

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Standing Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Regina Phillips, Chair
Councilor Victoria Pelletier, District 2
Councilor Anna Bullett, District 4

Agenda
January 10, 2024
5:00 PM
Zoom

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/j/87554450883?pwd=djNIY0wrTkNqbKQ1bDJQdGNRZmtrdz09>

Passcode: 839840

1. Review and approve minutes from October 19
 - a. October 19 minutes
2. Sustainability Program Updates
In lieu of a monthly update, the Sustainability Office team will provide an overview of their work and responsibilities. They will also cover key achievements and progress towards the goals established in One Climate Future.
3. Presentation and Discussion
Public comment may be taken
 - a. PACTS Rapid Transit Study -- Locally Preferred Alternative Presentation
Presenters: Chris Chop and Andrew Clark, GPCOG Transportation Planners

The Committee will be considering whether to affirm support for the locally preferred alternative with bus rapid transit as the preferred mode and Alternate A as the preferred alignment.

Public comment will be taken
 - b. Dedication of Thomas Park
Presenter: Ethan Hipple, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities
Public comment will be taken
 - c. Committee work plan and items for the year ahead
Discussion
No public comment
4. Other Business

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Andrew Zarro (D4), Chair
Councilor Victoria Pelletier (D2)
Councilor Roberto Rodríguez (At-Large)

Draft Minutes October 19, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Rodríguez, Councilor Pelletier
Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Katie Tims

Meeting was called to order.

September 13 Minutes

The July 12, 2023 meeting minutes were not included in the agenda packet and were not approved at the September 13 meeting.
September 13 minutes approved unanimously.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

On September 29th, we said goodbye to our Resilience Corp Fellow, Emma Perry. She was instrumental in the success of our Electrify Bikes! Program, organizing summer-long landcare events and webinars, and helping the office with everything in between. We have submitted an application to GPCOG for a new Fellow.

We were awarded a Community Resilience Partnership grant from the latest round of Community Action Grant funding proposals. More information provided in the meeting.

On October 12th and 13th, the Portland Sustainability Office hosted the New England Municipal Sustainability (NEMS) Network fall meeting. It was a great opportunity to collaborate, in person, with other municipal sustainability professionals and support each other in this work.

The City and a consultant, VHB, are looking at the possibility of converting State St. and High St. from one way to two way traffic. The project team had a kickoff meeting last month, and VHB has started doing an existing conditions evaluation. We expect more information on that next month, with fine-tuning of the alternatives analysis to follow. Our goal is to complete this analysis by the end of the winter.

On October 14th, Troy Moon presented at the Islesboro Energy Conference. The conference theme was "Sustainability that Works. Person to Person. A Step at a Time" and brought Islesboro residents and off-islanders together to explore and discuss practical solutions as Maine communities face the challenges of climate change.

We hosted our annual Drive Electric Maine event on Sunday, September 24th. We had many EV owners participate and it was exciting to engage those interested in test driving or learning about new models and the incentives available for them.

Outreach events include Parking Day, Educational tours of Ocean Ave Solar Array for King Middle School students, and Troy Moon was a panelist at the 8th Annual Interdisciplinary Preventive Medicine Faculty Development Conference hosted at Maine Medical Center, Internal Open House for City Staff, and Coffee and Climate focused on climate communications.

Katie and Emma spent time distributing door hangers to spread awareness of the Community Composting Program. We are currently targeting the Back Cove neighborhood, due to the recently-opened drop site, and look forward to hitting more neighborhoods where drop-site participation could be elevated.

Informational presentation regarding a proposal to rename Marginal Way in honor of Senator George Mitchell

Presented by Harold Pachios

Background on the achievements and legacy of Senator George Mitchell. His commitment to this state, in his public service, being the basis for proposing the renaming.

Councilor Comment on Informational presentation regarding a proposal to rename Marginal Way in honor of Senator George Mitchell

Councilor Zarro asks about the procedure that would take place if the Committee decides to move forward. *There would need to be approval of the full council and a public meeting. Staff would need to inventory how many addresses would need to be changed due to the name change and they would be included in the public outreach process. Public Works, Maine DOT, and Emergency Management would need to be involved.*

Councilor Rodriguez says it would be good to get recommendations for if the decision was to rename a park or other location instead of Marginal Way.

Councilor Pelletier requests more public engagement if the committee moves forward with the request.

Annual Report for Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure

Presented by Erin Ferrell

Energy benchmarking is the process of measuring a building's energy and water use over time. On November 7, 2016, the City of Portland adopted an energy benchmarking ordinance that requires covered properties to annually report water and energy usage. Jurisdictions all over the country have implemented energy benchmarking and transparency policies as foundational tools to support building decarbonization. Energy Benchmarking ordinances encourage the efficient use of energy and water and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By taking inventory of energy usage each year and comparing buildings of similar size and use, owners can identify underperforming areas that can be improved.

The Sustainability Office received 163 Energy and Water Use Benchmarking Reports for calendar year 2022. There were 39 municipal buildings and 125 commercial/residential buildings reported. Of the commercial/residential buildings, 108 reported enough energy and water data to designate Building Energy Use Intensity (EUIs) for the buildings. No EUI can result from missing data, having gaps in the dates data is entered, or if the building is part of a larger campus that shares meters between buildings. Data quality improved drastically during the 2022 reporting period. Only 3 reports were missing crucial data required by the ordinance. This is compared to roughly 40 reports during the 2021 reporting period.

Looking to the Future

- *Multi-tenant buildings:* As the ordinance states, multi-tenant buildings 20,000 square feet or more are required to report energy and water use metrics once the utility is able to provide whole-building energy usage data in a convenient online format. Central Maine Power is currently working on this platform, with hopes to launch in 2024. The

Sustainability Office anticipates multi-tenant buildings will be required to report starting in 2025.

- *Contact with building owners:* There are around 600 buildings covered under the ordinance in the City of Portland. The Office has had difficulty reaching the building owners of these buildings as Assessor's Office information is the basis for benchmarking contact. In December 2022, the Office requested contact information for building owners and those who would be responsible for completing the reporting required. The Office currently has contact information for 360 covered buildings (62%).

Councilor Comment on Energy Benchmarking and Disclosure Report

Councilor Pelletier asks if there are workarounds to try and get in touch with the correct person associated with the building. *Our notices have to go to the address listed in the assessors database, but we have been requesting contact information through those notices and building our contact base.*

Councilor Rodriguez asked a clarifying question about the number of covered buildings under the ordinance. *We know the number of buildings that need to report, but we do not know the number of buildings that are single-tenant and currently required. We have an estimate and are narrowing in on the accurate number.*

Councilor Zarro asked when CMP anticipates releasing the data access platform. *We keep seeing test platforms, but we hope to see the final product come out in 2024.*

Informational presentation regarding the Community Resilience Grant awarded by the Governor's Office for Policy, Innovation, and the Future.

Presented by Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, and Katie Tims

Our Office was awarded \$45,200 in Round 3 of the Community Action Grants administered by the Governor's Office for Policy, Innovation, and the Future through the Community Resilience Partnership. Our proposal includes a strategy for a robust energy efficiency campaign to connect residents and commercial building owners with resources that can be used to improve energy efficiency, electrify, and weatherize buildings in Portland which currently account for more than 60% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. Outreach to low income and marginalized communities will be a priority with program materials translated into the six most commonly spoken languages other than English and City funded energy efficiency incentives for low and moderate income residents.

We will build on our successful Electrify Everything! model to match participants with technical information, rebates, and financing from program partners (including Efficiency Maine) as well as information about Federal tax deductions for home electrification. We will use \$75,000 appropriated by the Portland City Council to provide low and middle income residents with rebates for items such as induction cooktops to replace gas stoves, energy conservation tools such as clothes drying racks, and "do it yourself" weatherization kits. To ensure our programs reach underserved members of the community including low income residents, BIPOC, and immigrants we will translate program materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, and French. We will use paid advertising in publications read by the immigrant community, and work with local organizations that support immigrant communities to share information about our program with their constituents.

We will also be updating our community-wide greenhouse gas inventory to provide the community with current information about greenhouse gas emissions in Portland. To ensure we

are able to keep our inventory current moving forward the consultant will provide staff in the Sustainability Office with professional training so we can do future inventories internally.

Councilor Comment on Community Resilience Grant presentation

Broad Councilor support for the update on the grant, and other Sustainability Office updates.

Status update regarding the City of Portland's solar consortium projects

The City collaborated with other organizations as part of a buying club for solar credits, the original program included 23 Solar projects and seven hydro projects around the CMP service territory. Since then 6 hydro projects and 8 solar projects have become operational. There are 7 more solar projects in process, completion expected by mid-2024. Other projects are facing challenges and may not reach completion.

We anticipate saving approximately \$1,134,600 annually if all of the online and in progress projects are successfully completed. Anticipated value of RECs generated annually upon program completion: \$392,000.

Councilor Comment on Portland's solar consortium projects

Do the projects that may fail, are there other projects in the pipeline? *We do keep looking and throughout the project, others have failed but we were able to replace them.*

Can you talk more about the Renewable Energy Credits? *For all the electricity we generate we also retain RECs which can be retired or sold. Upon program completion, we could sell the RECs and invest that money into other clean energy projects.*

Motion to Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Zarro. Second by Councilor Rodríguez. Potentials schedule another date before 2024. All adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned



sustainability
office

*Sustainability Office
City of Portland*

January 10, 2024

The Sustainability Office



Troy Moon
Sustainability Director



Erin Ferrell
Sustainability Associate



Katie Tims
Sustainability Associate

The Sustainability Office undertakes initiatives to make Portland a vibrant, environmentally friendly community now and into the future. We collaborate with all departments to increase the efficiency of City operations and seek innovative approaches to improve municipal services. We partner with community organizations, citizens, and businesses working to conserve energy, reduce waste, and preserve our natural resources. We promote actions that will make Portland resilient in the face of a changing climate. We lead the City's effort to implement our climate action plan, One Climate Future.



= 68 strategies with
186 action items



**Buildings
and Energy**



**Waste
Reduction**



**Transportation
and Land Use**



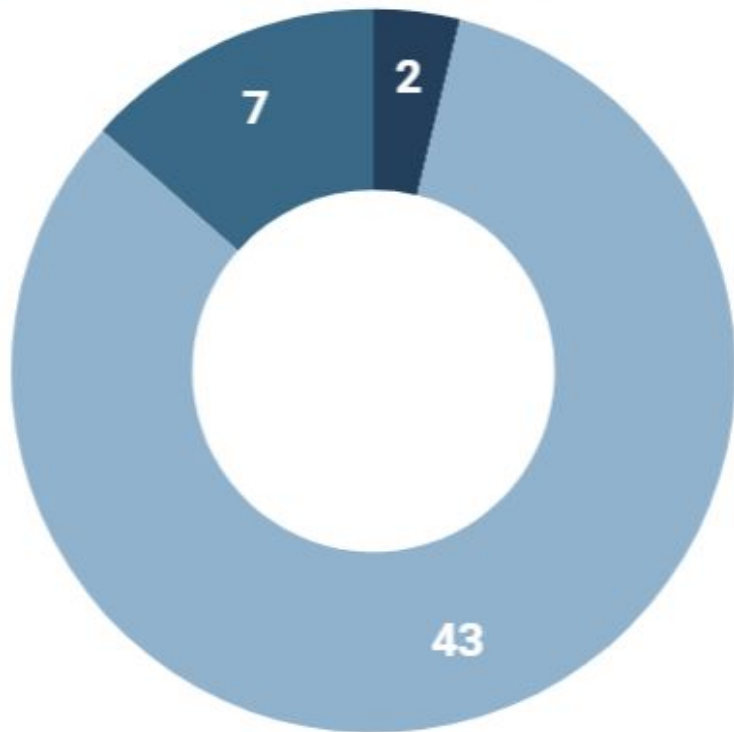
**Climate
Resilience**

**80% x 2050
COMMUNITY-WIDE**

**100% x 2040
MUNICIPAL**

Near-Term OCF Strategies

● IN ACTION ● IN PROGRESS ● NOT STARTED



3 years in to One Climate Future

Of the 52 near-term strategies,
2 are in action
43 are in progress,
and 7 are not started.

EMISSIONS BY SECTOR

34% COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

22% RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

0.3% WASTEWATER

3% SOLID WASTE

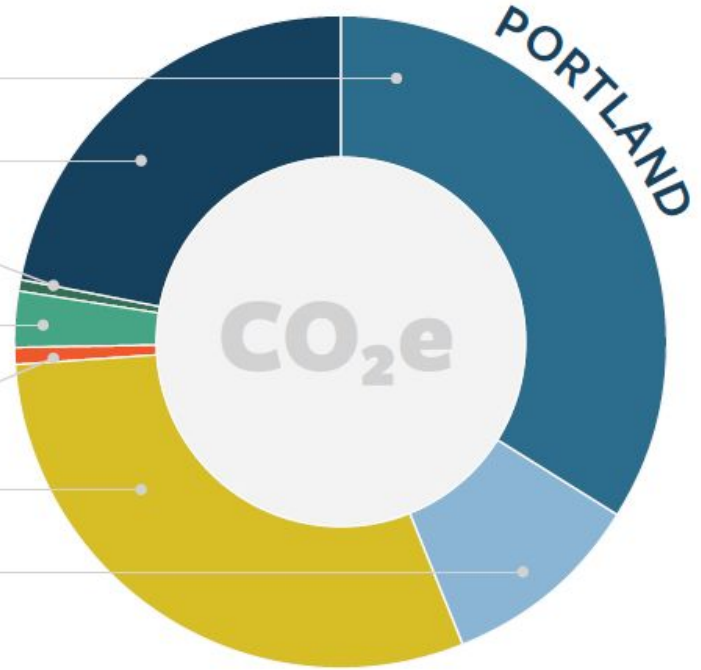
0.8% WATERBORNE TRANSPORTATION

30% ON-ROAD TRANSPORTATION

10% INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

840,419 MTCO₂e

OF GREENHOUSE GASES EMITTED IN 2017



Energy Management for the City

- Renewable Energy
 - Manage Net Energy Billing agreements with 20+ regional renewable energy projects
 - On-site solar at the Ocean Avenue Landfill, the Portland Jetport, the Homeless Service Center, and Riverside Golf Course
- Energy procurement
- Planning for energy efficiency retrofits in City Facilities
- Utility account management and monitoring



Energy Benchmarking

- Ordinance requires bigger buildings in Portland report their energy and water usage each year (City Code Ch. 6)
- Buildings that complete reporting receive feedback on building energy efficiency metrics
- Basis for implementing Building Performance Standards



Electrify Everything!

