

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
July 10, 2024
5:00 PM

To submit written public comment on an agenda item, email sustainability@portlandmaine.gov. Submissions must be received by 12:00 pm the day before the COMMITTEE_NAME meeting to guarantee their inclusion in the agenda packet. All submissions must include the commenter's name and legal address. To help ensure your comment is submitted for the correct item, please include the name of the agenda item (see below).

The Sustainability and Transportation Committee will conduct this meeting remotely via Zoom pursuant to the Remote Meeting Policy adopted by the Portland City Council. 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.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: Jul 10, 2024 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Sustainability and Transportation Committee Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/j/87554450883?pwd=djNIY0wrTkNqbKQ1bDJQdGNRZmtrdz09>
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Webinar ID: 875 5445 0883
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1. Review and approve minutes from June 12
 - a. Minutes from June 12, 2024
2. Sustainability Program Updates

- a. *Sustainability Director Troy Moon will provide updates and information about sustainability and climate initiatives.*

3. Presentation and Discussion

- a. Presentation by Greater Portland Metro (Mike Tremblay, GP Metro Director of Transit Development)
GP Metro will provide a general agency update and highlight recent service improvements, major projects, and solicit input on future priorities.
No public comment will be taken
- b. Proposed Downtown Worker Permit Sticker Program
Staff will present an initial review of the committee's request to consider a Downtown Worker Sticker Program.
No public comment will be taken.

4. Next Meeting: September 11, 2024

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

Draft Minutes June 12, 2024

Members Present: Councilor Phillips, Councilor Bullett, Councilor Pelletier

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Erin Ferrell, Dena Libner, Mike Murray, Greg Jordan, John Peverada

Meeting was called to order.

May 8 Minutes

The May 8, 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

The Sustainability Office is still running the DIY Electrify! Program to help income-qualified Portland residents access home weatherization and electrification materials; we encourage anyone interested in the program to visit portlandmaine.gov/electrify. 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.

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.

As a co-collaborator with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on the Coastal Flooding Community Science Project, we have been engaging with local middle school students on sea level rise and also working to install signs at high-risk flooding areas around Portland where community members can easily participate in the data collection. We also co-hosted Walk the Working Waterfront which 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. The office has been busy with a number of other community engagement events including May’s Coffee & Climate, Bike to Work Day, Portland Picks Up, a tour with Portland Adult Ed students, and more. We are also 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.

Discussion on Parking on Monument Square

Presented by Greg Jordan

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.

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 business 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.

The Parking Division's Parking Control Officers will monitor the square during the hours of 8:00AM -6:30 PM 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.

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.

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

Councilor Comment on Discussion on Parking on Monument Square

Councilor Bullett asks if there are any load docks and if there are any statistics on crash or injuries here? Councilor Bullett and Councilor Phillips both note the importance of ADA accessibility for these businesses. *As this is being rolled out, ADA accessibility will be assessed.* Could we close Center St for noncommercial traffic? *Closing Center St is likely not to happen.* Barriers are still being decided on that will allow access for emergency vehicles.

Discussion and Workshop Regarding Downtown Worker Parking

Presented by Councilor Rodriguez

Councilor Rodriguez brought attention to the issue of many downtown workers needing to move their vehicles every two hours due to parking time limits in the downtown area. Councilor proposes a pass system where employers can give their employees a permit in their car during the employee's work shift so that employee would not need to move their car every two hours. This proposal would not request removing parking fees but would operate similarly to the residential parking permit.

The Councilors brainstormed different ideas to address the parking issue brought up by downtown workers. Ideas include making garage parking more accessible, downtown worker parking permit. Elm st garage, free st garage, or public market garage are all options with monthly rates.

The councilors note they plan to revisit the topic and staff will continue to look into best practices in similar sized jurisdictions. This is just the beginning of the conversation with Greg Jordan becoming the point of contact.

Motion to Adjournment

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

The motion was accepted unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned



Sustainability Updates

July 10, 2024

Energy

We recently added Energy Star-certified air conditioners, Instant pots, and rice cookers to the list of eligible items in our DIY Electrify! program. Learn more at portlandmaine.gov/electrify.

Landcare

On July 10, we hosted our second Landcare Lunchbreak webinar of the season. In the webinar “The Dirty Truth About Urban Runoff”, guest speaker Will Everitt, with Friends of Casco Bay, discussed urban runoff and how landcare practices have on our water ecosystems. Watch the recording here: www.youtube.com/@SustainPortME

Our next two [Landcare Lunchbreak webinars](#) will cover:

- “Healthy Lawncare Made Easy” with Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District
- “Preparing Your Lawn for Winter” with landcare professional Jesse O’Brien

Community Engagement

We helped launch the City’s first electric trash truck on June 17. It is the first electric heavy duty truck in Maine. Our office secured \$535,000 in grant funding to support the purchase.

