



South Shore
Chamber of
Commerce

and

South Shore Economic Development Corporation

SOUTH
SHORE 2030

CHOOSING OUR FUTURE



INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

Energy

Water/Wastewater

Tourism

Community Development

SOUTH SHORE 2030

CHOOSING OUR FUTURE



The South Shore Chamber of Commerce is the region's largest business organization. It has successfully supported small business for more than a century. In addition to helping its members, the Chamber has also become one of the strongest voices in advocating for the region. As part of that mission, the Chamber has led many initiatives such as restoration of rail service to the South Shore and other infrastructure improvements. That work is never finished in a changing economy and this report builds on our past success. The Chamber is nationally recognized and managed by professional staff. It is led by an outstanding group of volunteer leaders who take time from their organizations to help other small businesses succeed and the South Shore to thrive.

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A commitment to strengthening our region

The South Shore Chamber of Commerce and South Shore Economic Development Corporation are pleased to present this report on infrastructure priorities for the South Shore. It is the first set of recommendations to support our earlier study, *South Shore 2030: Choosing Our Future*. That report laid out the broad strategies necessary to build stronger communities and a stronger regional economy.

This is neither all-inclusive nor finished. Our Infrastructure Working Group and Board of Directors intentionally avoided the temptation to catalog every worthwhile infrastructure project in the area. They also avoided the impulse to rush to judgement on proposals that still need analysis and public discussion. Instead they sought to provide a perspective on the most important infrastructure needs that are likely to have the greatest regional economic benefit. We fully expect more projects will emerge that support the regional development plan and will be supported by the Chamber.

People unfamiliar with our work might wonder why the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation, both privately funded nonprofits, would undertake this work. Decisions in the next few years may shape the economic opportunities for residents and therefore the vibrancy of our communities for several decades. As a broad-based business organization, we believe we have a unique role and a community responsibility to help build that future and shape those important decisions.

Our first report was led by a large Steering Committee, led by three co-chairs: Carol Bulman of Jack Conway & Company, Ken Quigley of Curry College and Bob Rivers of Eastern Bank. This report was developed by an Infrastructure Working Group co-chaired by Braintree Mayor Joe Sullivan and Ned Corcoran of Corcoran & Associates P.C. Also serving on the Working Group were Chris Anzuoni of Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway, Janice Bergeron of Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, Pat Ciaramella and Bruce Hughes of Old Colony Planning Council, William Constable of A.W. Perry, Nichole Dunphy of Highpoint Engineering, Martie Dwyer of Randolph Savings Bank, Emily Torres-Cullinane of Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Paul Tyrell of STV Inc.

We want to thank the Working Group, the Chamber's Board of Directors, who reviewed and approved the recommendations, and the Chamber's Partners, whose generous support of the Chamber has made this work possible. Individuals interested in following the Chamber's work on regional development should feel free to contact the South Shore Chamber of Commerce.