- Ongoing programs to provide residents with incentives to make choosing electric and efficient easier and more affordable
- Continuous outreach around
 - Beneficial electrification
 - Weatherization
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Federal, state, and local resources
- Work to transition the city away from fossil fuels to renewable energy as noted in One Climate Future



Electrify Everything! Past Rounds



First Round (Spring 2022)

- 105 projects
- ReVision Energy offered discounts for air source heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, home EV chargers, and rooftop solar for EE participants



Second Round (Spring 2023)

- 67 households, income-eligible program with upfront discount
- \$100,000 in generous rebates for electric assist bicycles and cargo bicycles and eligible accessories

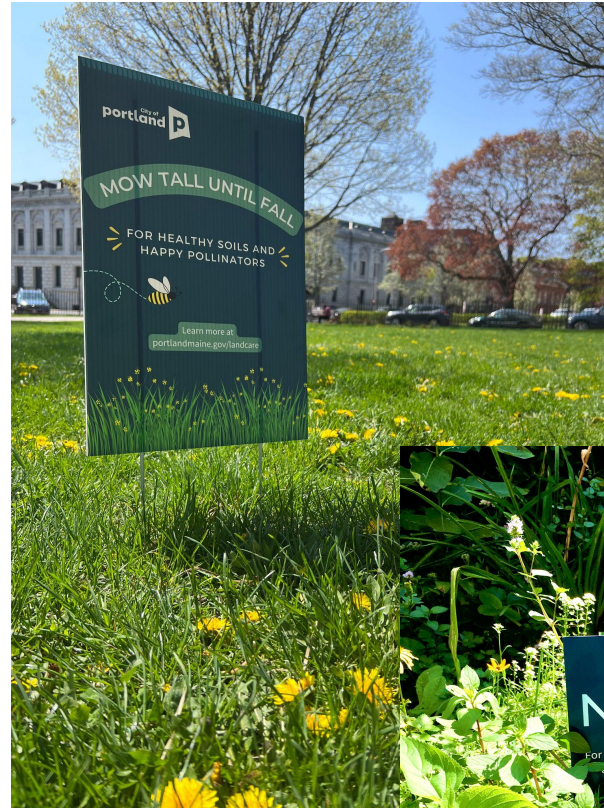
Expand EV Charging Infrastructure & Electrify Municipal Fleet

- EV charging requirements in our Technical Design Manual
- Public charging stations, parking garages & neighborhood charging hubs
- Infrastructure at municipal buildings
- Fleet Electrification Strategy



Sustainable Landcare

- Enforce Portland's Landcare Ordinance
- Promote sustainable lawn care practices in the City
 - Mow Tall Until Fall
 - Leave the Leaves
- Summer Landcare webinar series
- Annual Fall Landcare Event



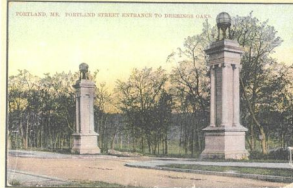
Climate Resilience

- Collaborate with other departments and external stakeholders to promote resilient infrastructure
 - Involved with updates to dynamic coastal flood inundation modeling and climate resilience overlay zoning project
 - Green infrastructure projects
 - Community science projects with GMRI
- Implement Sustainable Neighborhoods



Sustainable Neighborhoods Program

Deering Oaks History Walk



**Sunday,
October 22nd
@ 1:00 PM**

Tour meets at The Castle
with Portland Historian
Hon. HERB ADAMS
SMCC Professor and
former State Rep.
Author, "Bold Vision"



COMMUNITY CIDER PRESSING

SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

11:00AM - 2:00PM
LIBBYTOWN COMMUNITY GARDEN

FAMILY-FRIENDLY
CIDER MAKING
DEMONSTRATIONS &
FOOD TRUCKS
AND FREE CIDER!

*Bring-Your-Own-Cup!



MORE INFO



COMMUNITY POTLUCK



Bring your own cup, bowl & silverware if you can!
Friday, October 20
5 - 6:30 pm
Libbytown Community Garden

ALL ARE WELCOME



Promote Waste Reduction

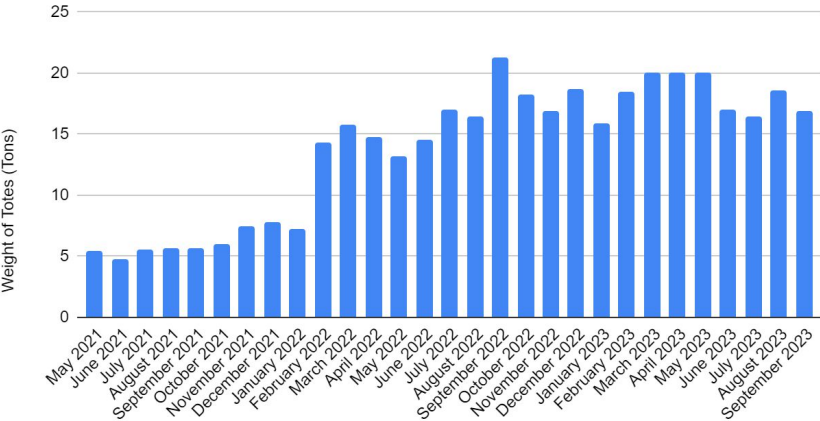
- Educational efforts around reducing waste, stopping single use plastic, and recycling properly.
- Enforce Plastic Straw Ordinance and Plastic Packaging Ordinance (City Code Ch. 12)



Community Composting Program

Our food waste drop-off program helps Portland residents reduce waste by composting food scraps for free.

Community Composting Program Collection Rates



LOCAL NEWS

Portland expands composting program after 'overwhelming' popularity

The city started the free program on Earth Day 2021, offering five drop-off locations.

Community Engagement



Stay up to date with One Climate Future.

Check out the monthly newsletter for updates, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.

**READ THE LATEST
NEWSLETTER**



1,200+
subscribers

Community Engagement

- 12 Coffee and Climate Webinars and 14 newsletters!!
- MCV Lunch & Learn presentation, “Advocating for Sustainability: One Year with Portland’s Sustainability and Transportation Committee” (January 13)
- High Tides and Hot Chocolate (January 24)
- MaineHealth’s Leadership in Preventative Medicine (January 30)
- Healthy Soils and Happy Lawns: A Deep Dive into Organic Turfgrass and Lawn Care Practices (February 14)
- Portland’s Sustainability Series, co-hosted by the Portland Public Library and the Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, presentation “Building a Sustainable City” (February 21)
- New York Times [“As Heat Pumps Go Mainstream, a Big Question: Can They Handle Real Cold?”](#) (February 22)
- Sustainable Neighborhoods Program Informational Open House (March 2)
- Maine-New Hampshire Climate Networks Exchange (March 9)
- Roux Institute’s Start Summit (March 23)
- EV Expo at the Green Home + Energy Show (April 1)
- Portland Public Health Fair (April 7)
- Department of Energy’s [Better Buildings Summit](#) in Washington, D.C. (April 13)
- Portland’s first official Earth Day Celebration (April 22)
- Leadership Portland environment sessions (April 27)
- GMRI’s Rise Up Portland (May 4)
- Maine Resource Recovery Association Annual Conference (May 9)
- Maine Public Radio [“Portland hopes 'charging hubs' will help apartment-dwellers adopt electric vehicles”](#) (May 11)
- Ocean Avenue solar array tour with King Middle School (May 11)
- New England Municipal Sustainability Network annual conference in Keene, New Hampshire (May 17 and 18)
- Bike to Work Day (May 19)
- Maine ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Chapter May Meeting (May 30)
- Mid-Coast Climate Resilience Resource Workshop (June 5)
- Summer Landcare Lunch & Learn: Bird-Friendly Habitats with Maine Audubon (June 6)
- Bird Safe Buildings Info Session (June 9)
- Presentation to the Brunswick Conservation Commission (June 12)
- Hosted Governor’s Energy Office for Webinar on Maine’s Offshore Wind Roadmap (June 13)
- Tabling at Portland Farmers Market (June 14)
- Tabling at Portland Farmers Market (June 24)
- Summer Landcare Lunch & Learn: Soil Science with UMaine Cooperative Extension (July 5)
- Community Solar webinar with EnergySage (July 13th)
- Payson Park Community Garden Pop-Up Picnic with Wayside Food Programs (July 17)
- Riverton Community Garden Pop-Up Picnic with Wayside Food Programs (July 24)
- Summer Landcare Lunch & Learn: Building Biodiverse Yards with Wild Seed Project (August 1)
- Libbytown Community Garden Pop-Up Picnic with Wayside Food Programs (August 7)
- Presentation, “Building Equity into Climate Action” with GPCOG (August 15)
- Spotlight feature at Woodford Corner Farmers Market (August 17)
- Boyd St. Community Garden Pop-Up Picnic with Wayside Food Programs (August 21)
- National Park(ing) Day (September 15)
- Libbytown Neighborhood Plant Swap (September 16)
- Drive Electric Maine 2023 (September 24)
- Ocean Avenue solar array tour with King Middle School (October 3 and October 10)
- Open House for City Hall staff (October 4)
- Portland Sustainability Office hosted the New England Municipal Sustainability Network fall meeting (October 12 and 13)
- Presentation at the Islesboro Energy Conference (October 14)
- Libbytown Neighborhood Cider Pressing Event (October 15)
- Panelist at the 8th Annual Interdisciplinary Preventive Medicine Faculty Development Conference hosted at MMC (October 18)
- Libbytown Neighborhood Potluck (October 20)
- Pumpkin Cycle (November 4)
- West End Neighborhood Tree Planting Project

Staff Support for City Committees

Sustainability & Transportation Committee

- The Sustainability and Transportation Committee develops and recommends policies to implement the goals described in the City's climate action plan, [One Climate Future](#). It also addresses issues related to Parks and Open Space, Parking, and transportation related issues including vehicle traffic, mass transit, and bike/ped infrastructure.

Landcare Management Advisory Committee

- Ongoing education and outreach (in coordination with the Sustainability Office) about the ordinance and ways to manage their property organically
- Hearing and ruling on waivers submitted by property owners who believe they have an emergency situation on their property that requires the use of synthetic pesticide to remedy

Top Sustainability Updates From 2023

- Deployed **4 DC Fast Chargers** in collaboration with EVgo and launched **three neighborhood EV charging hubs**.
- Conducted **Electrify Bikes!** to help low and moderate-income Portland residents get an e-bike.
- Adopted **Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)** to help commercial property owners finance energy projects.
- Began work on **Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay Zone** and city-wide standards to promote climate resilience.
- Constructed the **Homeless Service Center to LEED Gold standards** with energy performance that exceeds ASHRAE 90.1 (2019) by more than 30%.
- Expanded the Community Compost program to include 10 locations.
- Adopted an **online customer management program to support energy benchmarking** that dramatically increased the data quality of submitted reports.

Looking Forward to 2024

- Launching third round of Electrify Everything! focused on DIY efficiency and weatherization options for homeowners and renters
- Undertaking a major energy efficiency outreach campaign for residential and commercial building owners
- Launching City energy projects
- Receiving Maine's first electric trash truck
- Expanding our Sustainable Neighborhoods Program city-wide
- Updating our community wide greenhouse gas inventory



GORHAM-WESTBROOK-PORTLAND RAPID TRANSIT STUDY

Executive Summary

Investing in a regional rapid transit network is a key part of Greater Portland’s transportation future. Rapid transit is competitive with or better than driving, and convenient for many kinds of trips, throughout the day. Statewide, regional, and local planning identifies transit investment as a key strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

In 2022 and 2023, The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) conducted the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study (‘the study’). The outcome of this study is a “Locally Preferred Alternative” (LPA), which outlines a mode and alignment for a future rapid-transit line connecting these three communities. The study’s recommended LPA is a rapid bus service connecting Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland, primarily via Main Street, Brighton Avenue, and Congress Street. This alignment is in Figure ES-1, and most closely resembles “Alternative 1—Brighton Ave” from the study’s alternatives evaluation.

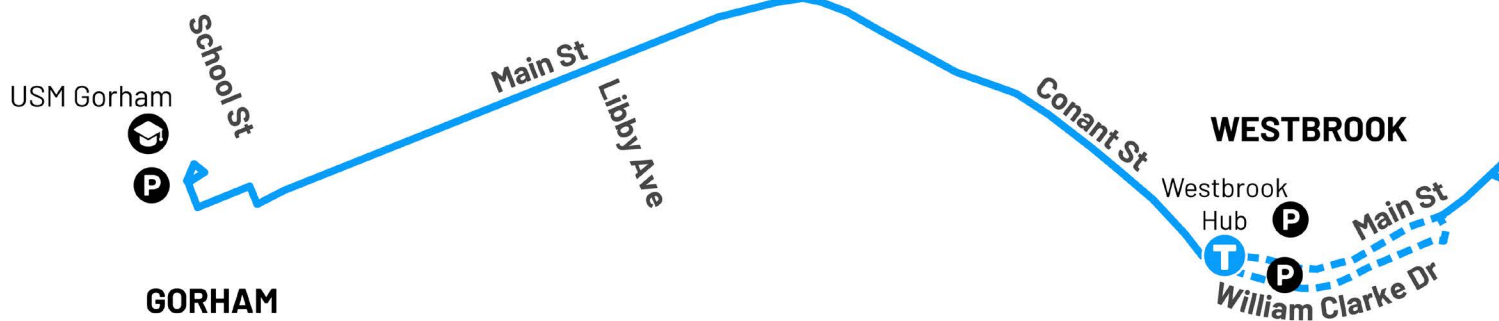
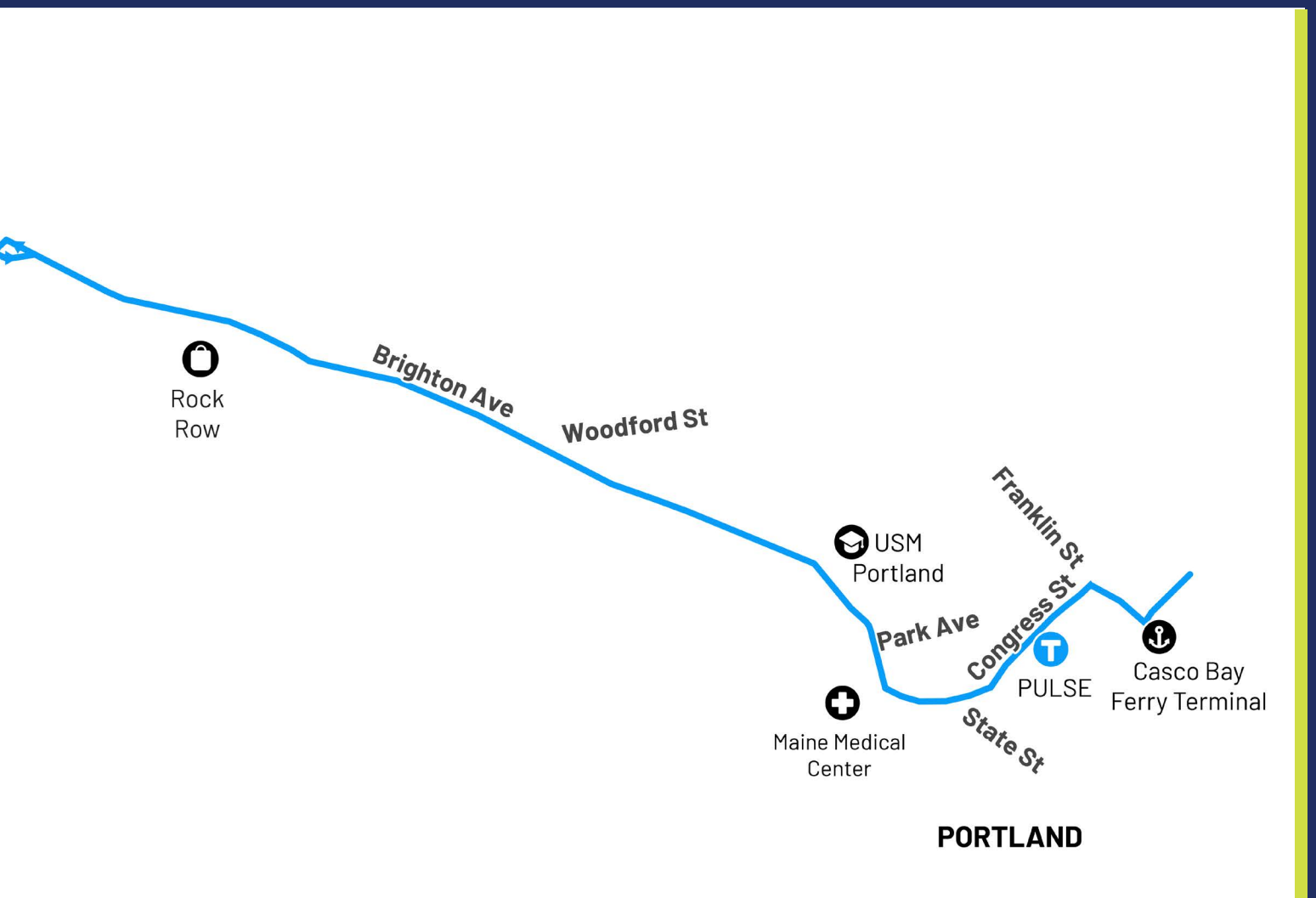


Figure ES-1: Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Line LPA

From west to east the LPA connects USM Gorham, Gorham Village, downtown Westbrook, Rock Row, USM Portland, Maine Medical Center, downtown Portland at the GP Metro PULSE, and the Eastern Waterfront. The LPA will provide 10-minute, all-day service between downtown Portland and downtown Westbrook, and 20-minute all-day service between downtown Westbrook and USM Gorham. High-frequency, all-day service means riders do not need to check a schedule before heading to a station. Real-time arrival information at stations means riders know with confidence when the next bus arrives. Transit signal priority and dedicated bus lanes mean service is fast and reliable, getting people where they need to go, when they need to get there.



