

CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE
Committee on Sustainability and Transportation
Councilor Regina Phillips (D3), Chair
Councilor Pious Ali (At-Large)
Councilor Anna Bullett (D4)

Approved Minutes January 8, 2025

Members Present: Councilor Phillips, Councilor Bullett, Councilor Sykes, Councilor Pelletier

Staff Present: Troy Moon, Katie Tims, Mike Murray, Kevin Kraft, Greg Jordan

Meeting was called to order.

November 13 Minutes

The November 13, 2024, meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainability Updates

- Sustainability Director Troy Moon provided the update that Erin Ferrel left. Erin did tremendous work contributing to all of the office's initiatives, especially in building the effectiveness and compliance with the Energy Benchmarking Program. The Sustainability Office is in process of recruiting her replacement; conducting interviews now
- Council has approved the grant to support the development of a fleet electrification strategy; Sustainability Office awaits information from the Department of Energy, which they expect to receive later in Spring 2025.
- Katie Tims, Sustainability Associate, reported on the DIY Electrify Everything! Program: that ended December 31, 2024.
 - 73% of individuals who participated were renters
- Staff supported a fourth community garden rebuild event on December 7, 2024, in the Boyd Street Community Garden. Over 60 volunteers attended the event, despite the cold. With the help of city staff, Cultivating Community, and Fresh Food Gardens, the entire community garden has been transitioned into raised bed garden plots.
- Sustainability Office has a few community events with Baxter Academy and Coffee & Climate.

Committee Goal Setting and Work Plan Development

Councilor Phillips began discussing the goals, starting with Diversity and Inclusion. Councilor Phillips notes it has been a goal for several years to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. There is an interim Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion director, and hope to see someone permanently in that position.

Councilor Phillips notes that part of this is Housing and affordability: not just housing, but also our unhoused residents, and notes that Councillor Sykes in the Housing and Economic Development Committee has put forward something to look at social housing. The other goal is the work done in S&T to look at One Climate Future. Instead of looking at different things and picking out different things, the goal is to look at One Climate Future as a whole. Another council goal is public engagement. It is very important to hear from residents on how the council does its work. The council is looking at creating an Office of Community Engagement. Councilor Ali has been championing this idea for several years. Moving into the goals for the Sustainability and Transportation Committee, Councilor Phillips turned it over to Director Troy Moon to give an overview of what 2025 looks like.

Sustainability and Transportation Committee 2025 Overview

Presented by Troy Moon, Greg Jordan, and Kevin Kraft

Troy Moon stated that in the package, there is an overview of the policies from OCF that the council has worked on and some that still need to be worked on. There is a color-coded list of policies labeled green, which the council has already adopted ordinance to implement. Policies labeled yellow are adopted and in progress of being implemented. Policies labeled magenta are still pending.

Many elements from One Climate Future's land use policy were part of Recode. The incorporation of the climate coastal resilience overlay zone overlay into the language of Recode, the low-impact development ordinance, as well as elements in the technical manual addressing stormwater management, heat mitigation, and heat resilience. Recode was a great step forward for implementing things.

There are still a bunch of other things being worked on. Energy Benchmarking is one of those. CMP is unable to provide the data for multi-tenant buildings. Continuing to engage with CMP to provide the whole-building aggregated data, which would open the door for rental housing, as well as performance standards for commercial buildings. Will keep working with CMP to move that forward. The organic recycling requirements for the business community on institutional recycling. Adopting a C&D ordinance would be a major undertaking. It is work they want to do, but maybe not right now. There is also work on adopting sustainable purchasing policies.

Greg Jordan mentioned that One Climate Future does include some elements that have been talked about for some time now, including creating a vision zero plan for the city. GPCOG has created a plan that they could sign onto. OCF also suggests updating the Complete Streets policy. It has been effective for 10-12 years, but it is time to see if an expanded policy or an ordinance is needed.

Opportunity for developing a comprehensive transportation plan for the city. The planning department has submitted the project through the CIP process, and subject to council approval. It is an opportunity to figure out what the vision is for transportation and mobility across the city. Would help prioritize and sequence and improve transportation and mobility projects over the next twenty years. If it does get funded and the council does want to advance that, it probably

makes sense to work on Vision Zero first, do the Complete Streets work in advance of CTP, because those would be good guiding documents moving forward.

Kevin Kraft notes that they received the Reconnecting Communities Grant received for Franklin Street.