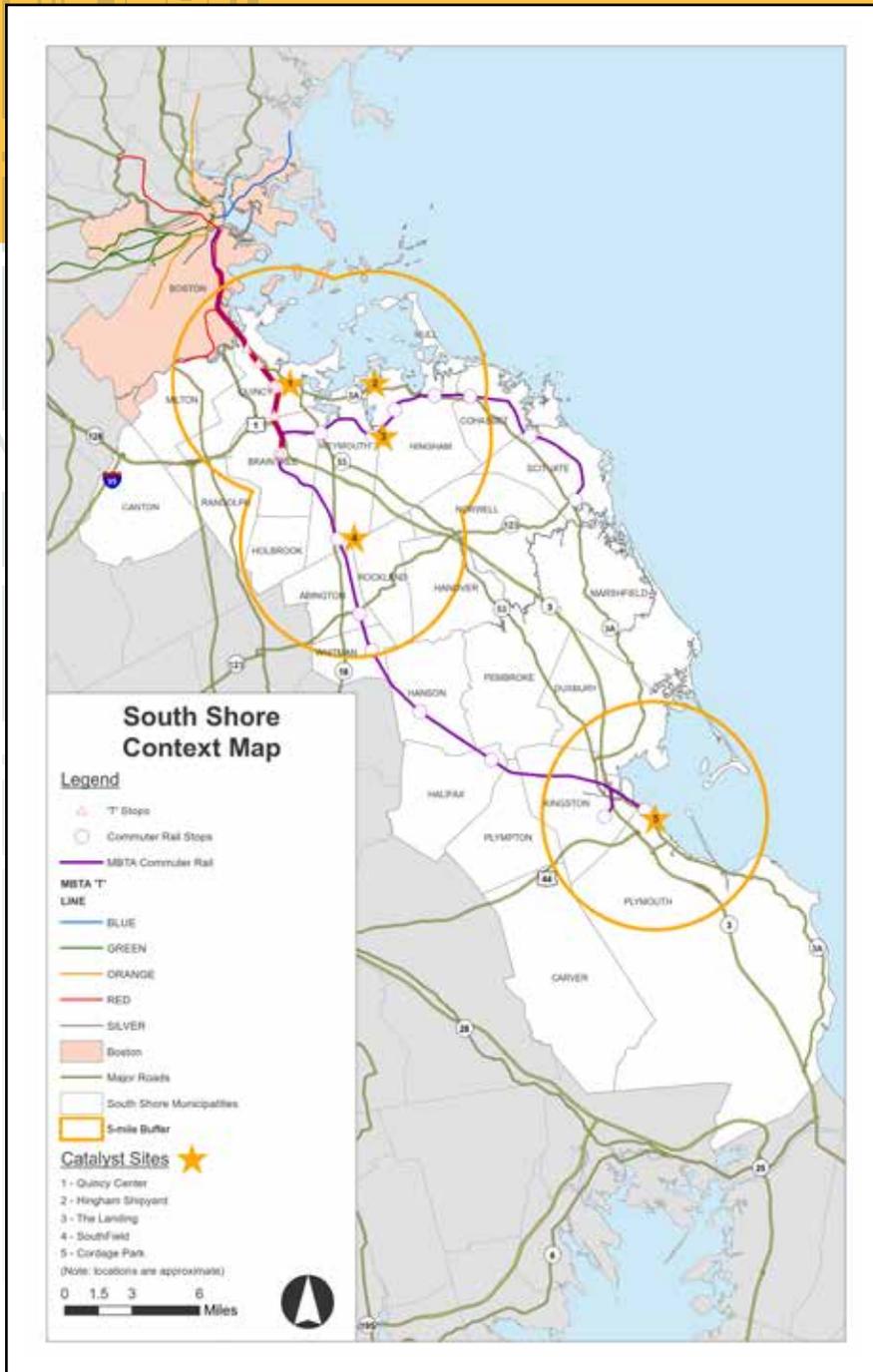
Cameron Snyder
Chairman of the Board 2016
Roomscapes Luxury Design Center



Peter Forman
President & CEO
South Shore Chamber of Commerce

SOUTH SHORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Infrastructure Priorities for a Stronger Regional Economy



The South Shore Chamber of Commerce has adopted a long-range strategic plan to diversify the South Shore economy and protect the high quality of life we enjoy today. In order to achieve these goals, proper infrastructure must be in place. Residents of and visitors to the region must be able to easily and efficiently move from place to place, and have sufficient resources to create strong communities – resources such as water, power, roads, buildings and more. And business enterprises must be similarly supported in order to succeed.

We know that building a stronger region starts with creating strong communities – by empowering local business, community and political leadership. Most municipalities are already engaged in local development strategies. The Chamber can collaborate with them on many projects that support a regional agenda. Moreover, there are several important, large development projects already planned and in progress across our region whose levels of success have the potential to vastly impact our region.

Research for this project revealed weak-



nesses in the region's current economic outlook and threats to our future quality of life on the South Shore. The Chamber's initial strategy report, *South Shore 2030: Choosing Our Future*, identified those threats and key strategies to both address them and create stronger opportunities for the future.

Critical challenges facing the region are an aging workforce, inadequate infrastructure, a concentration of jobs in contracting industries and a local economy too heavily weighted to circulating money and jobs within the area rather than attracting money from outside the area. Local services are threatened by increasing demands when future tax revenues and property values could actually decline if the local economy does not expand.

