

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
June 12, 2024
5:00 PM

The Sustainability and Transportation Committee will conduct this meeting remotely via Zoom. Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live either in person or via Zoom, a recording will be available in the [Agenda Center](#) following the meeting.

For public comment via Zoom, you will need to use the "raise your hand" feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public comment.

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

1. Review and approve minutes from May 8
 - a. Minutes from May 8, 2024
2. Sustainability Program Updates
 - a. Sustainability Updates for June 2024
3. Presentation and Discussion
 - a. Communication: Monument Square Parking and Commercial Loading Plan
Staff presentation regarding plans to reduce parking on Monument Square and establishment of commercial loading zones.
No public comment
 - b. Committee discussion and workshop regarding downtown worker parking
No public comment
4. Other Business

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Regina Phillips (D3), Chair
Councilor Victoria Pelletier (D2)
Councilor Anna Bullett (D4)

Draft Minutes May 8, 2024

Members Present: Councilor Phillips, Councilor Bullett, Councilor Pelletier

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Dena Libner, Mike Murray, Jeremiah Bartlett

Meeting was called to order.

April 10 Minutes

The April 10, 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

The Sustainability Office is continuing to implement the DIY Electrify! Campaign awarding \$250 rebates to income eligible Portland residents for home electrification and weatherization materials. More information can be found at portlandmaine.gov/electrify-everything

Energy and Water Use Benchmarking reports were due May 1 and the Office continues to receive reports and report corrections. The Office is pleased with the data quality of reports received so far.

The Office is continuing to be present in the community with engagement efforts.

Presentation regarding the coal pile at Cassidy Point

Presented by Sarah Southard

DEP response to the coal pile presentation

Eric Kennedy, Rick Perkins, Hillary Whitcomb, David Lemery, Liza Woodward, and Casey Wood
The DEP responded to citizen complaints last year by installing air monitoring last June. After some time, the monitors were removed after not seeing levels higher than deemed acceptable. DEP is working with Sprague on a best practices plan to manage the pile on a daily basis and will continue to monitor the pile.

Shipments will be restricted to April and October because water suppression is more effective when temperatures are above freezing. Planning on only unloading the coal when wind speeds are below 25 mph. They will also be installing new air monitors. They will continue meeting with Sprague to work on best practices. These are proposed control measures and the DEP plans to continue to request meetings.

The DEP team laid out a timeline of events. In June 2023, the DEP set up an air monitoring station near the coal pile. Over the next 6 months the data was reviewed and assessed with no conclusive data. The monitor was removed as it was needed elsewhere in the state. The DEP requested more monitors from the EPA and were able to reinstall the monitor in early 2024. After outside recommendations, a different type of monitor was ordered to install to gather better data.

Councilor Comment on Presentation regarding the coal pile at Cassidy Point

Councilor Bullett asked how long the coal pile has been present in Portland. The coal pile has been in Portland for quite some time.

Councilor Pelletier asks that this topic be on the next agenda to continue receiving updates. The DEP will be invited back on the July 10th meeting for another update. Councilor Pelletier recommends inviting state representatives to be present at that meeting as well.

State and High St Feasibility Study

Presented by Mike Murray and Jeremiah Bartlett

Mike Murray explained that this topic first came forward in 2006 peninsula study. In 2015, there was an expression of citizen interest on the topic.

Jeremiah Bartlett presented on the topic. He shared the history of State and High St, stating that the roads were previously two way streets until 1972. The 2015 study indicated that the project was feasible, however 32 public parking spaces would be lost. The city has been awarded federal grant money to reconnect neighborhoods. PACTS has funded a study to redesign Forest Ave Marginal to Park, and considerations to the multimodal environment on the peninsula and York St. The state will additionally be funding upgrades to traffic signals on State and High St. Peak traffic volumes are down 20% since the 2015 study, likely due to more people working from home. This is a common pattern in Portland. Due to the traffic density shift, it is likely that previous recommendations in the 2015 study may be subject to change. State St could potentially have one or two way bike traffic. However, there would be impacts to the width of vehicle lanes, and/or trees. There is insufficient space for bike lanes on High St. There is 1.75M to 2.5M in additional costs for the city.

Councilor Comment on State and High St Feasibility Study

Councilor Phillips shared her appreciation to the presenters.

Councilor Pellitier shared that she thinks bike lanes across the peninsula are a priority. She also shared that this project is a priority for residents.