The LPA serves many of the region’s main residential, employment, academic, and commercial centers. Key service characteristics are in Figure ES-2.

Figure ES-2: Key Statistics of the LPA

Length of the LPA: 12 miles	Time Spent at Each Station: 30 seconds
Number of Stations: 19	Average Daily Ridership (2045): 4,900
Hours of Operation: 5:00 AM – 11:00 PM Weekday 7:00 AM – 11:30 PM Saturday 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM Sunday	Major Transfer Locations: Westbrook Hub GP Metro PULSE Casco Bay Ferry Terminal
Frequency: On weekdays from 6:00AM to 7:00PM, every 10 mins. between Portland and Westbrook and every 20 mins. between Portland and Gorham, via Westbrook. Every 15 to 40 mins. at all other times.	Number of Buses Needed: 12 buses Assumed Maximum Vehicle Load: 80 passengers
Estimated Extent of Operation in Exclusive Transit Right-of-Way: 50% (6 miles)	Residents and Jobs along the Corridor: Jobs (2019): 51,400 Residents (2020): 47,200

Note: These figures are based on the current LPA; as stakeholder conversations continue, these key statistics will likely evolve.



Project Purpose, Goals and Objectives

This project purpose statement guided all the study’s efforts, and was developed based on feedback from project stakeholders, the Project Advisory Group, and public outreach. The project’s goals and objectives served as the framework in which ideas were evaluated. These goals and objectives are in Figure ES-3.

Figure ES-3: Project Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective
Improve Mobility	• Make transit time-competitive with auto travel • Improve the speed, frequency, and reliability of transit
Grow Transit Ridership	• Encourage mode shift away from single-occupant vehicles • Decrease auto dependency and greenhouse gas emissions
Support Sustainable Growth	• Provide opportunities for transit-oriented development • Serve future developments with sustainable transportation options
Enhance Connectivity	• Improve connections to the pedestrian network • Improve connections to local and regional transit
Focus on Equity	• Provide rapid transit to people that most need it
Provide New Opportunities	• Serve regional employment and activity centers • Enhance access for regional residents • Support reverse commutes
Focus on Practical and Implementable Solutions	• Achieve local consensus • Balance costs and benefits • Align with local goals

Statewide, regional, and local planning identifies transit investment as a key way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. *Transit Tomorrow*, the region’s long-range transit plan, envisions that by 2050 using transit is faster and more affordable than driving, and that transit is supported by focusing new homes and jobs in existing downtown and neighborhood centers. Developing a network of fast, reliable, high-capacity transit corridors is crucial to achieving the plan’s vision. The Gorham-Westbrook-Portland corridor is the first of the four corridors identified in *Transit Tomorrow* for study.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland rapid transit project is to provide fast, reliable, and frequent transit service that connects Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland’s major transportation and/or activity centers.

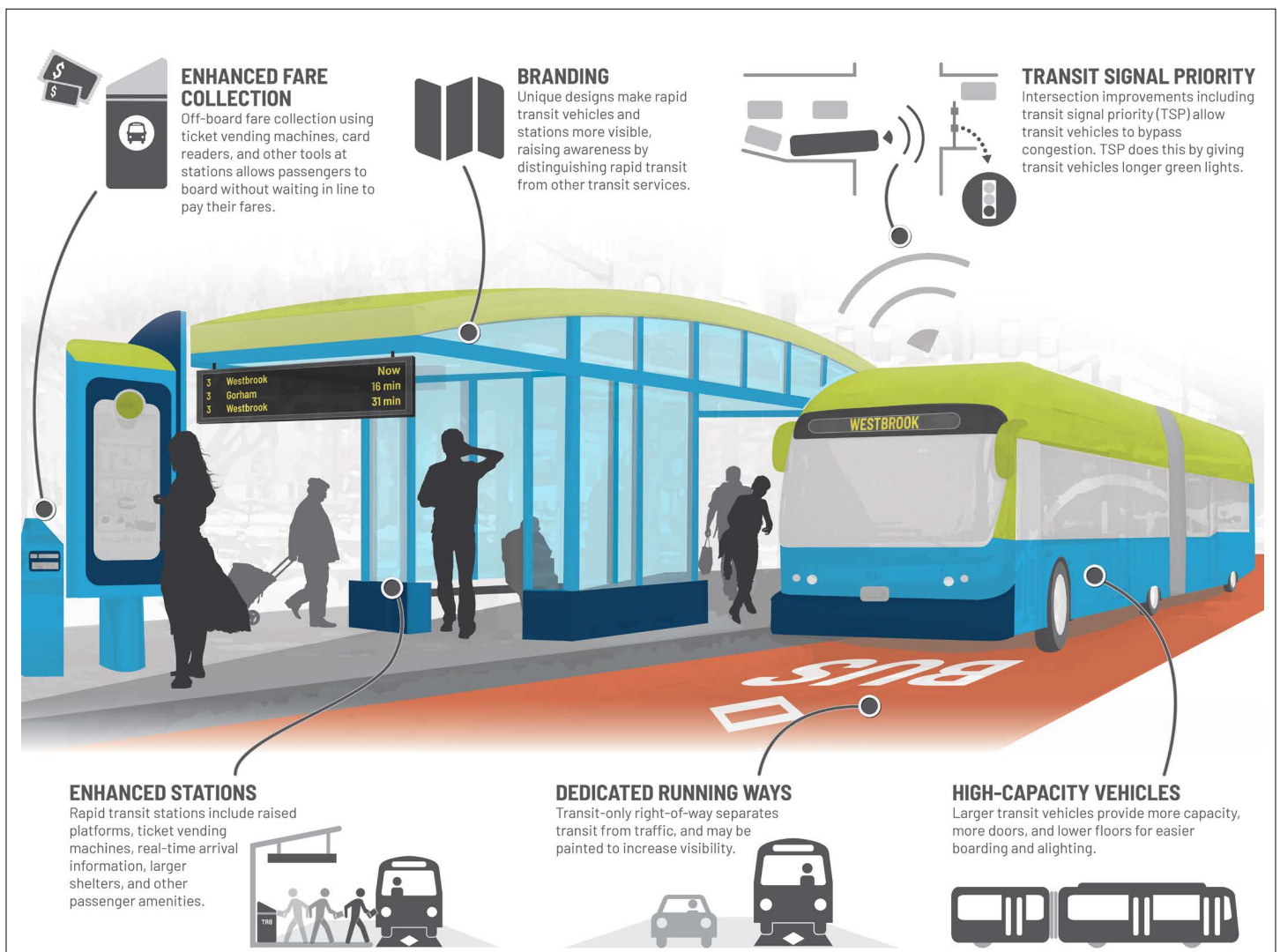


What is Rapid Transit?

Rapid transit has service and infrastructure characteristics that make public transit competitive with or better than auto travel. Key features of rapid transit are illustrated in Figure ES-4 and outlined below:

- **High-frequency service:** Service every 15 minutes or better is convenient and reliable for riders, and eliminates the need to plan around a bus schedule.
- **Dedicated right-of-way:** Transit-only lanes make buses faster and more reliable on congested roads.
- **Transit signal priority:** Priority signals make buses faster and more reliable at congested intersections.
- **Off-board fare payment:** Ticket vending machines, card readers, and other tools allow riders to board without waiting in line to pay their fares, which reduces delay.
- **Enhanced stations:** Raised platforms speed up boarding, real-time signage keeps riders informed, and other amenities (benches, shelters, etc.) make using transit more comfortable.
- **Branding:** A distinguished brand makes the public more aware of the service.

Figure ES-4: Key Features of Rapid Transit



How Did we Get Here?

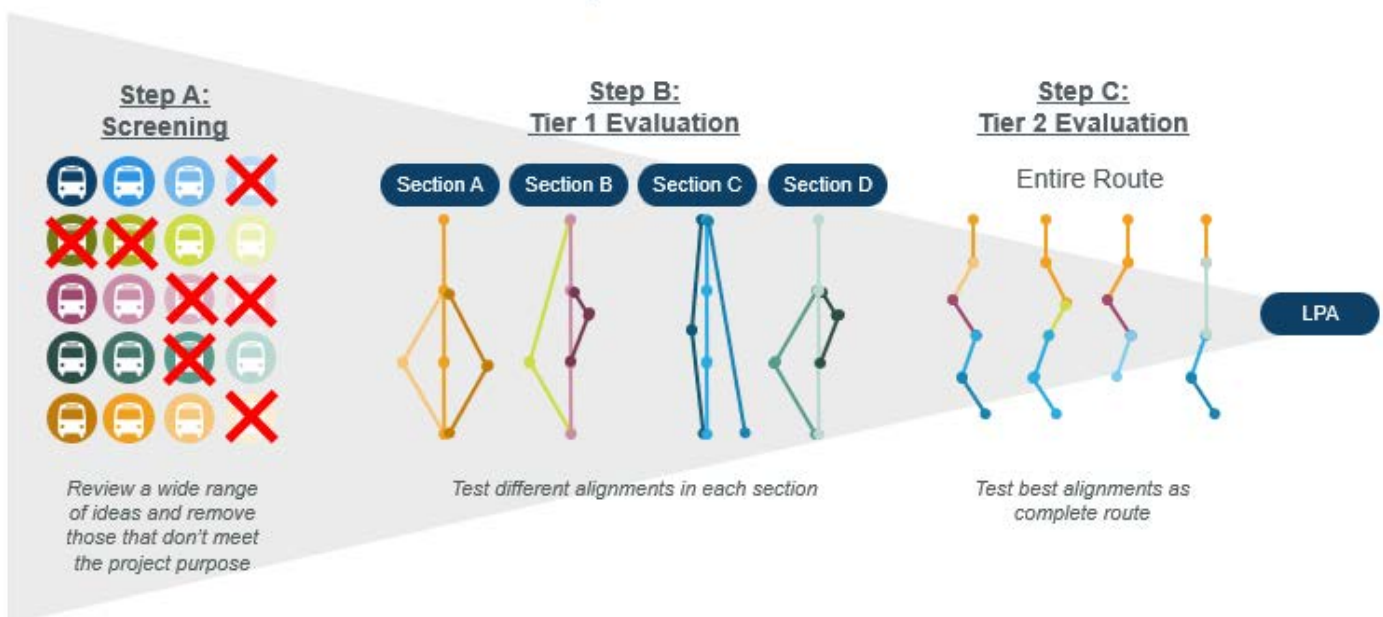
The study explored many possible concepts for serving Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland, before narrowing to an LPA. The process started by documenting needs and opportunities, and talking with the community about what they wanted to see in a rapid transit service. This early analysis and outreach generated many ideas that could meet the purpose of the project. The study then evaluated the ideas using a three-step process shown in Figure ES-5 and described below.

Step A: Screening – a first-pass, high-level screening of all project ideas collected in early analysis and outreach. The screening step determined whether project ideas met the project’s purpose.

Step B: Tier 1 Evaluation – an assessment of the project concepts that passed through the screening. The Tier 1 evaluation split the corridor into three geographic sections (Gorham to downtown Westbrook, downtown Westbrook to Rock Row, and Rock Row to downtown Portland) and analyzed how well each idea met the project’s goals and objectives. The Tier 1 analysis resulted in four alignment alternatives for further study.

Step C: Tier 2 Evaluation – evaluated the four alignment alternatives against project goals and objectives, but to a more robust extent than the Tier 1 Evaluation. Step C developed infrastructure assumptions, cost estimates, ridership forecasts, and travel-time estimates. The result of the Tier 2 Evaluation is the LPA.

Figure ES-5: Key Features of Rapid Transit



Why Bus instead of Rail?

The study explored both rail and bus-based modes, including the potential to use existing rail corridors for rapid transit service. Once Tier 1 Evaluation corridors were identified, the costs and benefits of using the corridor for rail versus bus-based service were considered.

Existing rail corridors were not recommended for rapid transit service, mainly due to existing use of the rail corridor(s) by freight and/or Downeaster service, which is regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration; but also because the existing rail corridors provide limited access to key destinations, could create environmental impacts to sensitive sites and are susceptible to sea-level rise. Ultimately, we found that using an existing rail corridor would require major rail construction and reconstruction to support rapid transit service, which would be considerably more costly and complicated than a bus-based service, while providing less access and mobility to the public.

A more detailed description of the mode-choice analysis can be found in the final report. More detailed key reasons for recommending a rapid bus-based LPA were determined in the Tier 2 evaluation, and include:

Capital Costs: A rail alternative is likely to cost four to twelve times more to construct than a BRT alternative.

Operating Costs: It is generally more than twice as costly to operate rail transit on a per-hour basis than it is to operate bus transit.

Ridership and Capacity: In the Greater Portland context, a street-running rail service is unlikely to produce enough added ridership to justify the higher cost of building and operating rail service instead of BRT.

Overall: BRT is assumed to provide similar benefits as street-running rail service at substantially lower per-rider cost.





Robust Community Engagement, Broad Community Support

The LPA received strong support from the community. A snapshot of public outreach through each phase of the study is in Figure ES-6 below. The study offered multiple and varied opportunities for public idea-sharing, participation, and feedback, including meetings, open houses, pop-ups, online surveys, and stakeholder interviews. The study team also reached

out to underserved populations in partnership with community organizations. Public support for the LPA is exceptionally high. In a survey of 590 respondents, more than 85% indicated support. Robust outreach and strong support for the LPA provide confidence in our recommendations.

Figure ES-6: Public Engagement Snapshot

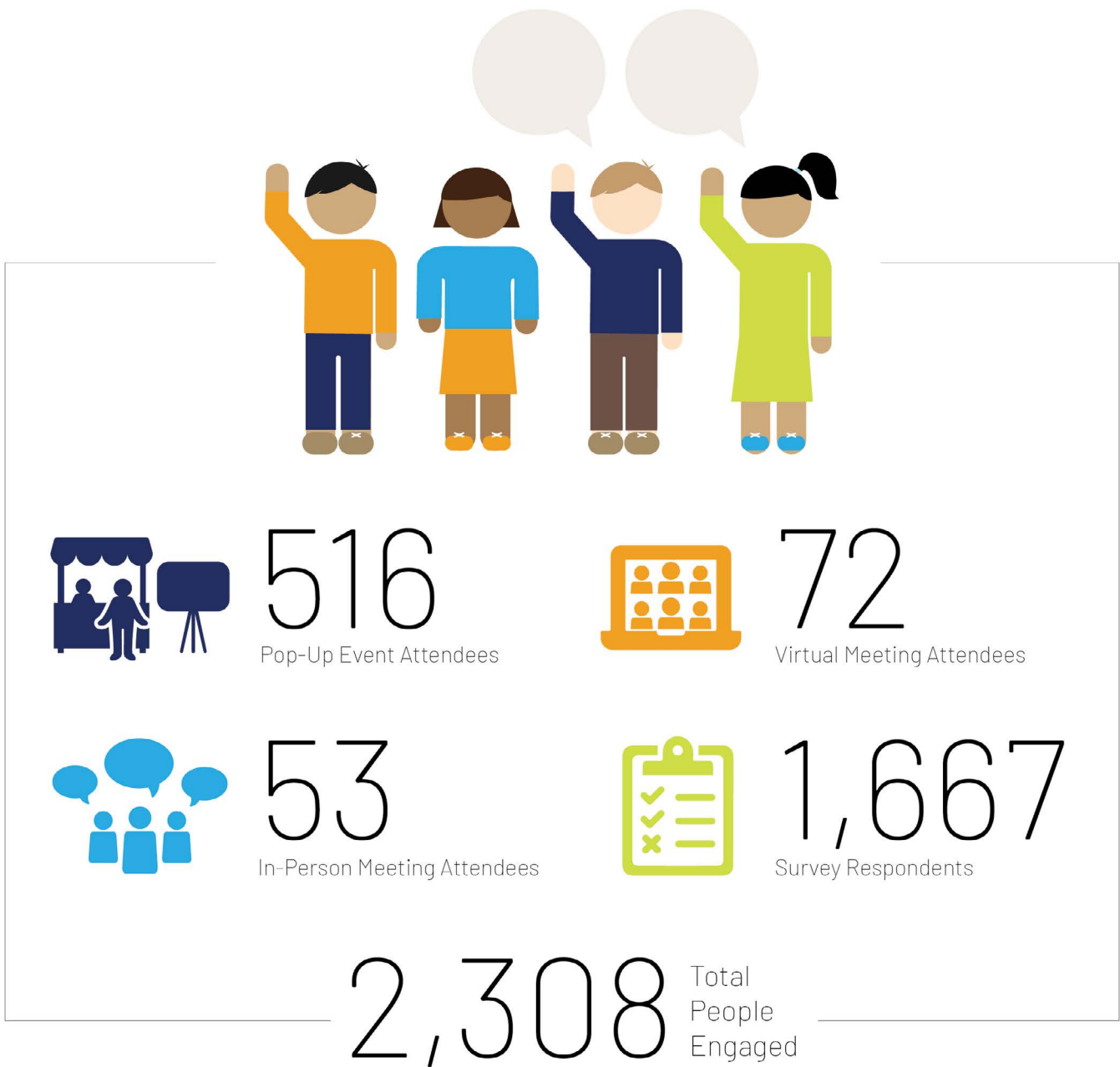




Photo credit: Kenneth C. Zirkel for Wikimedia Commons

What is Next?