Fortunately, there are strong assets that serve as foundations for building a stronger future. Proximity to Boston, a talented and entrepreneurial workforce living in the region and several large transit-oriented developments throughout the entire region are important catalysts for renewed economic growth. Well-run local governments,

strong public schools and enviable recreational and lifestyle amenities are strong magnets to draw new people and businesses. Engaged public officials, an active business community and a strong network of nonprofit organizations provide a valuable mix of leadership necessary to execute a long-range strategy for growth.

South Shore 2030 identified six strategies necessary for growing the economy. These will not appear to be solely or purely about business and the economy. But the relationships between people, place and the economy is an important

theme of the Chamber's development goals. There are connections between strong communities, attracting more people to the area and a sustainable economic growth agenda.

Each one of these strategies involves specific challenges that need to be identified and translated into action. The next step in the process is to identify projects and actions that will drive these strategies. This report identifies specific infrastructure concerns the South Shore Chamber of Commerce has prioritized as important to building a stronger regional economy.

The six identified strategies are:

- 1. Attract a younger workforce and be more welcoming to families.**
- 2. Strengthen public and private sector collaboration to build stronger communities.**
- 3. Strengthen and retain existing businesses in key target sectors.**
- 4. Promote new business startups and entrepreneurship on the South Shore.**
- 5. Recruit new businesses to the region.**
- 6. Improve our infrastructure capacity.**

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations and priorities in this report closely follow the findings of the *South Shore 2030: Choosing Our Future* report. The infrastructure priorities are built on some logical sequencing for growth strategies reflected in the *South Shore 2030* report.



Union Point and the upper South Shore.

1. Improve the commute to Boston. The South Shore economy is strongly tied to Boston's economy, with large numbers of residents commuting to and from Boston. Lengthening commutes will stall residential growth, hurting both the South Shore and Boston.

2. Encourage more transit-oriented developments. From Quincy to Plymouth, the region has a number of ongoing or potential transit-oriented developments that connect thousands of new housing units with mass transit into Boston. The new housing is generally more affordable than the Boston housing market and provides the region with a rare opportunity to attract large numbers of younger people. It also frees up family housing as empty-nesters downsize their homes. Some of the developments also include commercial opportunities.

3. Leverage the transit-oriented housing into broader commercial and economic activity. The new projects will help transform the entire region – not because they are isolated pockets of development, but because they have the potential to stimulate growth well beyond their own boundaries. That reach will require infrastructure improvements around the development sites for even more housing and commercial development.

4. Recognize the importance of regional suburban smart growth. Current economic and urban planning trends emphasize proximity of homes to work and community amenities like entertainment, shopping, dining, recreational activities

and even government services. Proximity is often measured by direct walkability to all these points – or at least, connection by mass transit. That model does not fit the suburbs the same way. Success is measured more by shortening the commuting time or distance between home, work, services and amenities. They will not all be in as compact an area as might be found in a city. It is likely to be spread over a larger area, requiring some driving. But the concepts are still valuable for the suburbs. South Shore 2030 envisions closer access to mass transit for tens of thousands of residents, stronger centers of activity in most communities with new housing and improved walkability, increased recreational opportunities closer to home or work, and much stronger employment opportunities in the area.

5. Maintain strong communities and preserve their individual characteristics. The infrastructure priorities anticipate a need to help communities with their own local infrastructure priorities that have broader regional value. It also anticipates that many local problems can be resolved through greater collaboration with surrounding communities.

6. Unlock opportunities held back by problems other than transportation. Transportation alone is not enough to spur economic growth. To take advantage of transportation improvements and residential growth there must be more growth in businesses. Other priorities seek to create those opportunities.





INFRASTRUCTURE:
Transportation
Energy
Water/Wastewater
Tourism
Community Development

TRANSPORTATION

No South Shore resident should be surprised that transportation dominates the infrastructure needs for our economic future. Tens of thousands of residents work outside the region and are trapped in the mostly North/South commute. The heavy congestion costs individuals countless hours of lost personal time, imposes higher costs and lost productivity for many businesses and denies municipalities greater opportunities to attract more businesses. Mass transit service into Boston is a key solution to broadening our economic base and increasing intraregional development beyond North/South commuting.