Councilor Bullett shared that she is not surprised by the change in traffic density. She also shared that she is not surprised by the high crash reports in the area. Bullett also agreed with Councilor Pellitier on the importance of safe bike lanes across the peninsula. Bullett asked - Are

there any neighborhoods in other cities that have transformed one-way streets into two-way streets? Jeremiah Bartlet shared that Water St in Augusta has completed a similar project.

Councillor Bullett shared that she would like there to be consideration to buses and rapid transit opportunities during this study.

Creation of Climate Action Fund

Presented by Troy Moon, Sustainability Director

Troy Moon shared the fund would include penalties from breaking city ordinances, grants, private donations, and renewable energy credits. It is noted that if the city sells their credits, the city cannot claim they are using renewable energy. The income from these credits could potentially help fund other climate related projects that otherwise would not be funded. The ordinance would take effect next year, so that it will not impact the work that has already gone into this year's budget.

Councillor Phillips opened the discussion up for public comment.

Public Comment on Creation of Climate Action Fund

Bill Webber commented that the city must sell the renewable energy credits in a responsible way that generates more renewable energy for the city. The city manager should not be in charge of the Climate Action Fund, instead the city council should be in charge of the Climate Action fund.

Councilor Comment on Creation of Climate Action Fund

Councillor Bullett expressed how she understands Webber's concerns, and she would like to get more information from the Director of Finance.

Moon noted this is not anticipated to be a large amount of money annually.

Councilor Bullett is concerned that these funds could be trapped in the standard operational budget of the Sustainability Office in the future, and she would like to prevent that from happening.

Councillor Phillips suggested bringing the Finance Director to the next meeting.

Councilor Pellitier expressed her excitement for the creation of the climate action fund.

Vote for the Creation of Climate Action Fund

The vote unanimously passed and will move on to the finance committee.

Motion to Adjournment

The motion was moved by Councilor Pellitier, and seconded by Councilor Bullett.

The motion was accepted unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned



Sustainability Updates

June 12, 2024

Energy

The Sustainability Office is still running the DIY Electrify! Program to help income-qualified Portland residents access home weatherization and electrification materials. Residents have received up to \$250 rebates for items such as smart thermostats, ENERGY STAR-certified refrigerators, clothes drying racks, window sealing kits, and LED light bulbs. We encourage anyone interested in the program to visit portlandmaine.gov/electrify.

This marks one year with our partnership with EnergySage, a web-based platform that helps homeowners, businesses, and nonprofits research and shop for rooftop solar, community solar subscriptions, and other clean energy solutions. In the past 12 months, Portland residents have used this platform to install 32 kW of rooftop solar in Portland. Residents interested in going solar should explore [resources compiled by the U.S. Department of Energy](#) and more information at www.portlandmaine.gov/GoSolar.

Landcare

After launching "[Mow Tall Until Fall](#)", the Office is gearing up to host three educational webinars with partners at the Wild Seed Project, Maine Audubon, and UMaine Cooperative Extension throughout the summer. We look forward to promoting sustainable landcare practices all summer long.

We have free "Mow Tall Until Fall" yard signs available to residents. People who are interested can get one from the Guest Services staff at the Portland City Myrtle St. entrance or at Parks, Recreation, and Facilities office at 212 Canco Rd. The "[Mow Tall Until Fall](#)" campaign is an effort to promote healthy land care practices that are compliant with our Landcare Ordinance and do not involve treatments like fertilizers and pesticides. In addition to Mow Tall Until Fall, the Office is gearing up to host a "[Landcare Lunch Break](#)" webinar series to share best practices in maintaining green lawns and healthy backyard soils. With the help of guest speakers around Maine, we will break down a variety of topics around sustainable landcare.

Electric Vehicles

The City of Portland received its fully electric waste hauler (Mack LRE) to join the City's refuse truck fleet used for regular trash collection service. This is the first electric heavy-duty truck in Maine and the first major step toward electrifying the City vehicle fleet. The truck's charging

infrastructure at 250 Canco Rd is operational and the new hauler will be on our City streets after the ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 17.

Coastal Flooding Community Science Project Engagement

The City collaborates with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on the [Coastal Flooding Community Science Project](#) (CFCSP). Project goals are to raise community awareness among residents about local flooding impacts and engage community members in collecting data that will inform future decision-making. Right now, you can contribute local data here at GMRI's [Ecosystem Investigation Network](#) page. The Office is also working to install signs at high-risk flooding areas around Portland where community members can scan a QR code and easily participate in the data collection.

On May 29, staff visited King Middle School to review proposals from students on their projects related to coastal flooding in Portland. These sixth graders have been studying sea level rise and conducting fieldwork collecting data at the designated coastal flooding monitoring sites around Portland. These curriculum “expeditions” empower youth voices in community climate planning and help show our future leaders how their perspectives and ideas support Portland with its coastal resilience planning goals and can support any work being done at the city level.