The outcome of this study is a recommended Locally Preferred Alternative—that is, only a mode and alignment—for a rapid transit service along the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland corridor. The LPA has been developed to the conceptual design level based on geographic information system (GIS) mapping, aerial imagery, and limited field measurements, and includes illustrative cross sections and generalized overall transit infrastructure along the alignment.

Those conceptual plans require additional analysis, design, and engineering in ‘preliminary design’, which is the next phase of the project. The preliminary design process will include collection of engineering survey, utility information, property data, traffic counts, traffic signal documents, and roadway plans. Key stakeholders from this study—including Gorham, Westbrook, Portland, USM, MaineDOT, and GP Metro—are developing the details for the next phase of this project.

Funding sources are being identified to move the project forward into the next phase. One alternative is a RAISE Planning Grant. The RAISE Discretionary Grant program, sponsored by the US Department of Transportation, is a unique opportunity to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives related to

reducing greenhouse gas emissions; incorporating evidence-based climate resilience measures and features; avoiding adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species; and addressing the disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities. Activities eligible for RAISE Planning Grant funding are those related to the planning, preparation, or design of eligible surface transportation capital projects. The Gorham-Westbrook-Portland rapid transit line aligns very well with RAISE goal areas and the State of Maine has not yet pursued any RAISE Planning grants (the State has pursued RAISE Capital grants). From a geographic diversity perspective, this makes the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland project competitive for Planning funds.

Alternatively, local funds could support more planning work to address questions raised by the municipalities and other stakeholders, with the hopes of enhancing regional coordination and support for the project, and perhaps making a RAISE Planning Grant application more successful in the future. Key decision makers and staff are working to determine a preferable course of action.





Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study

**City Review of the
Locally-Preferred Alternative**

**Andrew Clark, GPCOG
Christopher Chop, GPCOG**

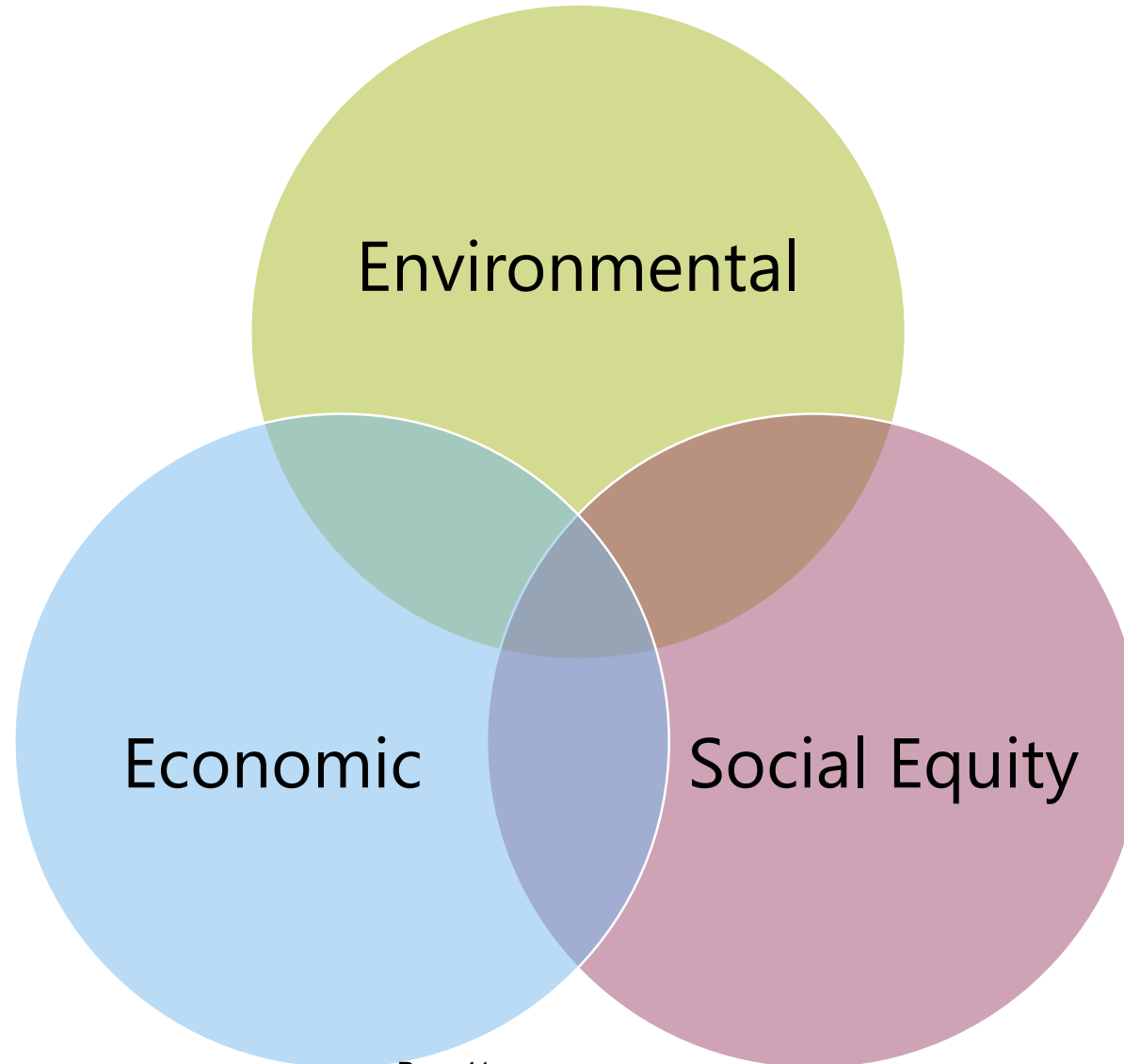
Portland Sustainability & Transportation Committee

January 10, 2024

Background

Tackling Major Issues

Public transit is a
key part of the
solution(s)...

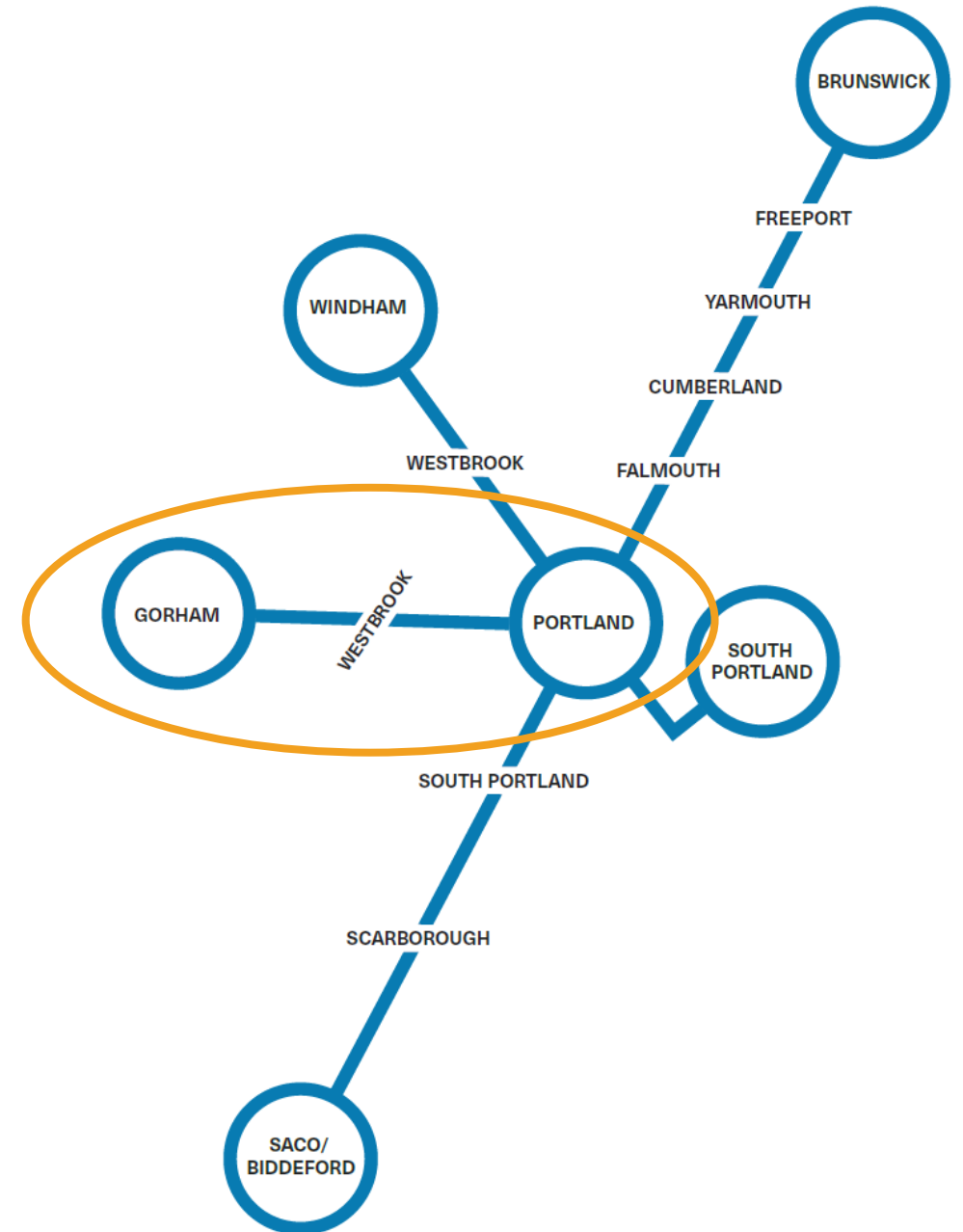


Transit Tomorrow

The region's long-range transit plan includes four goals:

Make transit easier
Create frequent connections
Invest in rapid transit
Create transit-friendly places

Gorham-Westbrook-Portland is the first of several corridors for further study.



Overview

Features of Rapid Transit

High-frequency service

Dedicated right-of-way

Transit signal priority

Off-board fare payment

Enhanced stations

Branding



ENHANCED FARE COLLECTION

Off-board fare collection using ticket vending machines, card readers, and other tools at stations allows passengers to board without waiting in line to pay their fares.



BRANDING

Unique designs make rapid transit vehicles and stations more visible, raising awareness by distinguishing rapid transit from other transit services.



TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY

Intersection improvements including transit signal priority (TSP) allow transit vehicles to bypass congestion. TSP does this by giving transit vehicles longer green lights.



ENHANCED STATIONS

Rapid transit stations include raised platforms, ticket vending machines, real-time arrival information, larger shelters, and other passenger amenities.



DEDICATED RUNNING WAYS

Transit-only right-of-way separates transit from traffic, and may be painted to increase visibility.



HIGH-CAPACITY VEHICLES

Larger transit vehicles provide more capacity, more doors, and lower floors for easier boarding and alighting.



Example from Richmond, VA



Example from
Cleveland, OH



Project Purpose and Goals

...To provide fast, reliable, and frequent transit service connecting Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland's major transportation and/or activity centers.

1. Improve Mobility
2. Grow Transit Ridership
3. Support Sustainable Growth
4. Enhance Connectivity
5. Focus on Equity
6. Provide New Opportunities
7. Focus on Practical and Implementable Solutions

Recommended LPA

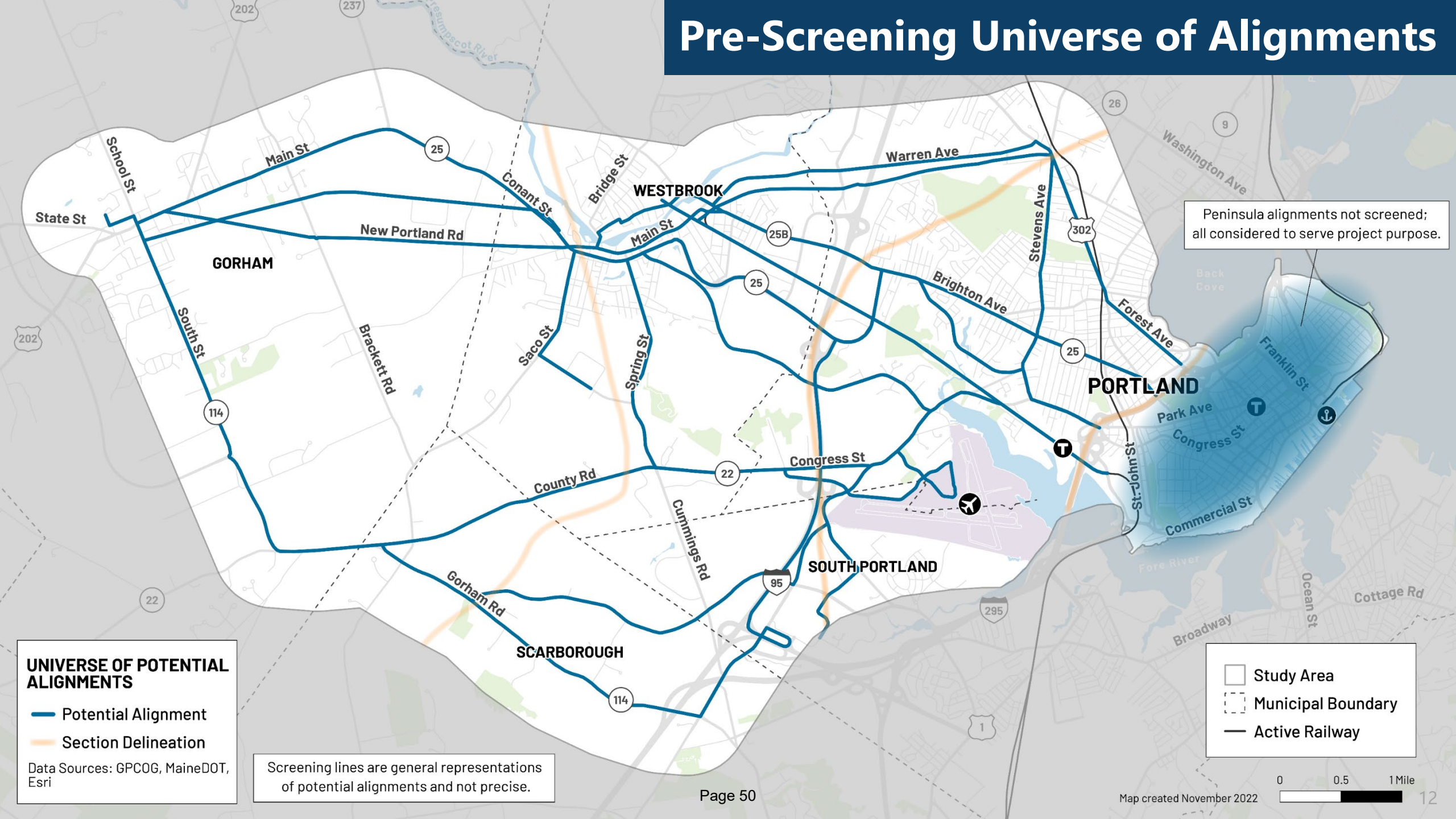
A "Locally Preferred Alternative"

The outcome of this study is a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that can be advanced through various federal funding programs.

