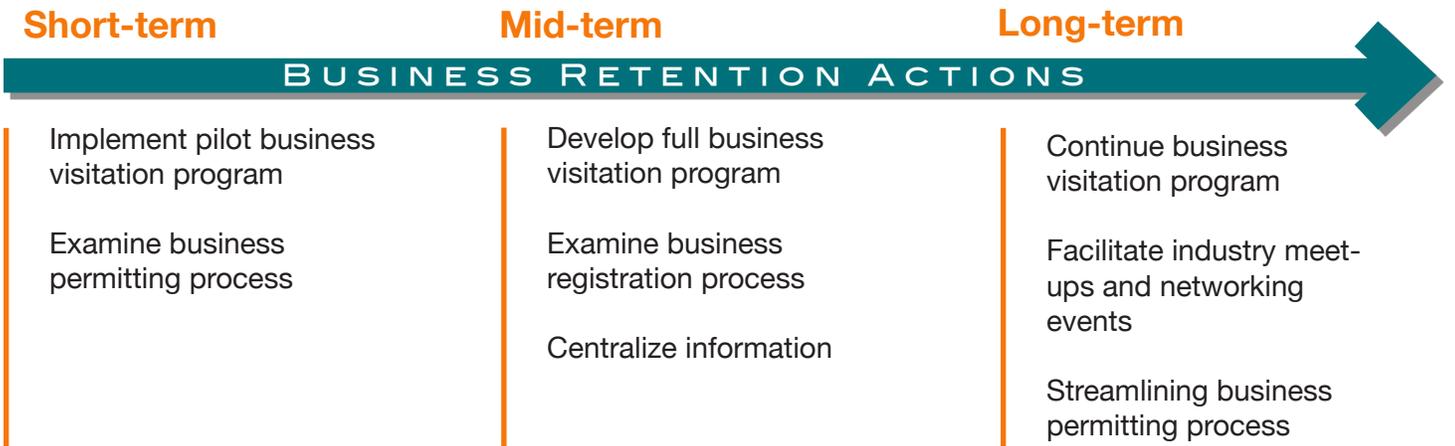
## Three Strategy Areas for Economic Development Planning in Portland

Portland in Focus presents an economic development strategy aimed at supporting existing City businesses, fostering collaboration in the food and life science sector, and building off of assets in the City and surrounding region. Primary findings, goals and recommendations for the three focus areas are presented below.

**Business Retention:** From 2001 to 2008, the City of Portland lost jobs in many industries, and most notably over 2,000 jobs in finance, insurance and real estate while the metropolitan region gained over 1,600 of these jobs. In addition, Portland has a reputation as an unfriendly place to do business. Cumbersome administrative processes are among the barriers to the attraction and expansion businesses. The business retention strategy aims to systematically engage businesses, create business-friendly processes and increase interaction between businesses. The core of this strategy is a commitment to regularly visit targeted businesses to better address their short term needs and to shape long-term trends and policies to retain and grow businesses in Portland.

### KEY PARTNERS:

Chamber of Commerce, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Workforce Investment Board, Small Business Development Center



**Food sector:** The food sector (fishing, food and beverage-manufacturing, wholesale, retail and services) provides 11% of jobs in Portland and accounts for over 50% of all manufacturing jobs in the City. The food sector is integral to Portland's character, and there has been an explosion of groups working on food-related issues in the Portland area. Recommendations aim to support businesses and high-quality jobs in the food sector, strengthen local food systems, and complement related economic drivers in the City. The primary recommendation is to convene a collaborative food sector organization in order to facilitate the identification and implementation of priority initiatives.

## KEY PARTNERS:

Food businesses, non-profits, industry associations, technical assistance providers, state-level organizations



**Life Sciences:** Over 30% of jobs in Portland are concentrated in education and health care services. The Portland region has strong educational programming around health care and life sciences, and boasts a growing network of research institutions. The City is also currently working to grow the biotechnology industry. Recommendations aim to expand on existing assets in Life Sciences, promote an entrepreneurial environment for businesses, and increase workforce capacity for core and emerging occupations. A central part of this strategy is creating a Life Science Collaborative to provide focused leadership and coordination in building the region's life sciences cluster.

## KEY PARTNERS:

Educational, research and medical institutions, businesses, investors, state-level government and organizations



## Next Steps

*Portland in Focus* balances long-term goals and recommendations with short-term action steps. Early action initiatives include initiating a business visitation program, a crosscutting food sector organization and a regional life science cluster organization. The elements of these recommendations are sequenced to maximize the benefits that can be achieved with minimal initial resource inputs. These actions reflect a new approach to economic development planning in the City of Portland according to the following themes:

- Promoting collaboration between inter-related businesses and organizations
- Identifying shared visions and available resources to pursue common priorities
- Demonstrating the City's support for businesses and its awareness of their unique needs
- Building off of existing assets in the City and in the region to promote growth and economic development