

A Full Service City

THE CITY OF PORTLAND provides a full range of public services consistent with other cities its size: fire and police coverage; solid waste management; public schools; public libraries; public water (through the Portland Water District); public sewer; parks and recreational facilities and programs; street maintenance, sweeping, and plowing; and traffic operations. In addition, the city provides other services and facilities that make it unique - a municipal airport, a nursing and rehabilitation facility, a fish pier, marine passenger terminals, and a homeless shelter. The city, through various departments, manages public buildings, spaces and infrastructure to support these services. Through private partners, the city also offers telecommunications services and energy infrastructure and supports other public needs.

Funding improvements to facilities and services always presents challenges, yet citizen satisfaction with these services is generally high. However, quality, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability are regular concerns, as evidenced in recent initiatives to improve the city's solid waste management services, address existing deficiencies in public school buildings and sidewalks, and make needed investments in major stormwater separation projects. Portland also recognizes the importance of the community services it offers, from stormwater

education for the public to community policing, addiction advocacy, and youth outreach. Public facilities and services touch each corner of the city and are integral to its physical, fiscal, social, and environmental health. In order to support a high quality of life for this and future generations of Portland residents, the city must continue to invest in these fundamental facilities and services that lay the groundwork for Portland's overall well-being, security, economic development, and future growth.



Over 90% of respondents reported overall satisfaction with current city services.

A strong future for Portland requires that we have a strategy for paying for it. The city is proud to have a robust and inclusive budgeting process that incorporates citizens' interests and allows the city's elected officials to make tough decisions to ensure that we can do so. The city has adopted policies that govern the way in which its two primary tools, the annual budget and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the financial transactions associated with them, are employed. These fiscal policies and budgeting processes have provided a successful framework for funding city services. The recent upgrading of the City's Standard & Poor bond rating is an indication of that promising future, especially if the city continues to improve its long-range financial planning and data collection.



SNAPSHOT:
FACILITIES & SERVICES



STATE GOAL

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

LOCAL GOALS

WE WILL:



Use planning and fiscal management to sustainably maintain a high level of service for existing infrastructure and programs.



Coordinate infrastructure planning and investments with areas of greatest anticipated growth.



Maintain and support a quality public school system, responsive to educational needs of our students.



Strive to be an environmental leader in municipal sustainability programs and investments.



Provide public safety, emergency response and emergency management facilities and services that can effectively meet the needs of all citizens.

FUTURE STRATEGIES



SNAPSHOT:
FACILITIES & SERVICES

1. DEVELOP MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

- Track performance on key indicators.
- Develop reporting mechanisms to keep staff and leadership apprised of performance.
- Explore national best practices in developing metrics.

2. PROVIDE SERVICES TO ALL RESIDENTS

- Explore efficient ways of delivering services to the homeless by investigating a wide variety of service models, evaluating the local potential of these models, and developing plans for implementation.
- Provide services that integrate new residents into civic and community life.
- Strengthen protocols for translation and interpretation services.

3. PROVIDE EXCELLENT SCHOOLS

- Make strategic investments in school facilities to modernize and update buildings and grounds, ensure student safety, and preserve and enhance neighborhood connections.
- Ensure that future land use policy is compatible with school plans by identifying growth areas, evaluating school capacity, and developing plans to address future service gaps.
- Leverage state, local, and private funding to allow a comprehensive approach to sustain excellence in the school system.



COMMUNITY POLICING

Since the mid-1990s, the City of Portland Police Department has placed community policing at the heart of its law enforcement strategy. Community policing, which is now widely adopted across the country, emphasizes close relationships between law enforcement and neighborhoods as a means of proactively identifying and resolving issues of public safety. Recent research on community policing suggests that the approach is associated with positive outcomes in terms of perceptions of disorder, police legitimacy, and citizen satisfaction.

In addition, the Portland Police have taken a progressive approach to issues of mental health, instituting a behavioral health response program, in collaboration with community partners, that employs mental health professionals to provide direct service in the field, trains all officers in crisis intervention, and facilitates access to a network of community mental health service providers for purposes of support. The program has earned the department national recognition and is a critical component of the effectiveness of the force.