The Boston commute — recommended priorities

Mass transit service must be improved, made more reliable and kept affordable

The winter storms of 2015 were a hidden blessing. The extreme weather that caused temporary shutdowns of the MBTA revealed fundamental weaknesses in the system that could cripple the state's economy if not addressed quickly. The problems are solvable, but the scope and expense is so large that many small decisions will be made along the way. Those small decisions could have major long-term consequences for a growing region. Residents, businesses and political leaders on the South Shore need to be vigilant in making sure short-term decisions don't cripple growth in the suburbs. As state officials look at long-term changes in the system, the region should demand:

Reliability – The system must have dependable equipment. This is not limited to the rolling stock but to tracks, buses and even boats.

Service – The system must run on time, with schedules and routes that serve commuters.

Fares – Fares contribute a large part of the revenue but mass transit is critical to all residents and should be partly subsidized by all taxpayers. Mass transit is essential in reducing highway congestion and in supporting many of our development strategies that extend beyond commuters. The Chamber supported recent fare increases but recognizes that at some point fares and parking fees will actually discourage use of service, even if that service is improved. The T cannot be financed solely by users.

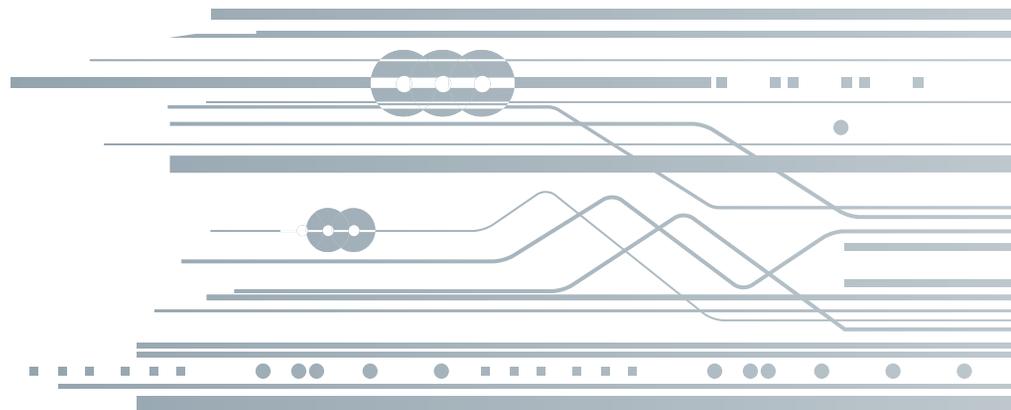
Parking Garages – Parking capacity and rates must also be realistic to promote transit use. Some of the garages also need serious attention, repair and reconstruction. These should be viewed as economic development opportunities, not merely as mass transit services.

T Stations – While state officials focus on making the trains run, the Chamber also believes service quality includes riders' experiences going through the stations. Safety, comfort and even impressions of South Shore living can be adversely affected if residents start and end their days in dark, dirty or dangerous T stations. Imagine the lasting impression on visiting tourists! The Chamber believes relatively easy and inexpensive steps can and should be taken to improve the stations, which form first impressions of both the T and the neighborhoods the T stops in.

Reform – Reliability and affordability require stronger attention to operations, maintenance, capital purchases and debt to properly and fairly fund the system. Strategies for sound business practices on the T are not a secret. The business community and public need to be more vocal in demanding reform or risk depending on a system that will routinely be underfunded and in crisis.



T stations in disrepair.



Expand service from the South Shore into Boston

As the region grows, especially around several large Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs), there will be increasing demand for mass transit. The Chamber should consider supporting a variety of opportunities:

- ▶ **Intermodal connections:** Improved connections for commuters using different means for split segments of a commute can promote transit use.
- ▶ **After additional study, the Chamber should support a preferred option for expansion such as:**
 - expansion of South Station to increase the number of tracks and trains;
 - the link between North Station and South Station;
 - building more rail sidings allowing more traffic back and forth to Boston; and
 - improved signalization.
- ▶ **Ferry service is a small part of the T's transit mix but is critical to some of our housing growth. The Hingham Shipyard is a clear example of the importance between commuting by water. Other opportunities may exist and should be considered, such as Squantum Point Park or Fore River/Quincy Shipyard.**

Improve highway access into Boston

There are several possible projects to consider, each requiring further study on best options. The Chamber should continue to push on the following choke points.