On June 25, staff joined Avesta Housing staff and residents of Butler Payson and Carleton buildings for a lunch cookout. This was a great engagement opportunity to talk with residents about some of our initiatives, especially DIY Electrify! and our Community Composting Program.

On July 8, staff attended the Wayside Community Picnic at Payson Park Community Garden to talk with attendees about composting food scraps and the free composting drop sites located around Portland.

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](#)



To: Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Councilor Regina Phillips, Chair

MEETING DATE

July 9, 2024

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item #4 - Downtown Employee Parking

PURPOSE

Assess downtown parking availability and evaluate options to improve convenience for workers.

COMMITTEE WORK PLAN/CITY COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Parking is not directly identified in either the committee's work plan or the City Council's 2024 priorities. However, the City's Comprehensive Plan ("[Portland Plan 2030](#)") and [One Climate Future](#) both identify effective parking management as a key to achieving the city's goals on sustainable development and climate action.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Individuals working in the downtown area have expressed concern that there is insufficient long-term on-street parking that is in close proximity to places of employment. For individuals choosing to use on-street metered parking, they must move their vehicles every two hours up until 6:00 p.m. As a result, such workers must take time away from work to move their vehicles or risk receiving a ticket.

At the May 6, 2024 City Council meeting, members of the public submitted comments advocating for parking accommodations for downtown workers. Follow-up engagements with City Councilor(s) by concerned workers resulted in submission of a proposed Worker Permit Sticker Program (WSP) for staff and the committee to consider (see Attachment A).

As proposed, this program would be functionally similar to the existing Residential Permit Program (RPP). The RPP allows residents to display a sticker on their vehicles enabling them to use on-street parking within their residential zone beyond any posted time limits, however the permits are not valid at parking meters where high turnover parking is required. The proposed WSP program imagines a similar approach in which eligible downtown workers would apply for and receive a sticker to display on their vehicle. The sticker would allow them to use on-street metered parking beyond the 2-hour limit.

The WSP proposal seeks to help promote retention of downtown workers by easing a common hardship associated with working in an urban area.

City staff advise the committee to consider the following elements as part of its evaluation, and potential advancement, of the proposed WSP program:

- Scope and degree of the problem
- Policy and priority alignment
- Alternative solutions
- Administrative questions related to program design

Scope and Degree of Problem

The initial public comments and related media story which led to the submission of the WSP program are helpful in bringing attention to the parking concerns of downtown workers. However, it is important to deepen our understanding of the problem's scope and degree, so the most effective solutions can be developed.

As there are more employees than metered parking spaces available, additional information on demand would help staff estimate potential impacts to municipal revenue from parking fees and retail/restaurant foot traffic or sales, as well as better understand the scope of administrative support needed for the program.

Additional information will be gathered in the following ways:

- *Survey of downtown workers and business owners.* Pending the committee's concurrence with this approach, staff would design the survey and questionnaire in July and implement it in August. This timeline would allow for data to be analyzed and reported to the committee in September.
- *Meet with the group of workers that helped develop the WSP.* This additional engagement will help staff gain a better understanding of needs and potential solutions.
- *Monthly check-ins with parking garage managers* to understand average availability of monthly permits.

Policy and Priority Alignment

Recognizing that all policy initiatives and programs come with tradeoffs, the committee ought to consider how the WSP aligns with existing policies and priorities, and whether any changes are desired. Provided below is an initial list of existing priorities.

- *Convenient Customer Access to Businesses* – Short-term metered parking in the downtown area has been primarily provided to support the general public and local businesses by facilitating convenient customer access. The two-hour time limit fosters

high turnover which is generally conducive to both customer needs and retail business/restaurant owners' desire for high traffic.

Lowering the supply of available short-term, metered parking should be expected to reduce the general public's ability to conveniently access downtown businesses. An industry accepted benchmark suggests that an on-street parking space generates \$45,000 to \$95,000 in annual retail sales. As part of evaluating the WSP, the potential impact to downtown businesses should be considered.