Troy Moon mentions that building on what was discussed in the November meeting and Council's goal to discuss sea level rise on Commercial Street, might take up developing a policy statement on the City's sea level rise adaptation strategy, which would be included in the resilience plan that is currently being developed. The port tariff has been of much discussion in the past, particularly in relation to cruise ships and a variety of other port operations. The tariff could be increased. The committee could come up with a set of initiatives that the city would like to accomplish. There have been a number of approaches to deal with dust from the coal storage facility on Cassidy Point. Members of the committee and residents have been concerned.

Councilor Comments on Goal Setting and Work Plan Development for 2025

Councilor Philips opened it up to Councilor Bullett for any priorities she would like to add, and any visiting councilors who would like to add any priorities.

Councilor Bullett notes that tariffs and port operations were on her list. Councilor Bullett asks Director Kraft if the grant and plan for Franklin Street is something they would get a consultant to do. *Kevin Kraft responds that yes, it is.*

Councilor Bullett noted one overarching thing that would be helpful- instead of just putting things into One Climate Future, also putting the committee's work in context with Maine Won't Wait. Would like to do that as a committee. Councilor Bullett lists Strategy A, about transportation, and Strategy C, about the power grid and transitioning to clean energy, Strategy F, about resiliency, are the areas of Maine Won't Wait that align. Back to transportation, she was hoping to add a feasibility study and pilot program of a traffic camera program. State law and data privacy concerns will be barriers, but for pedestrians and people-powered wheels (bikes, strollers, wheelchairs), this is important for safety. Wonders if there is a scaled-down version of shore power for smaller vessels. Thinking about our TOD zones are also sustainable, have green space built in, making sure that as business develops there, public transportation is safe and easy-to-use; thinking about how to invest in TOD projects around transit.

Councilor Phillips notes that the committee really only has a year; cannot do everything. They want to hear everybody's suggestions, but some things might have to go on the 2026 list. The committee will try its hardest to do everything it can in the timeframe it has.

Councilor Pelletier states that he is a strong proponent of tariffs on cruise ships. He notes he is on the Finance Committee and would be happy to help work on that; it is a revenue source that would help to get all of these goals done. He notes it is worth looking at requiring electric hookups for all new residential developments. It's not as expensive as one might think. He is in

support of Vision Zero, and as part of that, revising our technical guide for our transportation and roads would let us ensure our bike lanes are uniform, make sure cyclists aren't getting ignored. People in the community want to be engaged in this and people want to be engaged and build what our streets can look like. He is interested in traffic-calming measures and working with Portland Trails.

Councilor Phillips recommended Councilor Pelletier connect with Councilor Ali about electric hookups. We need to talk about Vision Zero, it is on our list, and maybe we'll get into some of the other things you suggested. We're getting a pretty lengthy list at this point. We want to do it as much as we can. I know we have a meeting set up with the Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, want to hear from them as well. Turned it over to Councilor Sykes

Councilor Sykes notes that she agrees with what the other councilors have said. Vision Zero is very high on her list of priorities and she is happy to do any legwork behind the scenes. She supports tariffs and thinks that would be a fairly easy thing to do on the budget process. Councilor Sykes also supports investigating traffic cameras, and also has trepidation around privacy. The one thing she wanted to add, which is not a topic for this year, but community choice energy aggregation is a way for cities to opt out of the default energy package we get through the state, form our own brokerage, get cheaper energy, lots of things you can do with the money saved. It is a climate action that really helps working-class people at the same time. Getting the residents of Portland a 30% decrease on their energy bill would be very popular. *Troy Moon notes that there is a bill introduced in the state legislature that Councilor Sykes might want to follow.*

Public Comment on Goal-Setting for 2025

Four constituents spoke. Two constituents mentioned cruise ships, one of whom favored a higher tariff on them, one who mentioned supporting efforts to quantify and get more information on the impacts they have on the harbor and how to better regulate those. Two constituents suggested creating a separate Complete Streets Committee, to take some of the burden from the Sustainability and Transportation Committee and increase public engagement. One constituent was in favor of Vision Zero being adopted before a comprehensive transportation plan begins, as well as exploring more traffic-calming strategies. One constituent spoke in favor of traffic cameras. One citizen suggested developing a recovery plan to get back to 2030 greenhouse gas reduction goals in One Climate Future and putting pressure on CMP. One constituent mentioned increasing bike safety for cyclists, investigating bike theft, and getting recovered bikes back to original owners.

Further Discussion on Goal Setting

Councilor Phillips called for public comment again. No one else spoke. Councilor Phillips closed public comment. She asked staff to collate the priorities discussed during the meeting for final discussion at the next meeting.

Motion to Adjournment

The motion was moved by Councilor Bullett, and seconded by Councilor Phillips
The motion was accepted unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned