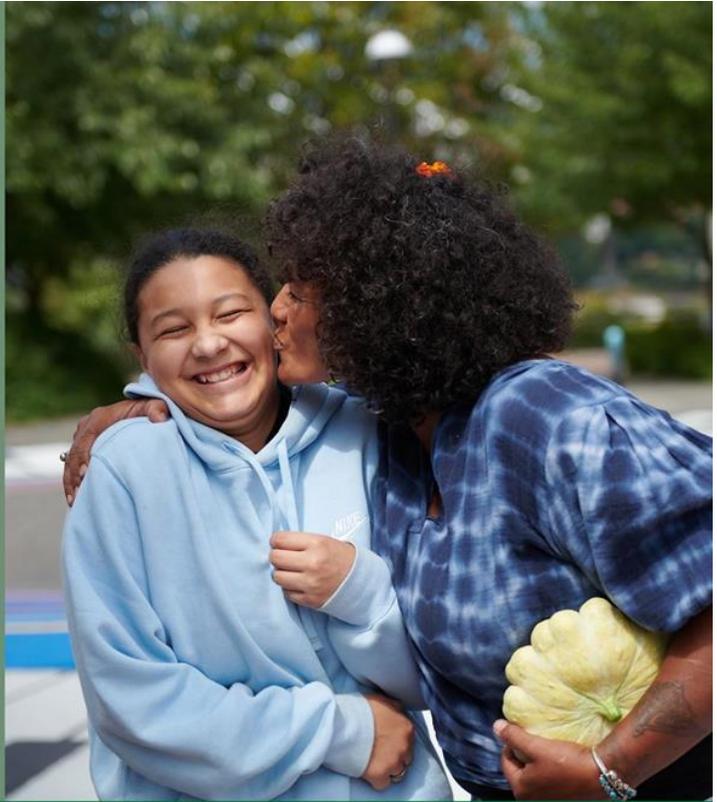


Portland Charter Commission



Climate & Environmental Justice Community Listening Sessions Report



October 2022

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CHARTER REVIEW OVERVIEW

The Charter Commission embarked on the once-in-a-decade opportunity to review and revise the City of Portland's Charter (the City's constitution) and recommend amendments for Portlanders to vote on. Amendments to the City's charter can have a significant impact on how Portlanders address the most pressing issues facing our City.

As an independent body, the Charter Commission set its own scope of work, this work centers on the voices of Portlanders across neighborhoods and identities. The Charter Commission is committed to having an equitable, accessible, and transparent community-driven process that informs decisions and path forward. The Commission has invested in resources to create various pathways to hear from Portlanders who have been historically left out of city hall decision-making.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION OVERVIEW

The Commission used a community listening session as one of many important tools to engage Portlanders in Phase II of Charter Review. The Charter Commission and one of our community partners, Unite Oregon, each hosted a community listening session on climate and environmental justice.

As part of the Climate and Environmental Justice Community Listening Sessions, participants got the opportunity to listen to an educational presentation on the charter review process, the work done in Phase II, and Climate and Environmental Justice (see appendix B). Afterward, participants joined small breakout groups to discuss folks' lived experience with the climate crisis and suggestions for ways the City can better address climate and environmental justice issues (see appendix A).

A copy of the presentation and survey of the questions asked in breakout rooms was made available on the Charter Commission website along with a presentation for community members who couldn't attend.

Details

Due to COVID-19, the sessions were hosted virtually via Zoom meeting. The Community Listening Session occurred on Thursday, September 15, 2022, and on September 28, 2022, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. To join the event, community members had to register online and had the option to request for interpretation and accommodations. In total, we had 93 individuals give feedback through the sessions and survey.

Roles

Charter Commissioners played various roles, including presenting the educational material, facilitating breakout rooms, and supporting event outreach. Charter Staff led material development, outreach, day of logistics, took notes, and conducted the collective analysis and writing of this report. For our partner hosted session, Unite Oregon recruited participants, gave the presentation, and facilitated the discussion. Charter Commission staff members were present during the session and supported with facilitation.

Outreach

The community listening sessions was advertised through various platforms including the City of Portland and our community partner social media channels, events on charter website, and email communications through the Charter commission's listserv.

Demographic overview

As part of registration for the event, participants could answer optional demographic questions. The optional demographic questions were asked to help the Commission understand what communities are being engaged. We only received demographic data available for about 40% of participants. The breakdown is as followed:

What racial or ethnic communities do you identify with?	
Race/Ethnicity	%
Black/African-American	2%
Latinx/Latine	7%
Asian	11%
Pacific Islander	0%
Native American/ Native Alaskan	4%
Middle Eastern	7%
White/ Western European	64%
Don't know	0%
Don't Want to Answer	2%

What additional communities do you identify with?	
Additional Communities	%
Renter	17%
Low-Income	19%
Transit Dependent	17%
Experiencing Houselessness	0%
Person w/ a Disability	11%
LGBTQ+ Community	22%
Immigrant	6%
Refugee	0%
Senior Citizen	36%
None	11%
Other	25%

What neighborhood do you live in?	
Neighborhood	%
East	4%
N/NE Portland	25%
Southeast	27%
West side	31%
Portland metro	10%
Cities in OR, outside of metro area	2%
Other states	0%

What is your age?	
Years	%
0 - 17	9%
18 – 34	18%
35 – 50	20%
51 – 67	27%
67 – 84	22%
85 +	2%

KEY THEMES

The Community Listening Session revealed the following key themes. These themes reflect sentiments shared among the participants who joined the breakout groups and the individuals who responded to the survey and are not intended to represent the opinions of all Portlanders.

Bold climate action is needed.

Many of the participants stated a desire for the City of Portland to be leading the country on solutions to climate change. They expressed a desire for the City of Portland to take immediate steps and to remove barriers to change, whether those are regulatory or fiscal.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt by Portlanders.

Participants provided examples of how climate and environmental issues were affecting their lives and communities. Common examples given included poor air quality due to wildfire smoke and traffic, extreme weather patterns such as excessive heat or increased flooding, and health impacts due to residential proximity to industrial areas. More specific examples included lack of access to green spaces, poor water quality, noise pollution, lack of air conditioning, food deserts, business impacts during power outages, cost of needing to fireproof housing and business, and lack of affordable housing.

Vulnerable populations should be given priority.

Participants generally agreed that any mitigation or adaptation strategies need to be designed for and by those most impacted by climate change. Because Black, Indigenous, people of color, low-income, elderly, immigrant, unhoused, and differently abled people are typically the most impacted by environmental issues they should not just be prioritized in any climate-related proposals but should be centered in the solution-making. These communities are the ones most experiencing direct impacts of climate. Participants shared many examples of how to prioritize vulnerable populations included participatory budgeting, a climate assembly, investments in programs to make home energy efficient, expanded access to public transportation, city communications being in multiple languages, and the city going to the community rather than expecting community to come to them. One community member shared that the Charter Commission doesn't have to figure out climate policies but should instead create mechanisms in the Charter for ordinary Portlanders to exercise power and shape climate solutions.

Direct relation between climate and housing

Participants highlighted the direct link between housing and climate. The main example was the lack of affordable housing. Participants shared that housing costs in Portland are too high and the city lacks adequate affordable housing and housing that is energy efficient. The lack of affordable housing means lower-income people often find housing further away from resources such as transportation, food, and work sites. Living further away means they rely on traveling by car, increasing pollution while also increasing their own transportation costs. Additionally, low-income people tend to pay more for utilities due to lack of adequate energy efficient housing. Ultimately, this means the cycle of poverty and being most impacted by climate change are unable to be broken. The second example was regarding the impact to unhoused community members. During extreme weather, unhoused individuals are amongst the most vulnerable and impacted – such as in 2021 when excessive temperatures caused many heat related illness and even death.

Climate-related Charter amendments need to have clear, binding requirements.

Participants expressed frustration that the City's approved resolutions, emergency declarations, proposals and plans related to climate are not binding, which means they do not have requirements or directives for funding or making land use decisions with climate or environmental justice as the highest priority. They additionally raised concerns that just having a climate declaration in the Charter will not help the City to make progress on this issue. Participants suggested that the Charter Commission should add binding requirements to the Charter such as a fossil-fuels phase out, or a legal requirement that people have the right to clean water and clean air. Participants supported the bureau proposed amendments related to climate and environmental justice.

GROUP IDEAS

In terms of takeaways of ideas for reform, below are ideas and recommendations that surfaced. There wasn't a way to figure out if there was consensus in the room.

Participatory Budgeting by 2025: Implement a well-funded Participatory Budgeting process by 2025. By 2030 the City of Portland allocates a minimum of 10% of the annual General Fund budget and a minimum of 5% of annual parks and transportation-related capital expenditures through Citywide participatory budgeting.

Climate Assembly: Establish a climate assembly that has the authority to refer policies directly to the voters of Portland.

City's Core Values: Change the City's core values and add Environmental Rights & Responsibilities. The environmental rights and responsibility include the individual and/or public right to clean air and water, ecological health, healthy built and natural environments, a stable climate, and enjoyment of the environment's healthful, recreational, scenic, and cultural values.

Community Involvement: Establish clear and accessible pathways for all Portlanders to engage in future climate decision-making. Make it clear how community can engage. Come to community, include multilingual and accessible information for all Portlanders. Educate community on these issues. Work with frontline organizations doing the work. Encourage youth involvement.

Tribal Coordination: Include tribes in land and water stewardship decision-making. Compensate tribes for their knowledge and labor.

Fossil fuel Include in the City's charter, a clear and binding requirement for fossil fuel phase-out.

Tree Canopy: Requirement to increase urban tree canopy throughout all Portland, but specifically in low-income and vulnerable neighborhoods where heat islands are prevalent.

Public Transportation System: Expand the City's public transportation system with a sustainable and reliable transportation network, but specifically in low-income and vulnerable neighborhoods. Create access to free biking and invest in safe biking path.

Waste Management: Establish better waste management systems and recycling services for unhoused communities.

Affordable housing: Develop affordable and sustainable housing solutions, especially for low-income and unhoused people. Require new development to be sustainable and energy efficient.

Fund Existing Program: Investment and expand existing programs that will allow for community members to make homes energy efficient and run-on renewable energy, one example included the expansion of Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF). Folks voiced not having access to air-conditioning.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

It was evident throughout the breakout groups that Portlanders are passionate about this issue and want the Charter Commission to make climate and environmental justice a priority in their Phase II work and in the Charter. Moving forward, the Charter Commission will use the key takeaways from this listening sessions and survey to shape and informed charter review decisions. The Charter Commission will continue to share themes and summary reports and make them available to the public to continue building shared values, holding the Commission accountable to its desired outcomes, and elevating our communities' voices.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Breakout group discussion questions

1. How have you or your community been impacted by climate change or negative environmental factors?
2. What do you think the city needs to prioritize in order to advance climate and environmental justice?
3. How can the City of Portland increase Portlander's participation and voices in the city's climate and environmental justice decision-making?
4. How can the City of Portland increase Portlander's participation and voices in the city's climate and environmental justice decision-making?

Appendix B: Educational presentation

PORTLAND CHARTER COMMISSION



**Climate &
Environmental
Justice**

Listening Session

September 2022

ZOOM OVERVIEW

Zoom overview

Recording: Meeting is being recorded and will be posted on our website.

Mute: Please mute yourself when not speaking.

Chat: Chat is available, we won't be able to answer questions during the presentation, but chat will be part of the meeting record.

Break out rooms: After our presentation we move into small group discussion groups

Tech support: If you have Zoom questions, please feel free to message me directly via chat.