- *Smart and Sustainable Development* – As staff and the committee consider the WSP, the needs of workers, customers and businesses ought to be evaluated in the context of the city's long-term goals included in the comprehensive plan (Portland Plan 2030) and One Climate Future climate action plan. Both plans outline objectives for balancing the incentives for automobile use and multimodal transportation, and specifically call for strategies that reduce parking demand and improve opportunities for walking, biking and using public transportation.
- *Municipal Revenue Generation* – The City has routinely communicated that parking access and convenience are the top priorities with revenue generation a secondary goal. As described in the WSP program proposal (Attachment A), sticker holders would still be required to pay meters for their extended parking. However, as more parking spaces are occupied for longer periods, these spaces will experience less turnover. Less turnover may mean reduced overall parking revenue.

Complementary or Alternative Solutions

Depending on further research into the scope and degree of the problem, additional solutions should be considered which most effectively target the needs of downtown workers, either independently or in tandem with the WSP. Until then, the following alternatives are noted:

- *Area Parking Garages/Surface Lots* – the WSP proposal suggests that relying on area garage parking has one or more of the following limitations: limited capacity on a daily/monthly basis, no exits after certain hours, and safety concerns related to walking late at night. These are legitimate concerns, but as the committee considers the WSP program, staff suggest the committee also consider how access and use of available garage parking can be improved.

Accordingly, improving communications on parking options may be helpful as well. For example, downtown workers may not be aware that most garages offer 24/7 access for monthly permit holders, that the Fore St. Parking Garage offers an “evening” monthly rate of \$110 a month for parking between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., or that the Angelo's Acre lot (at Commercial/Park) is available for \$5 per 24 hours.

As previously noted, city staff will conduct regular check-ins with parking garage managers to understand average availability of monthly permits. A survey conducted

on July 1-2 indicates that about 750 spaces are available across 18 downtown area garages.

- *Public Transportation* – the WSP proposal indicates that public transportation services operating in Portland do not run late enough to be relied on by individuals working past 11:00 p.m. While this is accurate, it may be possible to develop a program that incentivizes workers to use regular public transportation inbound to work, and after work access shared ride alternatives. Shared ride alternatives could include partnerships with Transportation Network Companies (TNC) or implementation of a microtransit service in partnership with Greater Portland Metro
- *Increase Metered Parking Time Frames at Underutilized Location(s)* – While on-street metered parking in/around the Old Port is in high demand and has been geared toward public/customer access, there is nearby on-street parking with lower utilization. On-street metered parking along the south side of Spring Street, between Center St. and Oak St. (near the Holiday Inn and Cross Insurance Arena) is usually never at capacity. The parking time limit for this bank of 30-40 spaces could be increased.

Administration and Program Design

The following list outlines various questions or open issues that would need to be resolved as a potential program is designed.

- *WSP Program Eligibility* – As proposed, the WSP program suggests all Portland workers would be eligible. As part of developing the program's design and supporting rules, staff suggest an approach that targets workers who are employed in selected areas of the Portland Peninsula where on-street parking is in high demand, and during periods of time that make other options more challenging.
- *Application Process* – To determine the best approach, staff will evaluate an application process in which workers apply to the City of Portland or employers serve as the primary applicant. As part of developing these scenarios, staff would also determine whether vehicle stickers or hang-tags are most appropriate, or digital permits.
- *Administration* – Staff will need to develop a process for reviewing and verifying applicant information, establish periods of validity for stickers/hang tags, set renewal parameters, produce an inventory of physical stickers/hang tags, configure the city's Passport mobile app to allow the exemption, and train Parking Control Officers.

Acquiring further information on potential demand will help determine the degree of added administrative support for this program.

FISCAL IMPACT

Although WSP permit holders would be paying the same rate as the general public, their long-term use of high demand parking spaces should be expected to reduce turnover at these

locations. As a result, the WSP may impact sales to retail businesses and restaurants, and staff cannot rule out potential impacts to municipal parking revenue. The scope of impact will depend on potential demand for the WSP program. Staff are working to develop estimated ranges for these impacts.

CONCLUSION(S)

This item is for discussion and input from the committee on next steps.

PRIOR COMMITTEE REVIEW

Sustainability & Transportation Committee, June 12, 2012 - Item Introduced

PREPARED BY

John Peverada
Director
Parking Division

Greg Jordan
Assistant City Manager
Executive Department

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Worker Permit Sticker Proposal (included in packet)

Attachment B - [Portland City Code, Section 28](#) (by link)

Proposal to Amend Portland's Parking Ordinance for Workers

Executive Summary

This proposal seeks to amend the current parking ordinance in the City of Portland to better accommodate the needs of all workers. The existing ordinance requires vehicles to be moved every two hours to different blocks, which is impractical for workers who are unable to leave their jobs to comply. Currently, workers' only options are parking garages, walking and public transportation. This proposal seeks to create a Worker Permit Sticker to allow workers to park in the same zone for extended periods.

