



**SUSTAINABILITY
OFFICE**

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**SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT
Work Plan for FY22**

MISSION

The City of South Portland has become a leader in sustainability across the state of Maine through ambitious climate goals, clean energy investment, and innovative programming. This progress is largely due to the leadership of the Council, very productive partnerships, and overwhelming community support for sustainability.

The mission of the Sustainability Office is to continue our leadership in sustainability by guiding the development of policies and practices that promote economic well-being, strong community connections, and a healthy environment. Our *One Climate Future* plan is the core driver for much of the work we are pursuing and proposing in the coming years to meet our ambitious climate goals: **to use 100% clean renewable energy for municipal operations by 2040 and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions citywide 80% by 2050.** In addition to these goals, the City Council declared climate change an emergency in 2019 and expressed its desire to accelerate our transition away from fossil fuels by 2030. This means we will need to continue on our bold course and incorporate climate strategies into all of the municipal services we deliver.

FOCUS AREAS

To achieve these goals, we work across five focus areas. A brief summary of each focus area is below, followed by concrete actions to support implementation.

1. WASTE REDUCTION

Minimize waste by changing how our community consumes and disposes of goods and materials.

Action: Expand and improve existing programs that promote reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting.

- Develop and deliver targeted education and outreach to residents about how and why to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

- Work with ecomaine and other partners to make the City's summer recycling internship program an on-going initiative.
- Advocate for the development of state-level waste reduction policies (e.g. product stewardship for packaging and food waste recycling for large generators).
- Implement the *One Climate Future* pledge program in collaboration with Economic Development to encourage and recognize businesses that adopt innovative waste reduction practices. (FY21 grant)
- Continue to expand and improve our citywide food waste program. (FY21 grant)

Action: Explore additional options for moving toward zero waste by 2050.

- Explore the feasibility of and options for adopting a Pay-As-You-Throw program.
- Review other communities' practices and develop an ordinance to require recycling at multi-family units and businesses.
- Continue to explore opportunities to reduce the use of single use plastics and minimize the impact of marine debris.
- Develop useful guidance to promote sustainable purchasing.
- Work with partners to explore opportunities to promote a circular, sharing economy.

2. BUILDINGS & ENERGY USE

Encourage high performance buildings (focusing on energy efficiency and electrification of heating and cooling), and transition to renewable energy.

Action: Develop programs and policies to increase energy efficiency, electrification, and transition to renewable energy in City buildings.

- Complete solar arrays on City property and contracts for off-site projects.
- Work with Facilities and Finance to develop performance-based procurement for the next appropriate City building.
- Benchmark and track the energy performance of City buildings and use this information to inform planning decisions. (FY21 CIP)
- Complete the City's transition to LED streetlights through a phase II scope of work.

Action: Pursue programs and policies that encourage energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy in residential and commercial buildings.

- Explore options to support residential and commercial solar projects through a solar proliferation strategy, community solar, and bulk purchasing programs. Promote pairing solar with ASHPs, HWHPs, and EVs.
- Work with partners to launch a program that incentivizes the adoption of air source and hot water heat pumps.
- Improve and expand the scope of the City’s Benchmarking Ordinance, and work with CMP and other partners to improve access to relevant energy data.
- Work with industry partners to develop and promote education about the stretch code, high performing buildings, and net zero energy standards.

Action: Actively advocate for policy changes and regulatory reform at the state level to make municipal and community renewable energy projects more feasible.

- Advocate for the enactment of state-level financing mechanisms (including a green bank and C-PACE program) to fund energy upgrades and renewable energy systems, and adopt it at the City level.
- Work with partners to develop a state-level stretch code for new construction that achieves net zero energy by 2030, and adopt it at the City level.
- Work with partners to advocate for utility regulatory reform measures and support the adoption of a state-level consumer-owned utility.

3. CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Build the resilience of our neighborhoods, infrastructure, ecosystems, and economy to the impacts of climate change.

Action: Create knowledge, tools, and resources on climate risks for buildings and properties.

- Launch the “Preparing for Coastal Flooding in South Portland” online story map and expand the scope of work to incorporate citizen science modules. (FY21 grant)
- Install High Water Marks to raise awareness of flood risk and sea level rise with support from Maine Silver Jackets. (FY21 grant)
- Develop a program to build the capacity of frontline communities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruption through resilience programming.