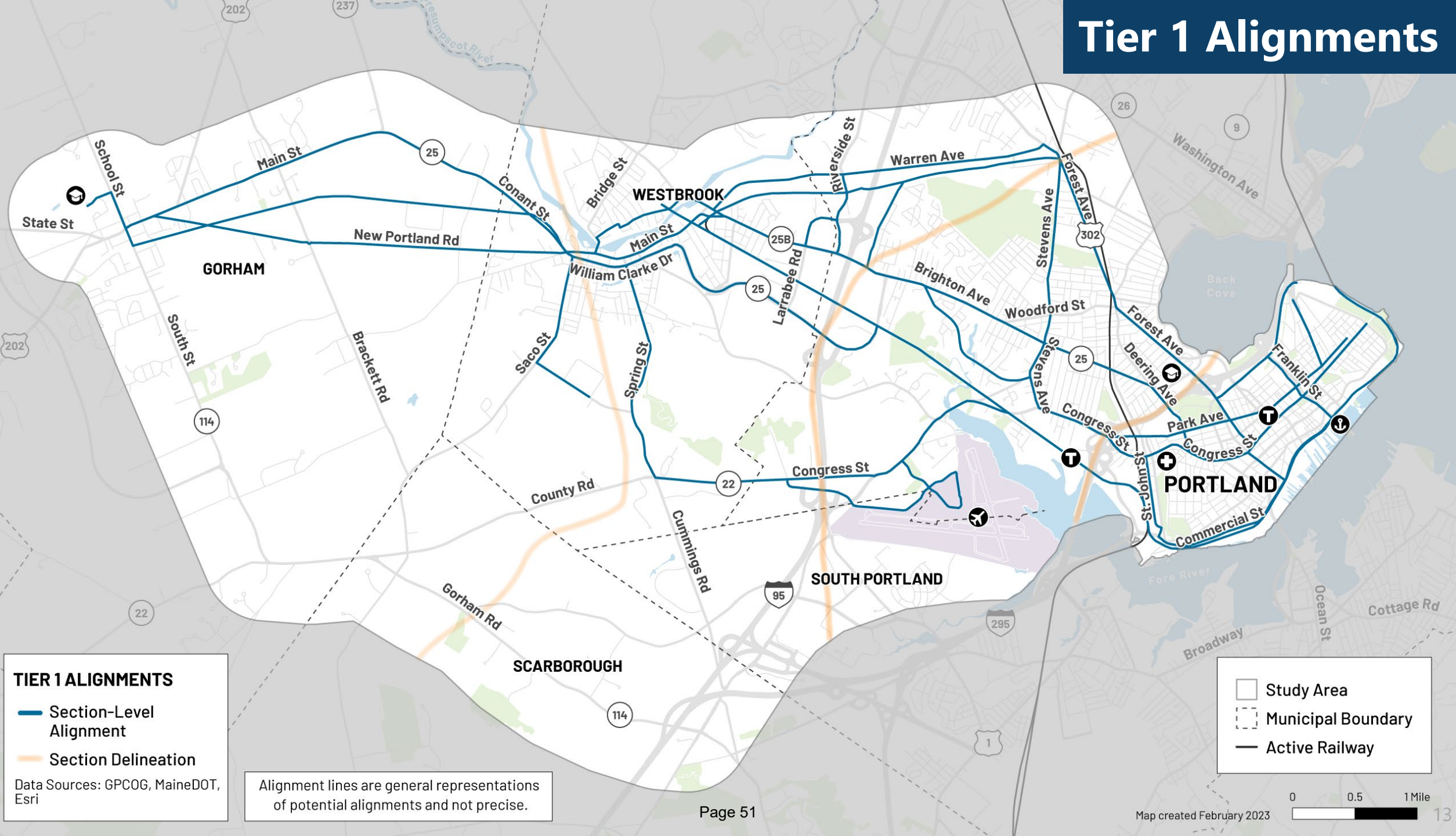
Two Key Components:

- 1. Mode: Bus Rapid Transit**
- 2. Alignment: Alternative 1—Brighton Ave**

Pre-Screening Universe of Alignments



Tier 1 Alignments



TIER 1 ALIGNMENTS

- Section-Level Alignment
- Section Delineation

Data Sources: GPCOG, MaineDOT, Esri

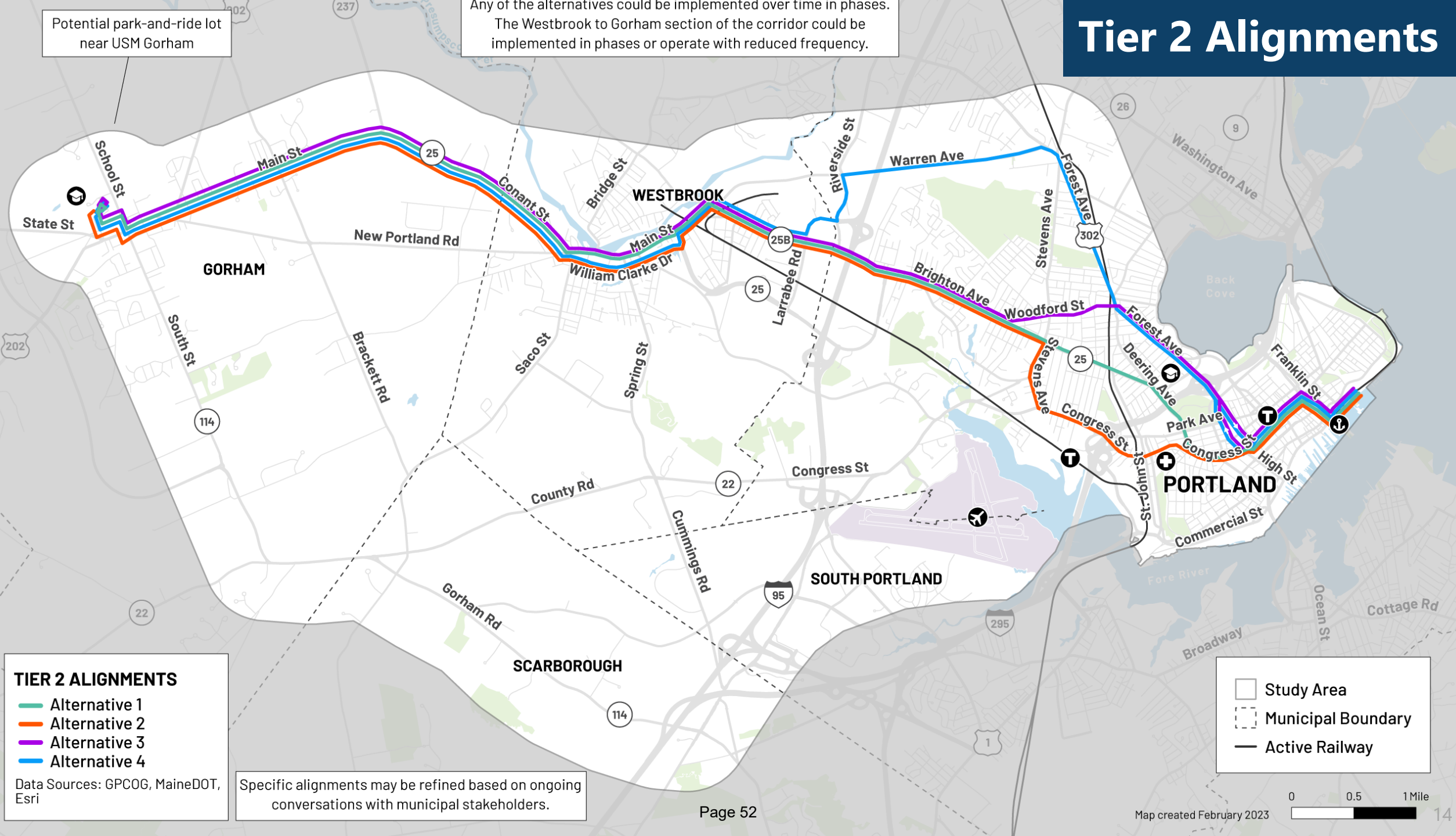
Alignment lines are general representations of potential alignments and not precise.

- Study Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Active Railway

Tier 2 Alignments

Any of the alternatives could be implemented over time in phases.
The Westbrook to Gorham section of the corridor could be implemented in phases or operate with reduced frequency.

Potential park-and-ride lot near USM Gorham



TIER 2 ALIGNMENTS

- Alternative 1
- Alternative 2
- Alternative 3
- Alternative 4

Data Sources: GPCOG, MaineDOT, Esri

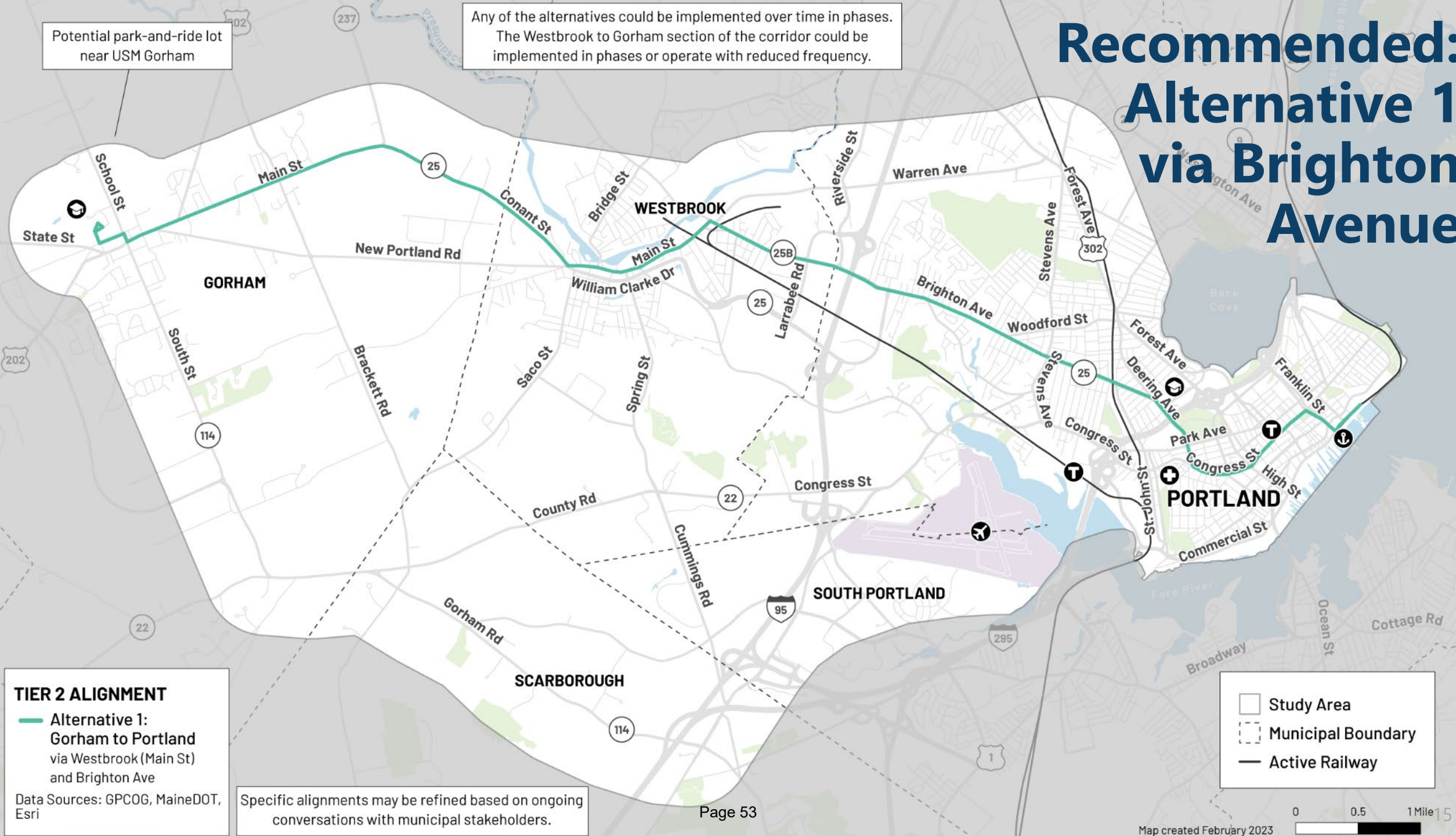
Specific alignments may be refined based on ongoing conversations with municipal stakeholders.

- Study Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Active Railway

Recommended: Alternative 1 via Brighton Avenue

Any of the alternatives could be implemented over time in phases.
The Westbrook to Gorham section of the corridor could be implemented in phases or operate with reduced frequency.

Potential park-and-ride lot
near USM Gorham



TIER 2 ALIGNMENT

Alternative 1:
Gorham to Portland
via Westbrook (Main St)
and Brighton Ave

Data Sources: GPCOG, MaineDOT, Esri

Specific alignments may be refined based on ongoing conversations with municipal stakeholders.

Study Area

Municipal Boundary

Active Railway

Recommended Service Characteristics

Mode: **Bus Rapid Transit**, operated by GP Metro

Alignment: **Alternative 1—Brighton Ave.**

High-frequency service so riders don't need to consult a schedule

Portland to Westbrook every 10 minutes

Westbrook to Gorham every 20 minutes

Transit priority infrastructure along nearly half the route

Bus lanes—Queue jumps—Transit signal priority

Enhanced stops and stations with high-quality amenities and bike/ped access

Why Alternative 1?

- **Highest ridership**, serving both USM Portland and Maine Medical Center.
- **Tied for the shortest travel time** based on length, speed limit, transit priority potential, signal delay, and dwell time at proposed stations.
- **More opportunity for transit-only lanes** based on estimated right-of-way widths.
- **Lowest increase in systemwide operating cost** based on assumed impacts of the service on the existing local transit network.
- **Tied for having the best equity outcomes** based on existing travel flows of low-income people and people without a vehicle.
- **Saves riders the most time-value** based on travel times, projected ridership, and rider demographics.
- **Second-highest opportunity for transit-oriented development**, primarily near Maine Medical Center.

Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

Broad and Robust Outreach



516
Pop-Up Event Attendees



72
Virtual Meeting Attendees



53
In-Person Meeting Attendees



1,667
Survey Respondents

2,308
Total People Engaged



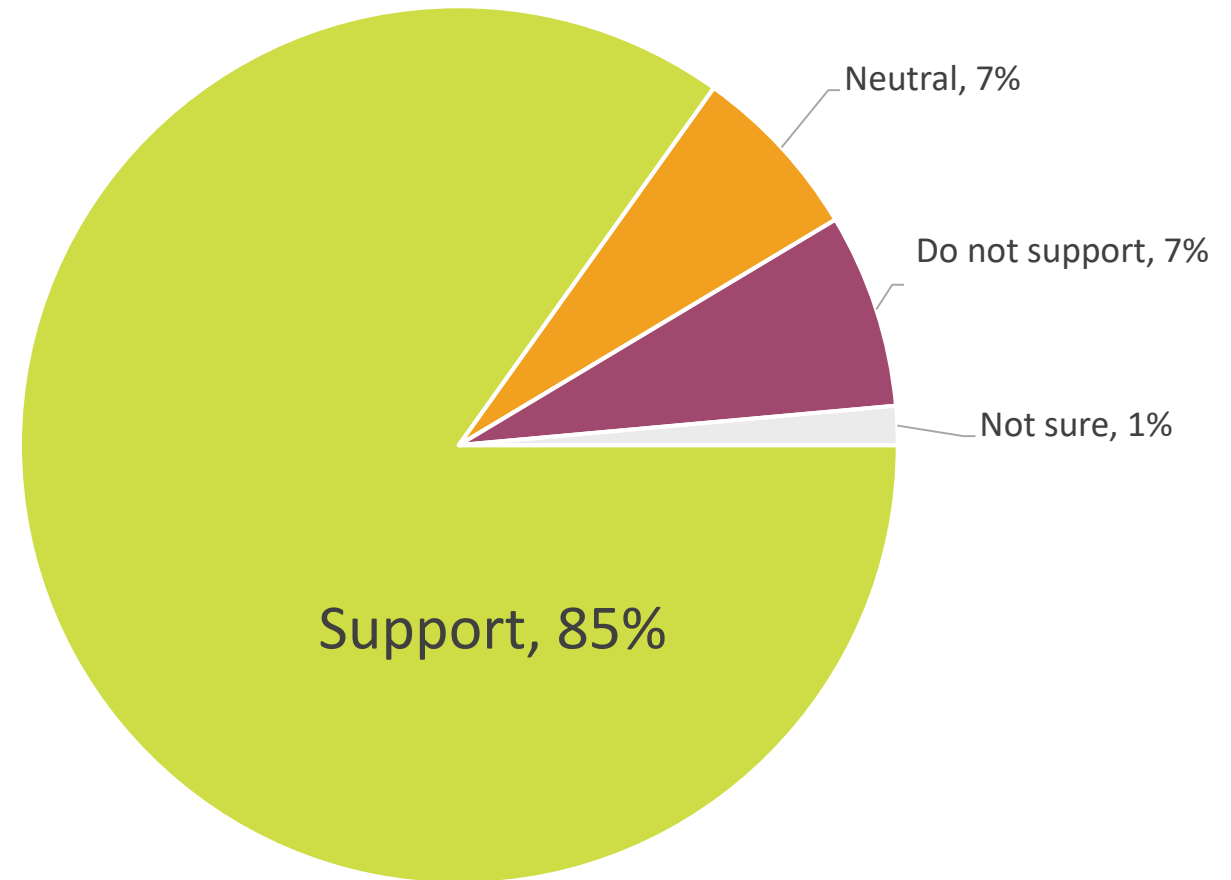
Broad and Robust Outreach Generated Broad Support

Final survey

(over 600 respondents):

85 percent indicated support
for the recommended service.

How Much Do You Support The
Recommended Service?



Project Advisory Group

Key stakeholder groups helped guide our decision making.

USM

Maine Medical Center

Portland Trails

Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

Portland Housing Authority

and more...

The group convened at major project milestones to hear updates and provide guidance to the project team.

Other Key Stakeholders

Close coordination throughout the project with Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland staffs, USM, MaineDOT, and GP Metro.

Initial project scoping

Consultant selection

Project advisory group meetings

Developing conceptual design parameters

Final review of the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative

Identification of key issues to be considered in preliminary design

Preliminary Design and a Funding Strategy

Next Step: Preliminary Design

- This study identifies an LPA: **mode** and **alignment**
- The next phase will address key questions, such as:
 - Locations for bus stops/shelters?
 - Locations and levels of bus priority treatments (e.g., dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority)?
 - Impacts of transit features on other modes of travel and parking?
- We're working with Gorham, Westbrook, Portland, USM, MaineDOT, and GP Metro to develop a scope of work for Preliminary Design.

Funding Preliminary Design

Conceptual Planning

LPA and any additional planning work

Preliminary Design (30%)

Traffic analysis, right-of-way needs, utility conflicts, environmental clearance, etc.

Implementation

Final design & construction

In pursuit of funding, we seek letters of support from Gorham, Westbrook, and Portland councils and/or subsets of councils.

*USM has submitted a letter of support.

How Can You Help?

- Provide questions, comments, and feedback.
- Affirm support for the study's "locally preferred alternative" (LPA) with bus rapid transit as the preferred mode and Alternative 1 as the preferred alignment (or route), acknowledging the project's next phase will further develop the LPA.
- Provide a letter of support for the next phase of the project.

Thank You!



Andrew Clark, aclark@gpcog.org

Christopher Chop, cchop@gpcog.org

RapidTransitForME.org

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

Ethan Hipple

Director Parks, Recreation, Facilities

Alex Marshall

Parks Director



Proposal: Dedicate Lowell St Parcel as a Park, and name it Thomas Park

The Lowell St parcel is a 0.4 acre parcel of City-owned land bounded by Lowell St, Congress St and Burnham St. It is adjacent to the former Denny's and the north-bound Exit 5 on 295. Until a recent census and redistricting, the parcel was located in District 3, but now lies in District 2. The land is currently city-owned, is un-designated, and is not currently listed as a Park in Chapter 18 of City Code. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities currently maintains it as green space, mows the lawn, and cares for the Linden trees on site.

The property was donated to the City in 1913 (sold for \$1) by the Thomas family. The deed contains language that states that the property shall remain as public green space or it will revert to the heirs of the family. We are in possession of copies of City Reports from 1928 that refer to Thomas Square as a designated City Park. However, Chapter 18 of City code no longer lists Thomas Square or Thomas Park as a City Park, and no staff members recall it being a designated City park, or having the Council remove the designation as a City park. Regardless, the City continues to care for the space as public green space, so is in compliance with the deed restrictions.

In February of 2023, descendants of the Thomas family reached out to the City to ask that the parcel be restored as an officially dedicated park, and that it be named Thomas Park, in honor of the family that gave it to the City. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities spent multiple months considering the request and vetting the documentation, consulting with Corporation Counsel, GIS and Archives Division, and our Transportation and Engineering Division at Public Works. We have held numerous meetings with the family and District 3 Councilor Phillips.

Dedicating this parcel as a park would further the Council goal of preserving green space in a historically low-income, CDBG eligible neighborhood, and would further the City's goals of providing green spaces within a 10 minute walk of all residences.

As the City is already maintaining this space, the cost of maintenance will be negligible. There are no plans for major capital improvements at this time. Park improvements in the future would consist of picnic tables, signage, and park seating, which would be covered in the existing Parks Operating Budget. The neighborhood association is currently funding installation of tree lighting.

After this 9 month review process, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities supports this proposal to dedicate this land as a park, and to name it Thomas Park in recognition of the family that gifted this public space to the people of Portland.



Fore River Parkway
Congress St. Portland...

HP Hood

Park Ave

CRM Works

La Quinta Inn & Suites
by Wyndham Portland
4.1 ★ 2-star hotel

Burnham St

Burnham St

Burnham St

Matthew A. Thees, OD

Rise Church
Portland (ACNA)
Church in Portland,
Maine - Discover A...

Head Light Homes

Artopa

Cherry St

Congress St

Apple Organics
Spray Tans

Running Tide



**Thomas Square Park
1913 to Present**

Park Description:

Thomas Square Park, founded December 19, 1913, located at 64 Burnham Street, between Lowell, Burnham and Congress Streets, Triangle shape, 17, 176.56 square feet . Thomas Park perimeter is surrounded by a ring of nine Linden trees.

Park Commission Reports list Thomas Square in 1913, 1922 reports, showing the park size was.39 acres. The 1914 Richard Atlas map shows the park was 17,176. Square feet.

Documents:

1. **Dec. 19, 1913 Deed:** Estate of Thomas Elias - Thomas Park Gift to City of Portland

2. **1914 Richard Atlas:** Plate 7

Alternative Title - Libby Town, West End (western section) .

This map shows the park, 17,176 square feet. The name is not shown.

Park Commission Reports:

3. **1915** Park Commission Report, Thomas Square

4. **1922** Park Commission Report 10th Annual

5. **1923** Park Commission Report, Thomas Square reference .39 acres

6. **1926** Park Commission Report,

7. **1940?** Portland City Guide, Lowell Street Playground, Congress, Burnham, and Lowell Streets, is a municipal playground with a supervised play program; regular playground equipment is available. Portland Guide, Recreational Facilities section, page xLi (n 44) -

Link: <https://archive.org/details/portlandcityguid00unse/page/n43/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater&q=lowell>

News Articles/Info:

Jan. 14, 1772 Elias Thomas was born - Died August 3, 1872 , 100 years old

April 17, 1869 - William and Elias Thomas go to court due to a fight provoked when called liar. Portland Press Herald, Page 3

August 9, 1872 (For the press.) Correction

Elias Thomas. Mr. Editor: — As there are some inaccuracies in the notice of Elias Thomas in your paper of this morning, I enclose you a sketch of his life as drawn by the late Honorable William Willis. Etc Portland Daily Press, page 3

May 11, 1875 Elias Thomas & Co., Flour, Groceries and Provisions, 86 Commercial Street. Thomas' Block Portland. Ad Portland Daily Press, page 3

May 10, 1890 Some of Portland's Venerable Citizens, Portland Daily Press, page 5

Nov. 23, 1896 "William W. Thomas - Death of An Aged and Prominent Citizen, 93 Years of Active Life." The Portland Daily Press, page 3

Nov. 30, 1896 Mr. Thomas's Will. He Gives \$50,000 in Public Bequest .

A Large Portion of the Property Place in Trust - Elias and Hon. W.W. Thomas as Made Trustees and Executors - Many Charitable Institutions Remembered.

The will of the late William W. Thomas was presented for probate Saturday....Witnessed by Byron D. Verrill, Henry C. Small and Fred E. Alen , Continued ...signed December 22, 1894 ..Portland Daily Press, page 3

Jan. 29, 1897 Funeral of General Thomas. Address Delivered by Rev. Mr. Hack of the Second Parish, Portland Daily Press, page 3

Sept. 23, 1902 Obituary Mrs. Elias Thomas, Jr. Eleanor Libby Holt's parents were Julia Libby & William Holt. Her grandfather was Harrison J. Libby. Married to Mr. Thomas last July 16th, 1902 or 1901?

July 14, 1903 Obituary Mrs. Elias Thomas. Daughter of Hon. S. P. Brown in DC, after marrying Mr. Thomas she moved to Portland. Survived by her husband, a daughter, Mrs. Richard C Payson, and two sons Elias Thomas, Jr and William W. Thomas.

March 7, 1904 Social Gossip - Mr. Elias Thomas, Jr., is at the Trochta, Havana, Cuba. Evening Express, page 3

January 11?, 1906 Elias Thomas, Jr & Dorothea Perkins 2nd Wedding Reception at Danforth Street.

January 14, 1906 "Gathering for Elias & Dorothea's wedding reception at Danforth Street house". Portland Sunday Telegram, page 10

1909 Elias Thomas, Jr Born - Died May 1995. Parents were Elias & Dorothea Perkins Thomas.

1910 Factory designed by John Calvin Stevens, on corner of Lowell & Cherry Streets, 1932 Corbin -Holmes Shoe Co. employs 520; Homes, Stickney & Walker Shoe Company; Holmes Stickney, Inc Shoe & Company,

October 19, 1913 Sunday Morning (Regarding Death of Mr. Elias Thomas) Commercial Portland was dealt, a hard blow, and its social life sustained a serious loss in the death of Mr. Elias Thomas. He was born in this city, and had been prominent in its activities and interest for years, all projects designed for the advancement of his native place and the betterment of its citizenship, found in him, an ardent, champion and sturdy supporter. His business career which extended over a long period was characterized by unusual success. For years, Mr. Thomas was recognized as one of our strong and representative citizens, and one who had contributed his full share to the stability and prosperity of the city. Portland Sunday Telegram, Page 16

April 26, 1914 News paper Ad: "Lot of Land on Congress St., Opposite the new Thomas Park, at West End, lately presented to the City: one of the most desirable locations for residences or for an apartment house, which is actually needed. Lot will be divided and sold 50 x 100 if necessary, or will sell 100 x 100 square feet. W. F. Dresser, 80 Exchange Street."

Portland Sunday Telegram, page 31

June 15, 1918 Elias Thomas, Candidate for State Senate, Evening Express , pg 5

September 5, 1920 Saturday, Sept. 11, Big Day For Children of Portland, Portland Sunday Telegram, page 11

July 23, 1922 - "Portland Playgrounds Care For More Than 19,000 Children" Portland Sunday Telegram, page 10 A

August 29, 1922: " Park Commission Doing Big Job in Adding to City's Beauty. Thomas Square listed. Evening Express, page 12

September 1, 1931 Six-Year-Old Margaret V. Axelson Awarded First Prize In Annual Playground Doll Parade And Pageant, Portland Press Herald, page 2

August 26, 1930 5,000 Watch Annual Doll Carriage Parade Here, Portland Press Herald, page 13

September 28, 1941 Miss Thomas To Be Wedded Oct. 25 In First Parish Church, Portland Press Herald, page 15

August 11, 1948 - "Section of Douglass St. Dump Becomes Modern Playground, Activities Transferred from Lowell Street; Latter Site Will Be Park". Portland Evening Express, Front page

March 27, 1952: City Plans Action To Protect Run Down Fore Street Park. Thomas Square listed. Evening Express, page 40

October 30, 1963 50 Years Ago - William Widgery Thomas was today elected to fill vacancy in the office of president at the Canal National Bank created a few weeks ago by the death of his father, Elias Thomas. Evening Express, page 20

July 6, 1983: Lowell Street Park: Congress and Lowell, at Thomas Square where the Lowell Street Professional Building is located.
Evening Express, page 5

July 6, 1983 Neighborhood Park used heavily . Official list of city's parks..Lowell Street Park. Evening Express, page 5

May 31, 1995 Obituary Elias Thomas, Jr. Survived by wife, Irene Goodson Thomas; 3 daughters, Irene Andrew, Eliza Lawrence, Sally Cushman, and son, Elias III .

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

FINANCIAL

The receipts for Evergreen Cemetery for the year ending

December 24, 1928, are as follows:

Received for Burials	\$5,203.70
Received for Foundations	3,456.40
Received for Care	3,839.14
Received for Grading	1,940.00
Received for Plants	1,302.53
Received for General Labor	1,077.46
	\$16,709.23

Note.—See Auditor's Statement for financial report.

PARK COMMISSION

Report for the Year 1928

TABLE OF AREAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE
PARK COMMISSION

1. Amshouse Valley Lot (northerly side of Park Ave.)	14.18 acres
2. Andrews Square (line and West Sts., west corner)	.05 "
3. Baxter Boulevard	28.83 "
4. Boothby Square (Fore St., at Pearl St.)	.11 "
5. Boothby Square (Woodford St. and Stevens Ave.)	.12 "
6. Caldwell Square (northerly side Park Ave.)	52.70 "
7. Deering's Oaks (northerly side Park Ave.)	53.76 "
8. Eastern Promenade	.46 "
9. Eastern Park (corner Brighton and Deering Aves.)	4.55 "
10. Forest Park (adjoining Eastern Promenade)	1.07 "
11. Fort Allen Park (North St.)	3.51 "
12. Fort Sumner Park (North St.)	.34 "
13. Lincoln Park and Extension and Oakdale Sts.	.10 "
14. Land at Noyes, Longfellow and Oakdale Sts.	.52 "
15. Monument Square (ornamental circle)	23.01 "
16. Noyes Park (Bedford St., Deering and Brighton Aves.)	47.75 "
17. Presumpscott Park (Stevens Ave.)	.39 "
18. Payson Park, The Edward (Ocean Ave.)	.30 "
19. Thomas Square (Congress and Lowell Sts.)	18.91 "
20. Trinity Square (Forest Ave. and Coyle St.)	.19 "
21. Western Promenade	
22. Winslow Park (Forest Ave. and Winslow St.)	262.85 "
Total Area	

ANNUAL REPORT

CEMETERIES CARED FOR OUT OF PARK FUND

1. Eastern Cemetery—Corner of Mountfort St. and Washington Ave.
2. Western Cemetery—Vaughan St.
3. East Deering Cemetery—Presumpscott St.
4. George St. Cemetery—George St. and Ocean Ave.
5. Longfellow Cemetery—Edwards St.
6. North Deering Cemetery—Maplewood St.
7. Riverton Cemetery—Forest Ave.
8. Stroudwater Cemetery—Westbrook St.