On June 8th, the Office tabled at [Walk the Working Waterfront](#) to chat with attendees about One Climate Future and CFCSP. This is the first year the City has stepped up to take on a lead organizing role along with the Maine Coastal Program, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and the Waterfront Alliance. Walk the Working Waterfront was a fantastic opportunity to elevate the conversation around the City's coastal resilience planning with the second phase of ReCode and our collaborative projects with GMRI.

Other Community Engagement

On May 11th, the One Climate Future team hosted our season's first in-person Coffee and Climate with Greencare Landscape Management to discuss the “Electric Lawn Care Revolution” and offer electric lawn mowers and string trimmers to test out.

On May 17, we celebrated Bike to Work Day with other community organizations in Congress Square Park. It was a great opportunity to highlight mode shift and the recent [Portland Bike Month proclamation](#) by the Portland City Council.

During the weekend of May 18 and 19, the Office supported the city-wide “Portland Picks Up” effort and other local litter clean-up initiatives. In addition to beautifying neighborhoods and reducing local pollution, these events are great opportunities for community building and strengthening relationships between neighbors. The Sustainability Office has “neighborhood clean-up kits” available to borrow for Portland residents interested in organizing a community cleanup.

On June 4, staff took a tour of the Bayside neighborhood with Portland Adult Ed. This was a fantastic opportunity to speak with adult English language learners and spread the word about some of our initiatives, especially DIY Electrify! and our Community Composting Program.

On June 10 and 11, the Sustainability Office attended the New England Municipal Sustainability (NEMS) Network annual conference in North Hampton, Massachusetts. NEMS is a consortium of New England cities and towns that collaborate to build connections among municipal sustainability professionals in the region and share ideas and resources. The theme of this conference was energy-related policy and advocacy and included a site visit to the ISO-New England Headquarters.

We are pleased to report that we have been awarded a \$15,000 Emergent Learning Fund grant from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network. This will provide resources to host community workshops where volunteers will learn how to build raised garden beds and then work collaboratively to build up to 70 raised beds for low income participants in the Community Garden program. The grant also provides for new, fresh soil and a fabric barrier for each of the raised beds.

As always, visit www.oneclimatefuture.org to sign up for our once-a-month newsletter where we share information on upcoming events, programs launching, and climate action progress. We also host monthly Climate and Coffee events, which are community conversations that happen on the 2nd Friday of the month at 9 AM. You can also follow us on social media. Instagram @sustainableportlandme // FB @SustainablePortlandME



Staff Memo To:
Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Councilor Regina Phillips, Chair

DATE

June 12, 2024

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item #3 – Monument Square

PURPOSE

Communicate the city's effort to ensure Monument Square is a safe and open environment for pedestrians and bicyclists while making accommodations for business' delivery needs.

COMMITTEE WORK PLAN/CITY COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

This effort is in general alignment with the One Climate Future Plan which prioritizes the improvement of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Later this season, in response to concerns received from members of the public and to enhance pedestrian accessibility and enjoyment of the public space, staff plan to install signage and improve enforcement of parking prohibitions on Monument Square. Although these operational changes do not require City Council action, staff are sharing information about this plan with the Sustainability & Transportation Committee meeting to ensure awareness and public notice.

Already, as part of their seasonal beautification work, the Parks, Recreation and Facilities (PRF) Department's horticulture team has installed planters in and around Monument Square. These planters are placed in order to deter vehicle traffic from entering the Square.

Monument Square's Status as a Park

Monument Square is listed as a dedicated park in Chapter 18 of City Code, and is also listed as a dedicated Land Bank Property in Chapter 2 of City Code. As a park/open space, the primary uses should be those typical of a park: a gathering space for events, concerts, and markets, a place to passively sit and enjoy the outdoors, a place to sit and eat food from a nearby restaurant, a place to travel through on foot or bicycle. The square is not a suitable location for passenger or commercial vehicle parking in most circumstances. In recent years, its use as a parking facility increasingly detracts from its primary intended purpose as park. In no other park space does the City allow vehicle parking outside of a designated parking space or lot.

Current Parking Restrictions

Prior to the opening of the Public Market House (~2012), no parking was allowed on Monument Square, with the exception of occasional large vehicles that needed access, and contractor service vehicles (e.g., plumbers, electricians etc.) for which on-street occupancy permits were paid. All other vehicles were ticketed.

Following the opening, adjacent businesses owners and their vendors, who were parking on the Square to conduct business, were receiving parking tickets. The business owners requested an accommodation from the then-City Manager, who approved allowing business owners and their vehicles to park on Monument Square for up to 30 minutes without being ticketed. General public parking continued to be prohibited, but Parking Control Officers and Police Officers were often not able to distinguish between vehicles.

Alternative Parking Options

As part of the effort to make Monument Square a safe and open environment for pedestrians and bicyclists while making accommodations for business' delivery needs, the Department of Public Works (DPW) has identified four (4) on-street locations which can be converted to (or already are) Commercial Loading Zones. The locations include:

- Preble St. (north of Congress St.)
- Elm Street (north of Congress St.)
- Monument Way
- Center St. (south of Congress).

All these locations are immediately adjacent and accessible to Monument Square. Attachment A provides additional information on this plan along with aerial images of the proposed zones.

A common challenge of Commercial Loading Zones is that they can be used by private vehicles, including personal vehicles for parking so long as they have commercial plates. With City Manager concurrence, DPW plans to install signs and pavement markings at these locations indicating the spaces have a 30-minute limit from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in order to encourage turnover.

Enforcement Operations

The Parking Division's Parking Control Officers will monitor the square during the hours of 8:00AM-6:30PM Monday-Friday and will issue tickets in accordance with current ordinances. Outside of these hours, and subject to higher Police Department priorities, Police Officers will monitor the square and issue tickets as appropriate. In certain circumstances, large vehicle parking may be permissible such as during events on the square or when vehicles are too large to park elsewhere.

Stakeholder Engagement

City staff from DPW, Parking, PRF and Housing & Economic Development met with the Portland Downtown District and area businesses to discuss the City's intention to discourage

long-term parking in the park in May 2024. The news was generally well received by advocates, business owners and residents who want to prioritize the use of Monument Square as a park and expressed concern for pedestrian safety and access to storefronts. Staff from Public Works discussed a number of potential alternative solutions to vehicle loading and parking near Monument Square and Parks Recreation & Facilities staff offered site furniture and planters as a means to disrupt undesired parking in the interim. Parking staff indicated that once alternatives are in place and area businesses have been notified, enforcement of parking violations will begin again in the square.

FISCAL IMPACT

Resuming parking restrictions on Monument Square is not anticipated to generate any material revenue or add costs.

CONCLUSIONS(S)

This item is being presented as a communication and does include an evaluation of new policy proposals or ordinance changes.

PRIOR COMMITTEE REVIEW

None

PREPARED BY

Greg Jordan
Assistant City Manager
Executive Department

John Peverada
Director
Parking Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Maps and Images of Alternative Parking for Business Deliveries

City of Portland | Department of Public Works
Mike Murray, *Director*



To: Greg Jordan, Assistant City Manager
From: Jeremiah Bartlett, Transportation Systems Engineer
Date: June 4, 2024
Re: Monument Square Parking

The Department of Public Works, in association with Parks, Recreation & Facilities and the Parking Division have been investigating options and opportunities to eliminate the current practice of vehicles traversing Monument Square for deliveries. Based on these discussions and a review of nearby locations, DPW has the following recommendations:

Preble Street (Already Approved)

Traffic Operations has recently placed signage for a commercial loading zone on the east side of Preble just north of Congress:



Elm Street (Agreed Upon by METRO)

DPW recommends adjusting the portion of Elm Street just north of Congress (east side) from a bus stop area, which is unused, to a Commercial Loading Zone. This change requires Manager concurrence; as per the Ordinance, it does not require Council approval.



Monument Way (Proposed)

DPW also recommends adding space for a Commercial Loading Zone on the west side of Monument Way. As with the proposed CLZ area on Elm Street, this change requires Manager concurrence.



Center Street (Existing)

There is an existing Commercial Loading Zone on Center Street just south of Monument Square and Congress Street, although it often has small vehicles with commercial plates parking in it:



Overall Recommendations

DPW recommends converting the two locations as discussed to Commercial Loading Zones. In addition, a common challenge of Commercial Loading Zones is that they can be used by private vehicles, including cars and SUV's for parking so long as they have commercial plates. It is therefore recommended that all of these spaces have a 30-minute limit from 9 to 5 in order to encourage turnover. DPW will explore enhanced signage and markings for increased conspicuity at newly proposed or recommended locations following approval.

If you have questions on this letter, please reach out to me at jbartlett@portlandmaine.gov.
Sincerely,

C: Mike Murray, DPW
Keith Gray, DPW
John Peverada, Parking Division
Alex Marshall, Parks Recreation and Facilities