**SNAPSHOT:
FACILITIES & SERVICES**



4. ENSURE ADEQUATE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Update the city’s Emergency Action Plan to ensure adequate integration of emergency responders.
- Use community partnerships to plan and implement steps to improve emergency preparedness.
- Evaluate Fire Department facilities, looking at the adequacy of buildings and equipment for 21st century life safety needs, as well as the location of facilities in relation to changing growth patterns.

5. MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING

- Continue to combine cutting edge law enforcement technologies with compassionate police engagement.
- Work with community partners to maintain and strengthen police-community relationships.
- Continue to develop partnerships to explore all available avenues to address the region’s opioid epidemic.

6. DEVELOP ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS

- Develop long-range asset management plans for public facilities in order to ensure that our limited public funds are invested strategically.
- Engage in needs assessment and cost-benefit analysis for proposed public facilities.

7. PLAN FOR SHELTERS

- Align the city’s land use code with City Council policy direction on shelter placement and facility requirements.

8. PLAN FOR FISCAL STABILITY

- Keep tax rate increases manageable, and provide predictability and stability in tax rate increases while supporting city services and a stable labor force.
- Make fiscal stability a factor in land use planning by considering both public investments and potential gains in the city’s tax base when planning for a sustainable future for the city, while recognizing that not all land use decisions will be driven by the fiscal impacts of the development produced.
- Ensure that the assessed values of property generally reflect their market value.

9. EXPLORE IMPACT FEES

- Investigate the potential of a more robust framework for defining needs and assessing development-related impacts.
- Use the framework to generate additional funding, while also adding clarity and predictability to existing procedures.



**SNAPSHOT:
FACILITIES & SERVICES**



10. PURSUE PUBLIC - PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- Pursue public-private partnerships to fund needed projects and services.
- Frame city funding for major projects as seed money for potential projects, rather than the sole funding source.
- Look to examples of successful public-private trade-offs in other communities where public funding for capital projects is constrained.

11. MOVE CAPITAL MOVEMENT PROGRAM

- Modify the city’s budgeting process to allow city staff, the public, and the City Council to focus on the annual budget each spring and then the CIP in the fall.

12. CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING ASSETS

- Explore ways to capitalize on existing, underused assets as a means of subsidizing programs and facilities with broad public support.
- Pursue disposition of properties that are no longer in active use, such as former schools, and invest the resulting resources to meet public goals.
- Prioritize returning income from land disposition to the city’s capital or long-term needs.

13. MAINTAIN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Continue to work in partnership with regional and state agencies, neighboring communities, non-profit organizations and private property owners in support of efficient, sustainable city services.

14. ENHANCE RESILIENCY

- Consider climate change and associated patterns of sea level rise, storm frequencies, and storm surges, which will impact city infrastructure in previously unanticipated ways, when planning for investments
- Establish carbon reduction goals for city operations and evaluate energy efficiency of city buildings to prioritize energy saving investments.

15. CHANGE SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

- Explore ways to modernize the collection process, alternatives to the current public operation, and strategies to support the city’s growth.
- Implement strategies outlined by the Solid Waste Task Force in 2011, including the adoption of the Maine State Waste Management Hierarchy, the promotion of durable, recyclable products and materials, and the creation of opportunities to turn discarded resources into new products and new jobs.