Ground rules

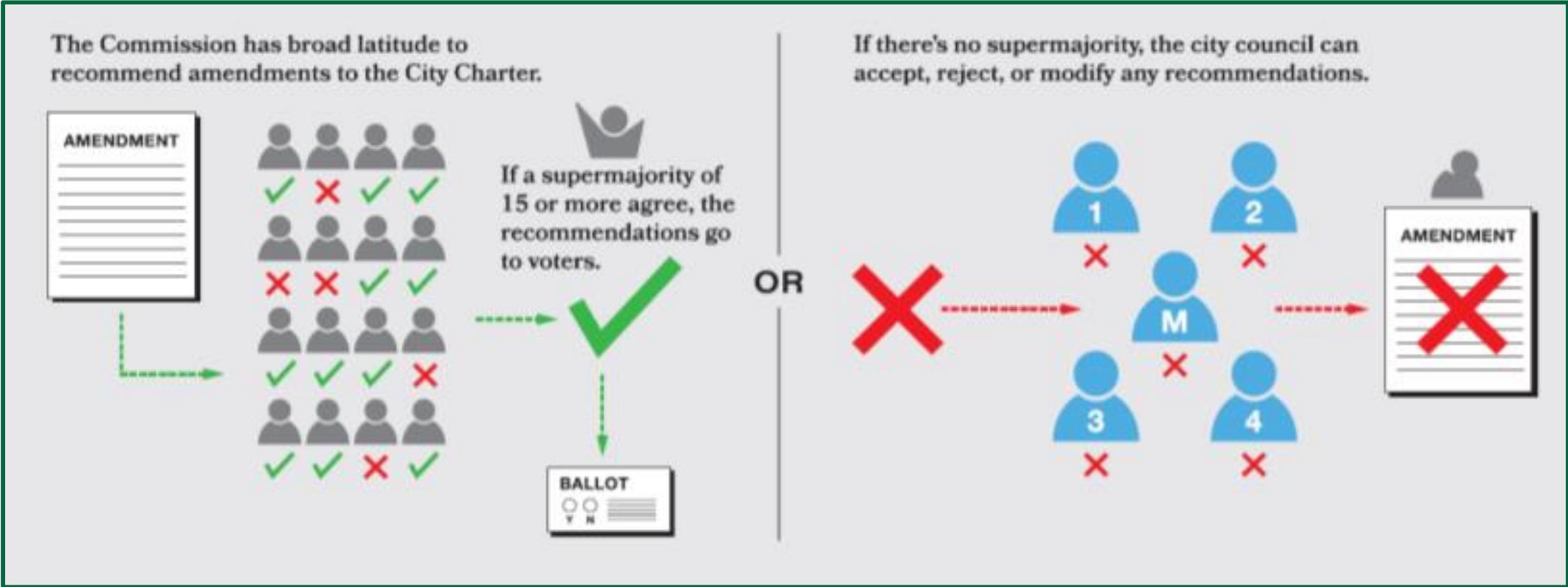
- Come from a place of curiosity
- No one knows everything, but together we know a lot
- Share the space
- Stories stay, but the lessons can be shared
- Take care of yourself

AGENDA

Time	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome & Zoom overview
25 minutes	Educational presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charter 101 (5 mins)• Phase II overview (5)• Climate & Environmental Justice (13 mins)• Closing (2 mins)
5 minutes	Transition break
40 minutes	Small group discussion
10 minutes	Discussion report back
5 minutes	Closing

Charter Review 101

AUTHORITY & TIMELINE



DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR CHARTER REFORM

- 1 Participatory and growing democracy with more voices being heard in elections
- 2 Accessible and transparent government with Councilors who are easy to reach
- 3 Reflective government with Councilors who look like the community they represent
- 4 Responsive government with Councilors who understand your community needs
- 5 Accountable government with Councilors who answer to the people
- 6 Trustworthy government with Councilors who safeguard democracy

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

Engagement	Number
Survey responses	4,022
People receiving monthly email updates	1,330
Community listening sessions (partner & Commission hosted)	26
Participants at listening sessions (partner & Commission hosted)	580
Public comments received	1,658
Hours of verbal public comment	16 hours
Public meetings + hearings	87
Charter review briefings & presentations	127
Policy discussions with community organizations	34
Media articles or interviews	203