- ▶ **Widen Route 3.** Options include traditional state financing and a Public/Private Partnership (P3), which might be a voluntarily tolling through a new lane.
- ▶ **Improve "The Split" at Braintree/Quincy.** Improve the Southeast Expressway to eliminate some local bottlenecks.
- ▶ **Relieve the congestion near Savin Hill.**
- ▶ **Look for possible localized improvements and alternatives for intra-regional and short east/west commuting options to pull some non-Boston commuters off Route 3.**

Continue expanding Transit-Oriented Developments

The Chamber believes that the existing and potential TODs offer our best opportunities to promote new housing growth that will appeal to younger workers and provide some relief to the very expensive Boston housing market. These projects move forward only with a combination of public and private investments and cannot move forward in many cases without the public infrastructure. Those TODs include:

- completion of the Union Point Parkway;
- completion of Downtown Quincy TOD infrastructure, including the T parking garage;
- possible projects in Wollaston/North Quincy;
- build-out of The Landing in Weymouth and Braintree;
- potential work in the Pearl/Ivory Street area in Braintree; and
- completion of the recently approved work at Plymouth's Cordage Park to open up potential investment in North Plymouth and Kingston.

Leverage the Transit-Oriented Developments for broader regional impact

The TODs are powerful drivers for growth, but only if we are able to leverage them to other opportunities beyond their project's footprints. For example, at Union Point the Chamber should continue its support for:

- opening the connections between Union Point and Union Street in Rockland;
- widening of Route 18;
- improvements to Reservoir Park Drive and Hingham Street in Rockland; and
- possible short-distance parallel or access roads between Exits 13 and 16.

Massport and supporting Boston's growth

Massport and Logan Airport are important to our regional growth. Massport currently has capacity problems with parking. The South Shore may be able to provide some offsite relief through more bus or park-and-ride options or ferry service.

- ▶ The South Shore should work with Massport to help address its parking problems.
- ▶ The Chamber should also work with Massport to identify possible opportunities to economically connect the Seaport District to the South Shore.

Other economic opportunities relating to transportation

There are other opportunities to improve intraregional commuting or open new development. The Chamber should consider promoting some of those in the next few years. Examples of potential projects include:

- ▶ Derby Street in Hingham to Libby Parkway in Weymouth, as identified in the Chamber's February 2008 Transportation Priorities report.
- ▶ Hingham Street in Rockland to South Shore Park in Hingham, essentially connecting the Commercial Way/Commercial Park in Rockland to the South Shore Park.
- ▶ Route 3A corridor between Downtown Quincy and Downtown Hingham.
- ▶ Route 53 corridor between Downtown Quincy and The Landing in Weymouth and Braintree.
- ▶ Exploring any new real estate development opportunities for underutilized or surplus MBTA/ MassDOT properties in the South Shore.





ENERGY

Almost all electric power is distributed and priced through the New England power grid, which limits opportunities to take action that specifically increase regional supplies or help control regional costs. However, energy supplies and costs should continue to be a concern.

Current supplies and relatively lower costs should not distract us from recognizing that potential future price hikes, and supply limitations will have a particularly hard impact on areas like the South Shore that are looking for new growth.

Some possible issues to watch:

Braintree Electric Light Department. Although BELD serves only one town, its consideration of a new power plant for peak load demand may be worth supporting.

Regional conservation efforts. Conservation has been important in reducing demand and lowering costs. There may be some opportunities for the Chamber to help promote further regional efforts.

Renewable energy supplies. There have been a number of renewable energy projects on the South Shore and the Chamber should take a deeper look at other opportunities it might be able to support.

Keeping Fore River navigable for the fuel tank farm. The Chamber was helpful a few years ago in having the Fore River dredged. This was necessary to guarantee ongoing deliveries of fuels to the fuel tanks along the river and Route 53. The Chamber should continue to keep Fore River navigation a regional priority.



WATER/WASTEWATER

The region is poised for growth, but opportunities will be blocked because of limits on water or wastewater. Indeed, transportation problems are visible, but the water/wastewater problems may be our largest obstacles to growth in the region and certainly pose problems for individual communities.

- The Chamber should encourage extension of MWRA water to more communities south of Quincy.
- The Chamber should work with local officials on developing regional approaches to water supply and wastewater solutions, including possible use of water from Brockton.
- The Chamber should work with local/state officials to ensure water/wastewater systems are reliable and that the business community takes closer notice of communities with aging and failing systems.
- Three areas of particular concern for water/wastewater resources include Union Point, the Derby Street area in Hingham and along sections of Route 53.

Stormwater runoff

The EPA has issued new guidelines on stormwater runoff control to take effect next year. These regulations may impose considerable burdens on municipalities and could limit development or re-development of sites. The Chamber should work with local officials and the EPA to help understand how the regulations will impact them and how the business community and local officials can pursue useful practices to allow new growth.

Coastal infrastructure and inland waterways

The Chamber has been involved in the flood insurance debate largely because of the impact on the region's housing market. It is also concerned about wastewater capacity, when that is often reduced due to inflow and infiltration from storm damage and coastal flooding. While the region's fishing industry is relatively small, it is active and the economy related to recreational marine activity is growing. Those industries will need help with the region's marine infrastructure. Meanwhile, old dams may present their own problems with inland waterways.

The Chamber should consider a long-term project, working with local and state officials, to identify some regional priorities, perhaps even a regional plan, around coastal infrastructure needs and inland dams.



TOURISM

The upcoming 400th Anniversary celebrations (Plymouth in 2020, Quincy in 2025, Boston in 2030) and the American 250th in 2026 are incredible economic opportunities for the entire region. The direct benefit from increased tourism is just one benefit. The chance to introduce the South Shore to millions of visitors should not be lost as a marketing opportunity for people who may be considering relocation of their homes or even businesses.

The Chamber has already endorsed the work of the Plymouth 400 Inc. It should look for additional ways to support Plymouth and eventually Quincy and Boston as they plan their celebrations. Some of that work may be prioritizing some infrastructure projects to promote visits and enhance visitor experiences. These may include measures such as the pier reconstruction in Plymouth or Squantum Point in Quincy or changes to mass transit or changes to mass transit schedules. Tourism infrastructure can also include some high impact but lower cost projects, such as improved signage, clean public restroom facilities and additional parking.

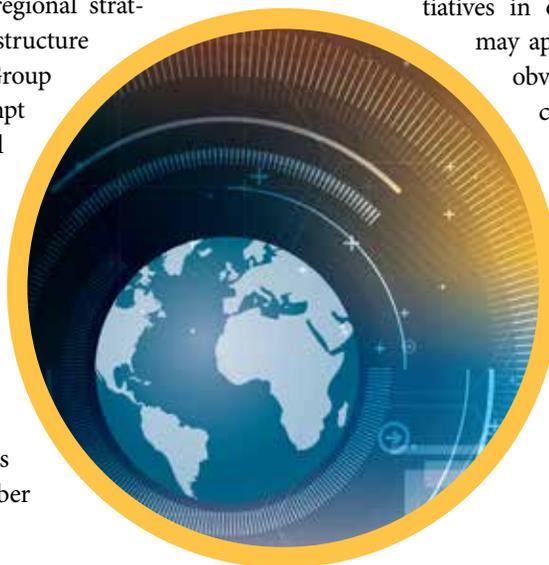
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Much of our regional plan is built on the idea that people choose where to live and businesses follow those workers. Strong communities on the South Shore give us some advantages as high quality places to live. But the nature of local governments is that most are under-resourced and rarely have the political luxury to think regionally.

Where there are willing partners, the Chamber should work with local officials and local business leaders to identify local priorities that actually reinforce the regional strategy. The Infrastructure Working Group made no attempt to identify local projects in any comprehensive manner. Instead the Chamber should work with officials to identify local priorities that the Chamber might support.

LOOKING BEYOND OUR OWN REGION

The South Shore, by definition, is not part of Boston – but our economic life is heavily influenced by it. Thus, it should come as no surprise that some of our development strategies and transportation priorities are closely tied to Boston's future growth. As the region and other parts of the state grow, we are likely to find similar shared interests between our region and other sub-regions south of Boston. The Chamber should consider supporting some initiatives in other areas that may appear to have no obvious immediate connection to our growth, but that will help produce a larger and stronger regional economy.



DIRECTORS' PARTNERS



SOUTH SHORE 2030

CHOOSING OUR FUTURE



This economic planning project, like so many services to our members, is made possible by our Partners. We want to thank and recognize our Partners from 2015 and 2016 who have helped lead the South Shore.

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