

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

Draft Minutes April 27, 2022

Members Present: Councilor Zarro, Councilor Pelletier, Councilor Rodriguez

Staff Present: Troy Moon

Guests: Mayor Snyder, Councilor Fournier, Peter Dugas, Tony Donovan

Meeting called to order.

April 13 Minutes

Councilor Rodriguez moves to approve the January meeting minutes. Councilor Pelletier seconds the motion. April 13 minutes passed unanimously, 3-0.

Sustainability Update

Presented by Troy Moon

Community composting drop off program is expanding and Channel 6 news covered the story as well. In the beginning of June, we will add drop off locations at Payson Park, Brentwood Garden, and Riverton Garden. We have reached out to Catholic Charities for translation services and plan to have translated signs available when the new sites get established. Our RFP for a curbside collection partner opened this afternoon. Our grant application to the State's Community Resilience Partnership was successful. We will be receiving \$50,000 to hire a consultant to help us create the Climate Resilience Overlay Zones recommended in One Climate Future.

Committee Comment on Sustainability Update

Councilor Zarro reiterates how important the Resilience Overlay Zones will be in moving forward with climate resilience in Portland.

Resolution Supporting Rapid Transit

Presented by Councilor Zarro

Councilor Zarro and staff drafted a resolution supporting GPCOG's rapid transit study and requesting the Maine Turnpike Authority and GPCOG fully evaluate the climate impacts of the proposed South Portland/Gorham Connector.

Public Comment on Resolution Supporting Rapid Transit

Ken Capron opposes endorsement of Rapid Transit study.

Amon Dunden speaks in support of the resolution and notes it is in PACTs long term plans.

Tony Donovan notes concern in the concept of a fixed guideway system because it cannot be a road. Include the existing railroad as a fixed guideway system and prevent use of corridors from being paved over for buses.

William of Portland asks for more information about the study.

Councilor Comment on Resolution Supporting Rapid Transit

Councilor Pelletier notes hope that MTA will align with Maine Wont Wait and GPCOG will expand the scope to make space for climate impacts.

Councilor Rodriguez supports adding the language regarding the Gorham Connector and expresses support for the resolution.

Councilor Zarro supports moving the resolution on to the Council to move forward.

Approval of Resolution Supporting Rapid Transit

Councilor Rodriguez moves to approve the Resolution Supporting Rapid Transit. Councilor Pelletier seconds. Motion passes unanimously, 3-0.

Informational presentation regarding ideas for passenger rail service between Portland and Lewiston

Presented by Tony Donovan

Tony is seeking a recommendation from the Council to perform a high level conceptual evaluation of a potential rail transit link to a future terminal at the Ocean Gate terminal in Portland. The presenter is the Maine Rail Transit Coalition Director, Tony Donovan. Tony showed examples of trains used in the US. The MRTC is looking to bring the PopUp Metro's Battery-Electric Train to Maine. The proposed plan would connect Portland with Downtown Lewiston/Auburn. The MRTC asks for an analysis similar to one completed for Westbrook. MRTC is looking for Maine state government support for, and investment in the SLR for a passenger train demonstration project.

Councilor Comment on Informational presentation regarding ideas for passenger rail service between Portland and Lewiston

Councilor Pelletier asks about conversations held with the Rioux Institute. *The Rioux Institute is not interested in the project.*

Councilor Fournier asks about the report from LD 991 passed last legislative session that dealt with the feasibility study of the rail. Amended version removed the oceanfront rail. *It is underway, being completed by Lewiston. It is not the project being discussed during this meeting.* Councilor Fournier asks about the advisory group put together to advise that study and what is the cost of this study? *The Westbrook study was \$50k with \$10k coming from a private investor.*

Mayor Snyder notes Portland and Lewiston contributed \$10k each to the study being noted in LD991. The City has put support into the study into rail through LD 991.

Councilor Zarro notes next steps would be to review findings from the study currently underway.

En-Roads Climate Modeling Demonstration

Presented by Peter Dugas

En-Roads climate simulator was developed by MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative which allows users to explore the impact of roughly 30 policies - such as electrifying transport, pricing carbon, and improving agricultural practices - on hundreds of factors like energy prices, temperature, air quality, and sea level rise. For example, moving away from coal and phasing out by 2100 resulted in a .2 celsius reduction in temperature increase by 2100. Highly incentivizing electrification of transportation without also greening the electric grid resulted in only a .1 celsius reduction.

Carbon pricing is one of the strategies with the most significant opportunity for emissions reductions and is highly supported in Portland and nationally. The IPCC names carbon pricing as being necessary for addressing climate change. British Columbia implemented a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend system in 2008 and all of Canada has now adopted the same policy.

This platform is free to use and available to everyone to see how addressing climate change involves many different strategies working together. Local action needs to be taken as well as national action.

Councilor Comment on En-Roads Climate Modeling Demonstration

Councilors are thankful for the informative presentation and express support for the En-Roads platform.

Councilor Rodriguez motions to adjourn the meeting. Meeting Adjourned.