Action: Pursue programs and policies that improve the resiliency of buildings and properties.

- Develop flood modeling projections to inform updates to the City’s zoning ordinances and development review processes. (FY21 grant)
- Work with Planning to develop a resilience zoning overlay for new construction and update land use codes to reflect resilience objectives.
- Explore participation in the Community Rating System to prevent and reduce flood damage to insurable property.
- Work with Water Resources Protection, Planning, Economic Development, and Public Works to leverage state and federal funding for resilience planning and planning-related activities, and shovel-ready projects.

Action: Reduce toxic landcare products in our community and promote a transition to organic land care practices.

- Continue education and outreach to promote the new Fertilizer Ordinance and encourage organic landcare practices, including targeted materials for retailers and landcare companies. (FY21 CIP)
- Continue working with Parks and WRP to develop demonstration projects at Bug light Park, Yerxa Park, and other City locations that promote organic landcare practices.
- Develop a “healthy soils” campaign to unify outreach about pesticides, fertilizers, and the carbon sequestration capacity of soils through *Grow Healthy South Portland*.

Action: Preserve productive and resilient natural resources within the City.

- Work with Planning and Parks to include resilience goals (stormwater and flood water infiltration, carbon sequestration, heat mitigation, and biodiversity and habitat connectivity) in open space planning.
- Work with Planning and Parks to establish a baseline tree inventory and develop a Tree Protection Ordinance.

4. TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE

Transition to electric vehicles and facilitate a substantial community mode shift from private vehicles to public transportation, ride-sharing, biking, and walking.

Action: Develop a strategy to transition City fleet vehicles and equipment to all-electric and alternative fuels.

- Work with Public Works to explore the use of biodiesel in select municipal vehicles.
- Expand the City's electric vehicle charging infrastructure at municipal buildings.
- Develop a plan for transitioning our municipal fleet to electric vehicles (focusing on cars, light duty trucks, transit, and school buses) as proven technologies become available and relatively cost effective.

Action: Develop incentives and build infrastructure needed to encourage community adoption of electric vehicles.

- Facilitate the expansion of EV charging infrastructure citywide to ensure that it is not only high-impact but also accessible to all members of the community.
- Keep current on new technologies and grant opportunities related to electric vehicles, smart controls, and advanced grid designs.
- Explore ways to support broader community adoption of electric vehicles including identifying and pursuing funding opportunities, grants, and public-private partnerships to build out incentives and infrastructure.

Action: Facilitate a substantial mode shift to public transportation, ride-sharing, biking, and walking.

- Work with Transit Department to advocate for coordinated regional and state-level transportation policies and programs that support sustainable transportation initiatives.
- Work with Planning, Transit, and Economic Development to explore barriers and opportunities for transit oriented development.
- Develop GIS resources and asset management tools in order to better plan for and maintain transportation-related city assets.
- Work with Planning to include initiatives that will help facilitate a substantial community mode shift to public transportation, ride-sharing, biking, and walking in the Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Explore the potential of bringing a bike share program to South Portland.

Action: Reduce vehicle idling.

- Explore anti-idling technologies for municipal vehicles and ensure City anti-idling policies are being followed.
- Work with partners to develop an innovative anti-idling campaign for the community and explore the necessity of an idling ordinance.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Support the transition to a more equitable, regenerative, and community future through inclusive processes that build local capacity and create opportunities for community collaboration and ownership.

Action: Integrate equity into sustainability program development, implementation, and outreach.

- Participate in USDN training that prepares staff to consider the complex nature of the social, economic, and environmental challenges our communities face.
- Wherever possible, support inclusive and participatory decision-making and capacity building, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable, underrepresented community members.
- Incorporate equity requirements in requests for proposals, grant applications, position descriptions, etc.
- Build relationships with local social service providers and frontline community organizations to facilitate long-term partnerships and strengthen existing solutions.

Action: Initiate broad community outreach and creative engagement programs that build awareness of sustainability policies, practices, and programs.

- Utilize the City's website, community newsletter, newspaper articles, and social media to educate community members about sustainability programs and practices.
- Organize workshops, coffee hours, Lunch & Learns, forums, events, and other innovative outreach methods to engage community members on specific issues.
- Explore neighborhood-scale action that brings people together and gives residents the opportunity to become active participants in building thriving communities.
- Attend, give presentations at, and participate in training, forums, and conferences to keep South Portland up to date with leadership on sustainability issues.