Recent & Ongoing Initiatives

CITY BUDGETING

Annual Budget Like all municipalities, every year the City Council adopts an annual budget. That budget must be self-contained, in that everything in it must be paid for. As part of that process, the city identifies items that have grant, federal, or state funding, and then determines a property tax rate that pays for the balance. That rate is determined by the estimated (or “assessed”) value of each property in the city and the overall amount that needs to be raised. Assessments provide a reasonable guess as to the actual value of a property, but are not updated every year and can be affected by a number of factors. If assessed values are adjusted through a revaluation, the tax rate would be adjusted as well. So while it is common to look at the tax rate to see how much residents and businesses pay in taxes, it is more accurate to look at the actual tax bills, as the rate is just a function of the assessment.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) The city also develops a multi-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) annually. The CIP is designed to program for larger needs for durable items, such as buildings, fire trucks, or roadway improvements

that will last for several years. Since the items will last for a long time, it is appropriate to fund part of the CIP through borrowing money. The city’s ability to borrow (or “bond”) money is largely determined by its ability to pay off those bonds (its “bonding capacity”) and what interest it has to pay on those bonds. That interest rate is determined by the city’s rating by the major rating firms. Recently, the city’s bond rating was increased to “AA positive” by Standard and Poor, one of the major rating firms.

The city also relies on several outside sources for funding. These include:

- State aid for education and general operations
- Federal grants such as the Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs, which can be particularly helpful for planning objectives
- Private donations, such as a recent major contribution to the library system for improvements to the Peaks Island branch
- Grants from foundations to run pilot projects, operate special programs, or for other specific purposes.

BUDGETING TOOLS

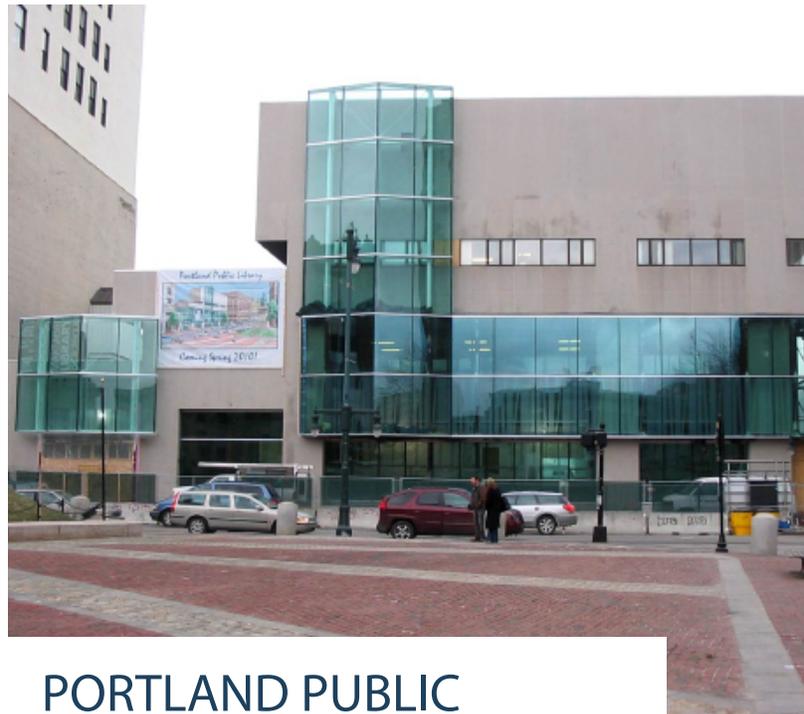
Budget Policies and Procedure The Finance Department has a set of policies and procedures based on the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP.) However, they do differ in some ways outlined in the city’s policy documents available on the Finance Department’s web page.

Debt Management Policy The city has a debt management policy related to borrowing. This policy is based on state law but further refines how and when the City will borrow money for capital needs.

Fund Balance Policy The city has a policy about its fund reserves. These are the funds the city keeps for unforeseen circumstances. This policy is designed to ensure that the city is fiscally resilient.

Primary Investment Policy This policy outlines what investments the city is allowed to make to ensure that these investments are prudent, free of conflict of interest, and meet other city policies.

Procurement Ordinance The city’s procurement ordinance outlines policies with respect to making purchases.



PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Since the mid 1800s, the Portland Public Library has served as one of the city’s major cultural centers. Today, the library serves 675,000 visitors annually and is the most visited cultural institution in the state. The library supports its mission, to build a city of readers, by offering a large collection of print, music, and film resources, free internet access, and lectures, classes, community discussions, and programming for all ages.