



# PORTLAND MAINE

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## NEWS RELEASE

City of Portland

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Neighborhood Selected As Center for Opportunity

*India Street chosen for planning project to support sustainable growth*

**PORTLAND, Maine** –*Sustain Southern Maine* has selected the India Street neighborhood as one of ten Centers of Opportunity study areas in the southern Maine region. The 15-block neighborhood will be part of an innovative planning project designed to make the community more prosperous and enjoyable for residents and will include a day-long neighborhood workshop held early this year during which data about the neighborhood and its capacity for future growth and change will be discussed and explored with residents. The *Sustain Southern Maine* study will also provide context for a larger land use plan for the India Street neighborhood that is expected to begin later this year.

The India Street neighborhood was selected because it presents an excellent example of a neighborhood in close proximity to a thriving downtown that is experiencing a resurgence of development activity. As one of the city's oldest neighborhoods with its origins dating back to the colonial period, India Street has often been on the periphery of other neighborhood master plans and has not been the subject of its own analysis. In response to the increased development activity and the desires of the India Street Neighborhood Association, the city has made crafting a master plan for the area a priority.

“Due to a location close to both downtown and the waterfront, the India Street neighborhood has attracted significant development interest. It's important for the city to make sure that this growth does not diminish the neighborhood's existing charm and appeal as a mixed-use center. The *Sustain Southern*

*Maine* process will help give residents and those close to the neighborhood an opportunity to weigh in on these issues and ensure that the neighborhood can absorb growth in a positive manner,” stated City of Portland Mayor Michael Brennan.

As a Center of Opportunity, the plans developed for the India Street neighborhood will be used to help guide other mature neighborhoods looking for ways to grow in a way that is compatible with the context of the area and increases residential and commercial density thereby supporting sustainable growth. *Sustain Southern Maine* is an initiative supported by a group of nearly forty Southern Maine organizations working in partnership to find ways for communities to become more prosperous, healthy and attractive. In October 2010, the Greater Portland Council of Governments was awarded a \$1.6 million Sustainable Communities Planning Grant by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for this regional planning effort.

As part of *Sustain Southern Maine*, ten participating towns and cities chose specific locations within their communities to become magnets for mixed residential and commercial growth. Each community will get the benefit of a focused planning effort to test what special mix of housing, jobs and amenities would work best to attract sustainable growth and increase livability and tax base.

The stated goal of the *Sustain Southern Maine* study of the India Street neighborhood is to “[t]ake an emerging urban fringe mixed-use neighborhood and help develop a vision for enhanced growth and density without losing the existing vibe.”

The India Street neighborhood has also been selected for a historic preservation survey. This survey, funded by the Planning & Urban Development Department, will provide valuable baseline data about the historic character of the neighborhood for use as part of the larger planning process.

More information on Sustain Southern Maine can be found at [www.sustainsouthernmaine.org](http://www.sustainsouthernmaine.org).

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