IMPROVEMENT EXPENDITURES

The ratio of improvement expenditures to maintenance costs is always of interest. The Portland Park Commission shows a total improvements expenditure of \$48,775.84. This figure includes \$5,000.00 bond payment on the tannery purchase (addition to Deering's Oaks); \$3,000.00 bond payment on the (addition to Deering's Oaks) for the property along Park Avenue and Forest Avenue; \$2,000.00, a final payment on the land at Deering Avenue, Brighton Avenue and Bedford Street, purchased several years ago from the Deering heirs. The improvement figure (less above bond payments), or \$48,775.84, reflects the following betterments in the Park System.

Amshouse Lott (\$116.87). Filling to grade the area which is to serve as an athletic field.

Baxter Boulevard (asphalt-macadam construction) (\$27,581.34). This is the largest item of improvement accomplished by the Commission in 1928. This work is a continuation of the macadam construction begun at the easterly end of Washington Ave. in 1927. The work was started late in April and, in spite of the worst weather conditions, was completed July 3rd. The area improved was 11,855 square yards. The macadam cost was \$25,961.34. The unit cost was \$2.23 per square yard. Imported trap rock was used in the wearing surface. It cost \$2.55 per ton f. o. b. Portland. The unloading and hauling was done by contract by the Morrill Coal and Wood Company, at \$.75 per ton. The base course

REPORT OF PARK COMMISSION, 1923

ORGANIZATION

CARROLL S. CHAPMAN, *Chairman ex-officio*

FRANKLIN R. REDLON

WILLIAM O. THOMPSON

SETH W. CLARK

WILLIAM J. DOUGHERTY, *Sec'y-Treas.*FRANK C. GOODRICH, *Superintendent*

TABLE OF AREAS OF PARKS, SQUARES, ETC.

Designation.	Area.
Andrews Square,	.05 acres
Alms-house lot,	14.18 "
Baxter Boulevard,	28.83 "
Boothby Square,	.11 "
Deerings Oaks,	51.22 "
Eastern Promenade,	59.20 "
Fessenden Park,	.46 "
Fort Allen Park,	45.55 "
Fort Sumner Park,	1.07 "
Lincoln Park,	3.51 "
Monument Square,	.10 "
Presumpscot Park,	28.01 "
Edward Payson Park,	47.75 "
Thomas Square,	.30 "
Trinity Square,	.30 "
Western Promenade,	18.91 "
Winslow Park,	.10 "
Total,	258.83 "

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

RECEIPTS	
Balance from year 1922,	\$.58
Appropriation (1923),	100,954.73
Receipts from miscellaneous sources,	3,382.10
Total,	\$104,937.41
EXPENDITURES	
Alms-house lot,	\$ 373.01
Baxter Boulevard,	24,915.46
Cemeteries, Deering section,	125.78
Park Commission cottage and greenhouse,	6,906.75
Deerings Oaks,	6,761.12
Eastern Promenade and Fort Allen Park,	2,614.97
Eastern Cemetery,	631.40
Edward Payson Park,	4,092.49
Forestry,	3,023.26
General,	2,592.90
Land payment,	5,799.99
Lincoln Park,	1,952.02
Motor transportation,	2,393.22
Office, salaries and insurance,	4,853.89
Presumpscot Park,	90.00
Recreation Commission (12½% of Park Dept. appropriation and last quarter annual payment carried forward from 1922,)	15,587.40
Small parks and squares,	1,751.47
Schools,	28.00
Snow and ice,	2,186.50
Stable,	1,690.68
Trinity Square,	99.25
Tools and equipment,	1,423.22
Western Promenade,	2,218.24
Western Cemetery,	2,549.49
Winslow Park,	193.51
Total,	\$104,004.62

From: Herb Adams <hadams@smccme.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2023 9:55 PM
To: Carol Schiller; elias@exitkeyrealestate.com; Nick Noyes
Subject: More on Thomas Park

Some research time in the Library today reveals the following. When I am in my SMCC office I will scan all of these out to you for our case. This is what I have :

1. 1922 City Report -- Parks Commission report notes this is the 10th anniversary of the 1913 creation of the Portland Parks Commission.

Hence, the donation of Thomas Park back in 1913 was one of the VERY FIRST donations of a new city park under the then-new commission and would have been known to everyone.

2. 1923 City Report -- pg. 128 clearly lists "Thomas Square , .39 acres " as one of the city's 258.83 acres of holdings (And it is not the smallest -- those are AndrewsSquare and Monument Square)

3. 1915 City Report -- pg. 440, as of December 31, 1915 , lists Thomas Square as .39 acres in the 181.97 acres of 14 total city parks and public grounds (This is the first mention of this brand-new park I can find in City Reports. Obviously everyone would have known about it .)

Do we know the date of the gift of Thomas Square in 1913 ? That way I can check the 3 city papers for any mention of it.

All this just adds validity to the city's acknowledgment of the existence of this small but pleasant piece of the city.

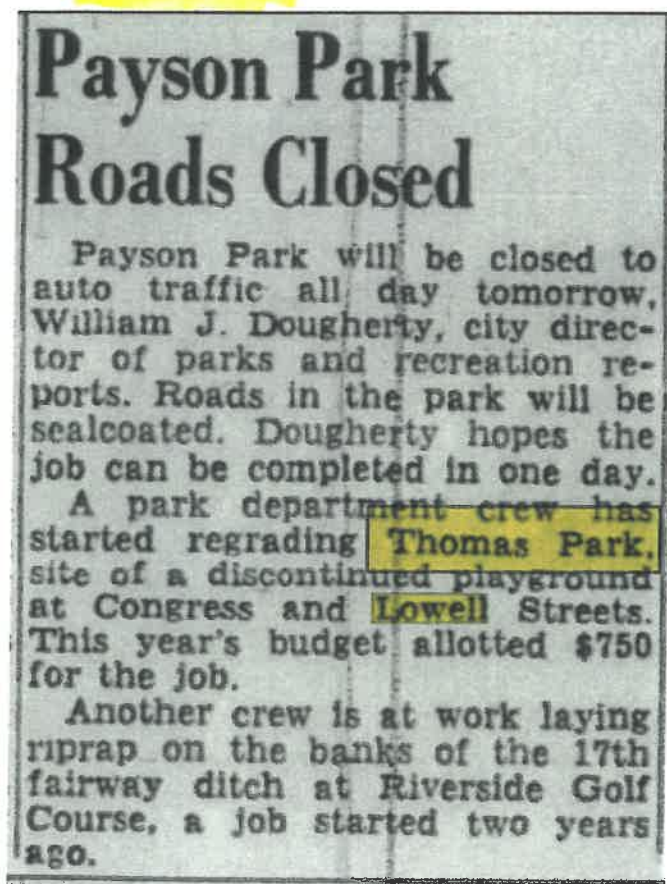
More to follow soon as time allows.
Best Wishes to All

From: S. Nick Zaccaro <snzaccaro@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 10:25 PM
To: ethomas@metrocast.net
Cc: Carol Schiller
Subject: Re: Thomas Park - introductions & research

I just found a reference to the "Thomas Park" name as late as 1952.

Evening Express
28 Aug 1952, Thu · Page 15

✂ CI



On Thu, Feb 23, 2023 at 10:14 PM S. Nick Zaccaro <snzaccaro@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello Elias,

I just noticed the below email to Earle seems to have only been sent to me. I wanted to make sure you also sent it to him.

I've attached the articles Carol referenced which list Thomas/Lowell Park as an official park. I believe at least Parks Director Alex Marshall has seen these clippings.

Nick

LOT OF LAND ON CONGRESS ST., OP-
posite the new Thomas Park. at West
End, lately presented to the City; one of
th most desirable locations for resi-
dences or for an apartment house, which
is actually needed. Lot will be divided
and sold 50x100 if necessary, or will sell
100x100 square feet. W. F. DRESSER, 80
Exchange street. 24 6t Fel

Green Space

used heavily

Official list of city's parks...

There are probably a lot more parks in Portland than you thought. Here is the official list of city parks, their location and facilities.

Back Cove Park: Preble Street Extension and Interstate 295, soccer field. Back Cove is a lookout site for migrating waterfowl.

Barrows Park: The wedge of green past Vannah Avenue as you pull onto Baxter Boulevard.

Bayside Park: Fox and Anderson streets; playground, basketball court, baseball diamonds, tennis courts.

Baxter Wood: Stevens, Forest and Hartley trails.

Pearl, Federal, Congress and the Franklin Arterial, benches.

Lowell Street Park: Congress and Lowell, at Thomas Square where the Lowell Street Professional building is located.

Longfellow Park: between Longfellow, Noyes and Oakdale streets, cement benches, flower bed.

Martin's Point Park: Land set aside at Marine hospital which will get a walkway and picnic area sometime this summer.

North Street Park: Next to old Jack Elementary School; playground.

Oakleigh Park: near the Boulevard, softball field, generally

Section Of Douglass St. Dump Becomes Modern Playground

Activities Transferred From Lowell Street; Latter Site Will Be Park

Children in the area around Congress Street and Park Avenue had a new playground and new equipment today.

Richard S. Westgate, director of recreation for the City of Portland, announced that playground activities were transferred this morning from the small and poorly located playground at Congress and Lowell Streets to a much larger area at the Congress Street end of Douglass Street.

This area, on what was the Douglass Street dump, has been graded, and an area 330 feet by 260 feet has been made into a playground and softball field. The old Lowell Street playground will become a small park according to William J. Dougherty, director of parks and recreation.

Westgate said the new playground is nearly five times as large as the old, but the principal

advantage is that it is away from the heavy Congress Street traffic and is therefore much safer for the children.

Miss Phyllis Wheeler, who has been playground leader at Lowell Street will supervise activities at the new playgrounds.

Westgate said new equipment has been installed at the new playground, where the children will have the customary swings, slides, teeter-boards and sand-boxes.

The softball field will be an additional facility the children will like, he said, but hardball will not be permitted.

Dougherty said this is the first step in the ultimate development of a 23-acre tract into a large recreational area, a development it has been estimated would cost \$165,000. He declared the new
(Continued on Page 18, 3rd Col.)

Elias Thomas III
Post Office Box 7
Acton, Maine 04001-0007

February 8, 2023

Honorable Kate Snyder

City of Portland

389 Congress Street

Portland, Maine 04101

(207) 874-8941

ksnyder@portlandmaine.gov

Ethan Hipple

Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department

City of Portland, ME

212 Canco Rd, Suite A

Portland, Maine 04103

207-808-5400

ehipple@portlandmaine.gov

Dear Mayor Snyder & Mr. Hipple:

My family gave the City of Portland a generous gift, Thomas Park. I am the living descendant of the Elias Thomas Estate. We are extremely proud of our heritage and many contributions our family has made to the City of Portland. This letter is written requesting the following:

- 1. Correct Lowell Street Park name to Thomas Park name. Our family gave the City of Portland this generous land gift located at 64 Burnham Street. It is a triangle shaped park comprised of 17,176.56 square feet, located between Congress Street, Burnham Street and Lowell Street. Thomas Park's perimeter is outlined by a ring of nine Linden trees that are evenly spaced. Please see below deed dated December 19, 1913 for your review. Thomas Park is 110**

years old city park, known to our family as Thomas Park. We can find no evidence that the council ever voted to change the name, but historic references confirms the name it was given, Thomas Park. We want this error corrected to Thomas Park.

2. According to Portland Property Search the original park size was reduced from 17,176.56 square feet to 12,447 square feet. We were never notified about size reduction. We want the correction of the park name and it's preservation of the land for the purpose for which it was given, a City park for public use.

3. Request that you correct the City's maps and all public information that the City disseminates about the city's public parks to include Thomas Park name, install City of Portland Park sign identifying the park as "Thomas Park" founded in 1913.

4. Respect the family's interest as a stakeholder in any planning for the use of the property by consultations and the sharing of any proposed future plans for this property with us.

It is our desire to work closely with you and the City of Portland to correct these errors.

If you have any questions, please email: elias@exitkeyrealestate.com.

We look forward to your response and want this rectified as soon as possible.

Could you please outline action plan and timeline to fulfill our requests.

We greatly appreciate your swift response.

Sincerely yours,

Elias Thomas, III

Cc. Danielle West, Interim City Manager, City Manager's Office

(207) 874-8689, citymanager@portlandmaine.gov

Michael Goldman, Acting Corporation Counsel

(207) 874-8480, mig@portlandmaine.gov

Know all Men by these Presents, That

We, Elias Thomas, William Widgery Thomas, and Helen Thomas Payson all of Portland in the County of Cumberland and State of Maine, being all the children and devisees under the will of Elias Thomas, late of said Portland, deceased,

in consideration of one dollar and other considerations, to us said City of Portland, a body politic and corporate, created and existing under the laws of the State of Maine, paid by

the receipt whereof We do hereby acknowledge, do hereby remise, release, bargain, sell and convey, and forever quit-claim unto the said City of Portland and its successors, a certain lot or parcel of land situated in said Portland near "Libby's Corner" so called, and bounded and described as follows: viz:—Beginning at a point where the northerly side line of Congress Street is intersected by the westerly side line of Lowell Street, thence running west-erly by Congress Street, eight and fifty-three one hundredths (8.53) feet, more or less, to an angle in said Congress Street, thence north westerly by Congress Street, two hundred and sixty-three and ninety-five one hundredths (263.95) feet more or less, to Burnham Street, thence easterly by Burnham Street, one hundred and forty-three and eighth-nine one hundredths (143.89) feet, more or less to Low-ell Street, thence southerly by Lowell Street, two hundred thirty-and thirty-two one hundredths (230.32) feet, more or less, to the point of beginning, containing seventeen thousand one hundred and seventy-six and fifty-six one hundredths (17,176.56) square feet, of land, more or less Being the first parcel of land des-cribed in a deed from Elizabeth Pullen to said Elias Thomas, dated March 26, 1901 and recorded in Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, Book 702, Page 90. This conveyance is made upon and subject to the following express conditions, to wit:— 1. Said land shall be kept and maintained either as an open green, a public park, or a public playground, and shall be used for no other purpose. 2. No building or permanent structure of any kind (fountains, fences and statues excepted) shall be erected or placed upon said land. No act of Legislature of the State of Maine, authorizing said City of Portland, or its successors, to construct public buildings upon public grounds, or upon this particular land, shall be effectual to avoid the foregoing condition. Upon breach of either of the foregoing conditions, this deed shall immediately become null, void, and of no effect, and said land shall thereupon revert to said grantors or their heirs. Said Grantor, further stipulate and said City of Portland by accepting this conveyance covenants and agrees for itself and its successors, that if said land or any part thereof shall at any time hereafter be taken for any purpose by process of eminent domain, said grantors or their heirs shall be entitled to all damages paid, or to be paid, for said taking, and shall have all such rights and remedies in relation thereto as they would have if they were absolute owners of said land.—

To Have and to Hold the same, together with all the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging, to the said City of Portland and its successors, forever. heirs and assigns forever; And-----do covenant with the said heirs and assigns, that-----will warrant and-----defend the premises to-----the said-----heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons claiming by, through or under me.

In Witness Whereof We the said Elias Thomas, William Widgery Thomas and Helen Thomas Payson, and Dorothea Brayton Thomas, wife of the said Elias Thomas, Mary Cate Thomas, wife of the said William Widgery Thomas, and Richard C. Payson, husband of the said Helen Thomas Payson, joining in this deed as Grantors and relinquishing and conveying all rights in the above described premises, have hereunto set our hand and seal this nineteenth day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirteen.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in presence of
A.K. Butler. to E.T., W.W.T. & H.T.P. Elias Thomas Seal.
Eva G. Tarbox to D.B.T. Dorothea Brayton Thomas Seal.
Charlotte Thomas. William Widgery Thomas Seal.
Annie L.P. Harrison. May Cate Thomas Seal.
Helen Thomas Payson Seal.
Richard C. Payson Seal.

State of Maine, Cumberland, ss. December 19, 1913

Personally appeared the above named, Elias, Thomas, William Widgery Thomas, and Helen Thomas Payson and acknowledged the above instrument to be their free act and deed.

BEFORE ME, A.K. Butler. Justice of the Peace.

RECEIVED February 4, 1914, at 1 o'clock 40 m. P. M., and recorded according to the original.

TO : Portland Parks Commission
RE: Confirmation of "Thomas Park "

ATTN : Please add to packet for meeting 4 January 2024

2 January 2024

Dear Parks Commission :

This letter is to repeat my support for recognizing "Thomas Park ", Portland, under its proper name, and to add it to the list of city parks protected under City Code Chapter 18.

As one of the advocates in 2014 who drew up the first list of parks and open spaces to protect under city law, I can attest that we advocates knew that names, clarifications, and changes would be made to this important list, and always said so at the time. This is one of those times.

I have previously provided to Director Hipple my list of research indicating that "Thomas Park " was one of the very first small parks donated to the City in 1913, and extracts from Portland City Directories showing that the parcel was officially known to all as "Thomas Park " in following years. This research should be in your packets.

BUT – in times like today, the modern question is : " What's in a name ? Why Care now? Were these "Thomas " people the Real Deal ? "

The answer is FOR SURE – the Thomas family was the Real Deal. In many ways – in generosity, public spirit, far-sightedness, and an open heart for others – in the 19th Century they preceeded the generous Baxters of Portland in the 20th Century.

The Thomas family were merchants who were Abolitionists long before that was fashionable, or safe. Their mansion at the corner of Congress and India Street was known as "Cozy Corner. " There, Charlotte Thomas (sister of the first Elias Thomas) kept an open door to all in need ; she was known to all Portland as "Aunt Charlotte. "

A guest at her dinner table was likely to sit by Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, or Susan B. Anthony on one side and on the other a hungry homeless person who knocked on her door.

Page 2

Long before their public gifts included parks , their quiet gifts to the Widow's Wood Society, the City Milk Fund, and many more, warmed winter homes, fed children, bought shoes and found jobs for those in need.

The Thomas family never asked for public thanks. Proof of this is attached.

PLEASE NOTE : you are the first people to see this in Two Hundred Years.

In the War of 1812, the Portland privateer "The Dash " was lost at sea with all hands. One crewman was a young African American named William Anderson who left behind a widow and an infant son. Quietly, Elias Thomas took the son under his guardianship, supported the widow, educated the son, and set him up in business. Thomas sought no publicity for this. It was lost to history until 2023, when research on the Dash turned it up. (See attached, crewman # 2)

Deeds speak louder than words ; words are often lost, and forgotten. But such a deed as this – saving a grieving widow and providing a path for an orphan of color – speak loudly about Elias Thomas.

The Thomas mansion was lost in the Great Fire of 1866. The Thomas story has sadly faded into history. There are no monuments to the Thomas family – only memories and a small city park they gave to future times.

The park is a small thing, but represents so much more. The name represents the spirit of faith in the future that we must hope Portlanders still believe in, and still will act like we have that faith.

For these reasons, and more, I believe the name of " Thomas Park " should be confirmed. Thank you for taking this under consideration .

Sincerely,

Herb Adams *hadams@smccme.edu*

Adjunct Professor Social Sciences
SMCC -- 2 Fort Road
So. Portland, ME 04106

Roster of men lost on the Dash
(Ron Romano, May 2023 update)

			age	source	cenotaph at	Find-a-grave	notes	on Dash?
1	Adams	Robert	22	Adams: <i>A Genealogical History of Robert Adams of Newbury, Mass...</i> (1900). page 120			Adams: "He was a mariner, and unm(arry)ed; was lost on the privateer <i>Dash</i> 21 Jan. 1815."	very likely
2	Anderson	William		[1820 Pension files]			[He was a Seaman. His widow Sophia Anderson applied for pension renewal. The in 1829, Sarah Small applied for a pension extension for William Jr., was was under 16 in 1825 and under guardianship of Elias Thomas] Research note: William certainly African American. A vital record of marriage is found in 1811 Portland for William Anderson and Saviah Gerrish, both of whom were Black. (Saviah may have been a poor transcription for Sopria). Then in 1829 Sarah Small partioned for continued pension for William Jr., who was then under the guardianship of Elias Thomas. There was a 40-year-old Black woman named Sarah Small living in Portland then, and Elias Thomas was a well-to-do merchant in the city, and while he was white, not Black, he is celebrated to this day as an Abolitionist.	confirmed
3	Bennett	Job Jr.	41	[1820 Pension files] Sinnott: <i>Sinnott Genealogy</i> (1910), page 55			[He was a Seaman. His widow Anna Bennett applied for pension renewal. Attestation letter from Josiah W. Mitchell noted that she was living in Freeport with her children at the time.] Sinnott: "Job Bennett, Jr. was an ardent patriot and was lost on the privateer <i>Dash</i> of Freeport, Me., in 1815"	confirmed
4	Bennett	John		Thurston & Cross: <i>Three Centuries of Freeport, Maine</i> (1940), pp 62 - 64		yes [lost at sea]	The original findagrave listing for US Navy Seaman John Bennett in 1815 noted that he died on the Portsmouth NH based <i>Wasp</i> (left port July 1814 and never heard from again) but gave no details proving he was aboard. Thurston & Cross include him as one of 16 Freeport men on the <i>Dash</i> (but do not list Job Bennett Jr. who is proven to have been on the <i>Dash</i> ...)	need more info
5	Cobb	Smith W.	22	Stone reads "Lost at sea, Jan. 1815"	Eastern Cemetery	yes	He was Portland-based, like the <i>Dash</i> , and this was the one ship known to have been lost from Portland that month and year.	very likely
6	Cumpston	Henry	33	[1820 Pension files]	Evergreen Cemetery	yes (JJ)	[He was the Prize Master. His widow Lydia Skelton—married 1803— applied for pension renewal]	confirmed
7	Cushing	Nathaniel	17	Cushing: <i>The Genealogy of the Cushing Family</i> , (1905), page 138			"Lost in the privateer <i>Dash</i> , Feb., 1815"	very likely
8	Dovre (Duer)	John Alexander		[1820 Pension files]			[He was the Cook's Mate. He married Sally Burnison in 1814, and they had no children. She remarried—to Samuel Powers of Portland—in 1817. This surname is under Duer in the marriage records. John was an African American aboard the <i>Dash</i> , as confirmed by his VR of marriage to Sally Burnison.	confirmed
9	Frost	George	40	Secondary listing on stone for wife Sarah, who died 1848. It reads, "...who was lost at sea in Jan. 1815, at age 40"	Portland St. Cemetery, South Berwick	yes	The inscription strongly suggests he was on the <i>Dash</i> . The fact that his wife died 30 years later with a stone in South Berwick does not mean they weren't in Portland in 1815...	very likely
10	Hunnewell	Nathaniel	27	Dole: <i>Windham in the Past</i> (1916), page 450.			Dole: "Lost in the Privateer <i>Dash</i> in the War of 1812."	very likely

George Rheault Public Comment

Subject: S&T Public Comment: Former Lowell Street Playground - Please Slow Down

There is no harm in the present-day descendants of the Elias Thomas heirs asking our City Council to formalize the name of the land donated just prior to the outbreak of World War One.

However, the fact that action is being taken on this request was only disclosed to the public just prior to the arrival of the new year and during the holidays.

That alone should give the S&T committee pause to allow for a few more months of consideration and discussion to allow the general public that does not have a stake in this outcome to "catch up" so to speak and make sure that the public record (including most of all the history behind the original land donation and subsequent activity around the site) is comprehensive and not merely cherry-picked.

The Elias Thomas heirs could easily have included in the deed to the City the requirement to name the parcel "Thomas Park" or whatever they wished it to be called. They apparently were indifferent to what it would be called and left it to the discretion of the City of Portland. That was not "an error" but merely a choice. Obviously Elias Thomas III in 2023 would not have been so indifferent, but over a century has passed and therefore the question of what to call this patch of open space and ideas about what can be done with it rest on all of Portland's residents, not just a once wealthy family's descendants.

FYI - below is a link to what the neighborhood looked circa 1954 including the open space.

1954 Sanborn Map - Showing Location of Lowell Street Playground Open Space [unmarked as park or playground]

[Image 70 of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Portland, Cumberland County, Maine. | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

1954 Sanborn Map - Showing Location of "West School - a/k/a "Lowell Street School"

[Image 71 of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Portland, Cumberland County, Maine. | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

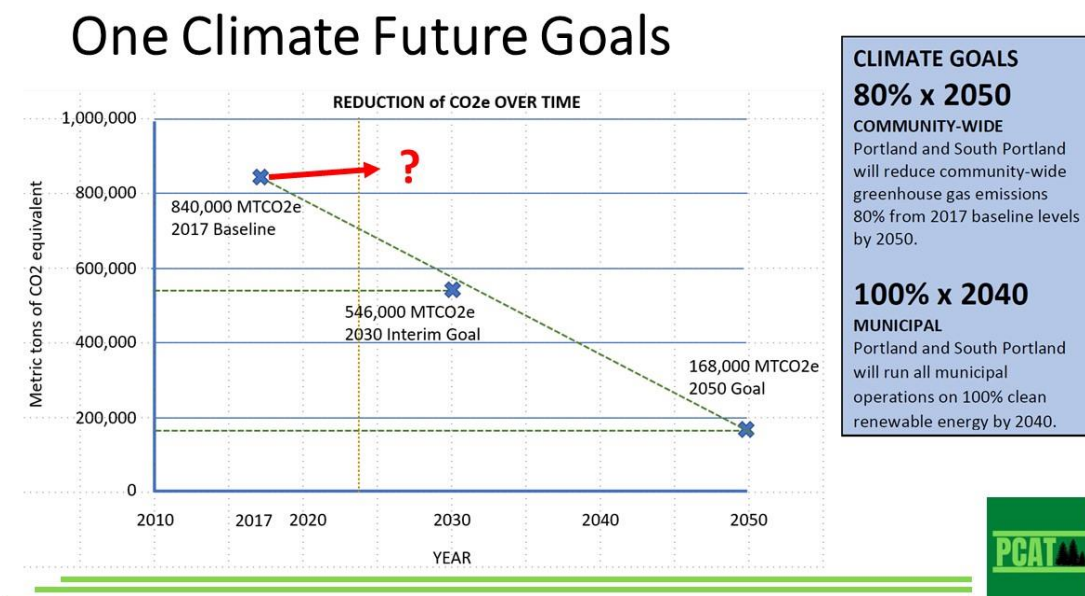
The Portland Climate Action Team (PCAT) looks forward to working with the Sustainability and Transportation (S&T) Committee to meet the 2024 City Council climate goal. The agreed goal: The Council will act on the recommendations of One Climate Future. In order to more effectively meet this goal, PCAT would like to submit some suggestions for the Committee's 2024 Work Plan.

PCAT supports the Climate Goals and tactics agreed at the City Council goal setting meeting on December 11, 2023. It should be recognized that work has already been performed on many of these goals, so they should be accomplished in short order this year. The S&T work plan should include target dates as to when the goals can be accomplished. For instance, city staff has already been working on the draft language for the Sustainability Fund so a reasonable target date for the ordinance to be presented to the full city council could be as soon as April 1.

As mentioned earlier, significant work has already been accomplished on many of the predetermined goals and it would be expected that those goals could be accomplished in the first half of 2024. But given the dire consequences of climate change the Committee should set more aggressive goals for the second half of the year. The One Climate Future Climate Action Plan for Portland established long range goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, with an interim goal in 2030. The rate

necessary for greenhouse gas reduction to meet those commitments is depicted in the graphic below. It is very unlikely that the city is anywhere close to achieving those goals given the pace of development in the city since 2017. The Committee should take meaningful action this year to begin to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and bend the curve projected in the below graph.

PCAT would appreciate the opportunity to discuss measures the City could take with the Committee to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and get the city back on track to meet agreed upon goals in One Climate Future. Again we look forward to collaborating with the committee this year to progress sustainability efforts in the City we all love.



--
Bill Weber for Portland Climate Action Team

Roaring Brook Road
Portland, ME 04103

History

- The Maine Mall was completed in 1971.
- Preparing for its impact on downtown Portland, the City hired Victor Gruen (the father of the enclosed shopping mall) to devise a plan to “save” the downtown from its impact.
- Gruen recommended a number of traffic “improvements” to facilitate access of downtown, creating a ring road of arterials: Franklin, Spring, High/State, and Cumberland (not implemented).
- In retrospect, this traffic network did not save the downtown, which deteriorated for decades, and resulted in negative impacts on the peninsula’s residential neighborhoods, obliterating some (along the Franklin Street and Spring Street Arterials), and destroying the neighborhood street feel of State and High Streets.

Context

- State and High Streets both are high-density residential streets with most housing on-street from end-to-end.
- One-way traffic concentrates traffic volumes, promotes speeding, encourages beating lights, and creates noise for residents.
- One-way traffic is intimidating for pedestrians.
- One-way traffic is dangerous for pedestrians – visibility in crosswalks.
- One-way traffic bisects neighborhoods.
- One way traffic presents confusing access to PMA, Westin, and other businesses.

Process

- Restoring two-way traffic has been the subject of multiple City studies: Peninsula Traffic Study (2007), Portland Transit Plan (2008), Preliminary Feasibility Analysis (2012), and Phase II Feasibility Analysis (2015).
- For the last analysis (2015), the Council appointed a diverse 15-member Public Advisory Committee and 13 Community Advisors.
- The PAC had four two-hour meetings and held two two-hour well-attended public meetings.
- The traffic study indicated minimal impact on traffic flows during rush hour, with traffic splitting between the two streets, depending on destination and route preference.
- A pros-cons analysis indicated more pros than cons.
- The PAC expressed a strong majority of support 10-2-2.
- Restoring two-way traffic was unanimously recommended by the Transportation and Sustainability Committee in July 2015, but tabled by the City Council due to opposition by the then-City Manager.

The Case for Two-Way

- This proposal has been the subject of significant public process.
- It is “citizen driven”, a reflection of changing community values and the evolution of widespread interest in reversing the Gruen plan’s impact on residential neighborhoods.
- The Purpose and Needs Statement of the 2015 analysis notes the need to balance interests.
- Nationally, many cities are reversing one-way traffic flows with many positive impacts.
- The projected cost is minimal (\$1.3 million, based on the 2015 estimate, which would need to be updated). Two million dollars of the original total project cost was for scheduled signalization upgrades, since completed.
- Widespread support was voiced in 2015 – by neighborhood associations, residents, PMA, Westin, Landmarks, Congress Square advocates, GPCOG, etc.
- Concerns raised by opponents are not substantiated by the analysis – e.g. two-way streets are dangerous, the change would bring gridlock, etc.

The Sustainability and Transportation Committee should review the history of the traffic pattern on State and High Streets as an element of its 2024 Work Plan and, hopefully, recommend restoration of two way-traffic.

Dear Chair Phillips, members of the Sustainability and Transportation Committee,

As you decide what to work on in the year ahead, I want to draw your attention to the [Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee's Priorities for 2024](#).

They are built on the last few years of research and work done by the committee, and were decided on via a democratic process in which about 30 members of the committee participated. These members are from all over Portland: bike ped advocates with lived experience traversing Portland in all manner of conveniences at all times of year, former city employees, nonprofits employees & city planners living in Portland and practicing in other municipalities. It was a lot of work, and the S&T committee should look at it as a quick cheat sheet on how to improve Portland's transportation infrastructure for all.

I want to point out how one of the 2 headline priorities, **Revise the Technical Manual to better incorporate the needs of vulnerable users**, might help in unexpected ways: If the council were to form a special committee to bring a potential technical manual to the council, that committee might come up with standards making it easier for the city to plow sidewalks, such as putting exceptions to mandatory sidewalk material in place on city snow plow routes: concrete is much easier for the Parks department to plow than bricks, which often damage the plows.

That's just one small change- many more could be possible if a long hard look is taken at how to make the Technical manual serve all those who live in Portland in the safest, best way possible.

Sincerely yours,

hoping to see inspiring goals come out of tonight's workshop,

~Winston

Winston Lumpkins IV (he/him/his)