Background

Current Ordinance

The City of Portland's parking ordinance defines "prolonged parking" as parking beyond the maximum time limit without moving the vehicle to a different block (Sec. 28-1). The ordinance mandates that vehicles must be moved to another block after the metered time or time zone expires and cannot return to the original block for at least three hours (Sec. 28-84). The fine for prolonged parking is \$25 (Sec. 28-20). Additionally, vehicles with three or more unpaid violations can be immobilized or towed (Sec. 28-39).

City-Owned Parking Garages

Portland owns four parking garages with varying hours of operation:

- **Elm Street Parking Garage:** Mon-Fri, 6 am - 10 pm; Sat, 8 am - 10 pm. \$25 after-hours lock-out fee. Currently has a waiting list.
- **Spring Street Parking Garage:** Mon-Sat, 6 am - 1 am; Sun, 8 am - 1 am. Limited availability at \$150 per month.
- **Casco Bay Garage:** Mon-Sun, 4:30 am - 11:45 pm. 16-month waitlist
- **Temple Street Garage:** Mon-Sat, 7 am - 12 am; Sun, closed. Monthly cardholders have 24/7 access.

Public Transit

Portland and surrounding areas are served by the METRO bus system, which has eight routes with varying hours of operation. However, the bus schedules do not accommodate late hours. Below is the schedule for the eight routes offered by Metro.

The Metro has eight (8) routes.

Metro Route 1 – Congress St

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday Buses from 5:08 am until 11:10 pm

Saturday 5:08 am until 11:10 pm

Sunday 7:43 until 6:35 pm

Metro Route 2 – Riverton

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 5:45 am to 10:56 pm

Saturday 6:20 am to 10:23 pm

Sunday 8:20 am to 4:15 pm

Metro Route 3 – Westbrook Crosstown

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 5:40 am to 10:30 pm

Saturday 6:45 am to 10:34 pm

Sunday 9:15 am to 6:00 pm

Metro Route 4 – Westbrook

Monday – Friday 5:15 am until 11:40 pm

Saturday 5:45 am until 11:40 pm

Sunday 8:15 am to 7:45 pm

Metro Route 5 – Maine Mall

Monday – Friday 5:20 am until 10:40 pm

Saturday 6:10 am until 10:50 pm

Sunday 7:55 am until 5:40 pm

Metro Route 8 – Peninsula Loop

Monday – Friday 6:40 am until 6:05 pm

Saturday 7:50 am until 6:17 pm

Sunday 8:50 am until 4:17 pm

Metro Route 9A – North Deering

Monday – Friday 5:15 am until 10:25 pm

Saturday 7:30 am until 10:25 pm

Sunday 8:30 am until 4:25

Metro Route 9B – North Deering

Monday – Friday 5:40 am until 9:53 pm

Saturday 8:10 am until 10:10 pm

Sunday 9:10 am until 5:10 pm

Problem Statement

The current parking ordinance is detrimental to Portland’s working class because it requires them to leave their jobs and move their vehicles every two hours. This is impractical for workers. The city’s proposed solutions (ie. Walking, garages, public transport) are not viable alternatives. Parking garages are not open late enough to serve these workers. Walking to and from work late at night is unsafe. The public transportation schedule does not meet the needs of downtown workers who often leave work after 11:00 pm. Rising rent costs have also pushed workers to live outside the city, making commuting more challenging.

Proposed Solution

The city of Portland currently offers Residential Permit Stickers, which allows Portland residents who live in residential sticker zones to apply for a parking sticker for the area which they live. The sticker is displayed on the vehicles rear windshield, and exempts them from time limit restrictions, allowing residents to park in the one- or two-hour time zones.

We propose the creation of a Worker Permit Sticker. This sticker would allow workers to park in the same zone for more than two hours, exempting them from time limit restrictions. Workers would still be required to pay the standard hourly parking fee and would be subject to the same fines for failure to pay.

Implementation Details

- **Eligibility:** Workers employed in Portland.
- **Application Process:** Workers apply for the permit through the City of Portland.
- **Permit Display:** The sticker is displayed on the vehicle's rear windshield.

Benefits

This proposal would alleviate a current burden placed on downtown workers, at veritably zero impact to parking congestion. It would also keep our late-night workers safe during their commutes home from work. The effects of this proposal passing would make downtown Portland a more attractive area to work in, as well as promote retention of downtown workers despite a growing number of suburban developments.