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**Public Services Department**

Michael J. Bobinsky

To: David Marshall, Chair and Members of the Transportation, Sustainability and Energy Committee

From: Katherine Earley, Engineering Services Manager  
Doug Roncarati, Storm Water Program Coordinator

Date: April 12, 2012

Subject: Capisic Brook Watershed Management Plan Briefing Report

The Capisic Brook is one of the last remaining intact urban streams in the City of Portland. Its watershed encompasses an area of nearly 1,500 acres in Portland and Westbrook and the brook drains to Capisic Pond and ultimately, the Fore River. Unfortunately, the effects of polluted urban runoff from developed areas and combined sewer overflows have significantly impaired water quality in the brook. Capisic Brook is recognized as impaired surface water under the federal Clean Water Act and has been designated as an *Urban Impaired Stream* by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MaineDEP), meaning that its water quality does not meet the standards established for its designated uses. Federal and state water quality regulations require that Portland and Westbrook take action to restore water quality in Capisic Brook. The City has made significant investments in its combined sewer overflow abatement program in this watershed with very positive results. Several additional combined sewer overflow abatement projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2013 and should effectively eliminate sewage as a source of water quality impairment in the brook.

In addition, the City has increased its efforts to reduce stormwater pollution through its street sweeping, catch basin cleaning and community education programs. However, much remains to be done to address the impacts of polluted stormwater runoff, restore water quality in the brook and preserve this important community resource.

In 2009, Portland received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and MaineDEP to help the City to develop a watershed management plan for Capisic Brook. Over the next two years staff from the cities of Portland and Westbrook, representatives from the MaineDEP and other State agencies, members of local environmental organizations, residents of Portland and staff from the consulting firm of Woodard and Curran worked together to complete the Draft Capisic Brook Watershed Management Plan. The Plan builds on previous studies to create a cohesive strategy for management of the brook and its watershed, consistent with the recommendations of the Sustainable Portland report published by the City in 2007, and sets a path for meeting both state and federal clean water standards.

The broad nature of the Management Plan, the strategy for management of the brook and its watershed, and its link to meeting state and federal clean water standards, necessitates recommending the Plan be adopted as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan. We come before the Transportation, Sustainability and Energy Committee to present the Draft Capisic Brook Watershed Management Plan and ask that you both endorse it and recommend it to the City Council for adoption as part of the Comprehensive Plan. As part of the endorsement process, staff would present and review the Management Plan with the Planning Board before submitting to the City Council for action. We would recommend a City Council Workshop and a public hearing prior to adoption by the City Council.

We have included the executive summary and a watershed map in this package and will make the full draft plan available electronically. Staff from the Department of Public Services and the consulting firm of Woodard and Curran will give a presentation on the major elements of the plan and provide the opportunity for you to request additional information about the plan at a subsequent Committee meeting. We look forward to presenting this important plan to the Committee.