PHASE II FOCUS AREAS

1. Climate & environmental justice
2. Bureau & office proposals
3. Expansion of voting rights

PHASE II TIMELINE

Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022
Community engagement 			
Subcommittees continue research & evaluation	Commission meeting with unlimited public comment	Draft amendments released	Final vote
	Charter amendment drafting	Public hearings	

PHASE I CLIMATE RECOMMENDED CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Chapter 2 ARTICLE 4. THE MAYOR

Section 2-401. Duties

(b) Advance the City's efforts to mitigate the human-made climate crisis and prioritize environmental justice initiatives.

Chapter 2 The City Administrator

Section 2-406

(b) Advance the City's efforts to mitigate the human-made climate crisis and prioritize environmental justice initiatives.

PHASE II: Climate & Environmental Justice

Educational presentation

Climate & Environmental Justice Basics

Climate & Environmental Justice

Climate justice is a framework that calls for centering the voices, priorities, and lived experience of people most impacted and burdened by climate change

Frontline Communities

Overwhelmingly and disproportionately people of color, individuals in these communities have endured the incredible physical, economic, and mental burdens of climate change.

Educational presentation

Climate & Environmental Justice Basics

Climate Change Facts

- The concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth.
- The most abundant greenhouse gas, accounting for 2/3 of the gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂) is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.
- Experts have stated to curb detrimental effects of climate change we must reduce carbon emissions by 45 to 65% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

Educational presentation

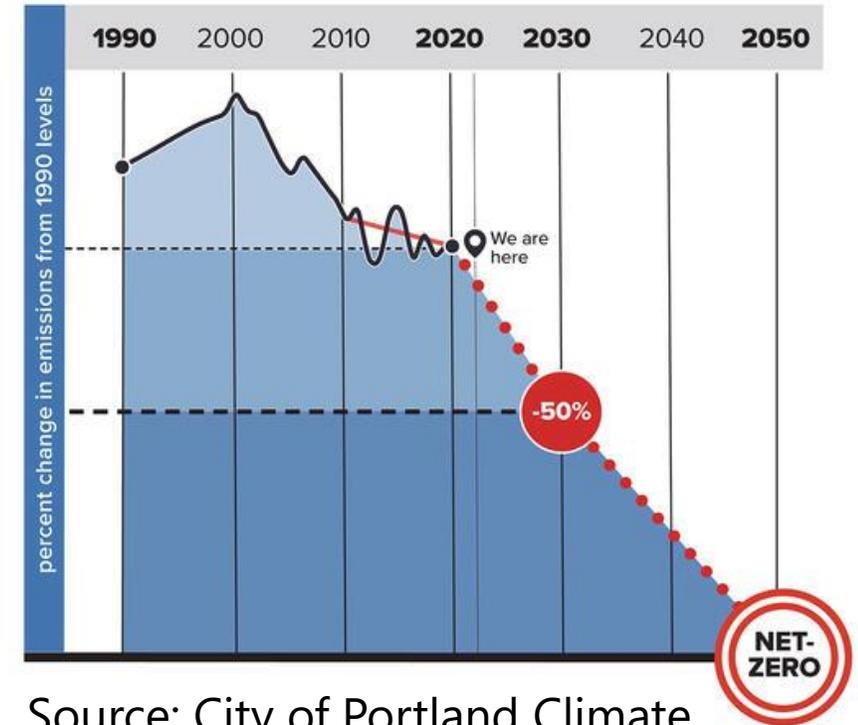
City of Portland's Climate Emergency

What is the City of Portland Doing around Climate?

City Council declared a climate emergency in 2020 and directed City bureaus to restore a safe climate for all Portlanders, especially communities of color and those most at-risk to impacts of climate change.

Climate Emergency Declaration: Declare an immediate mobilization effort initiating greater action, resources, collaboration, and new approaches to restore a safe climate resolution

The City has set a long-term target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and an interim reduction goal of 50% by 2030



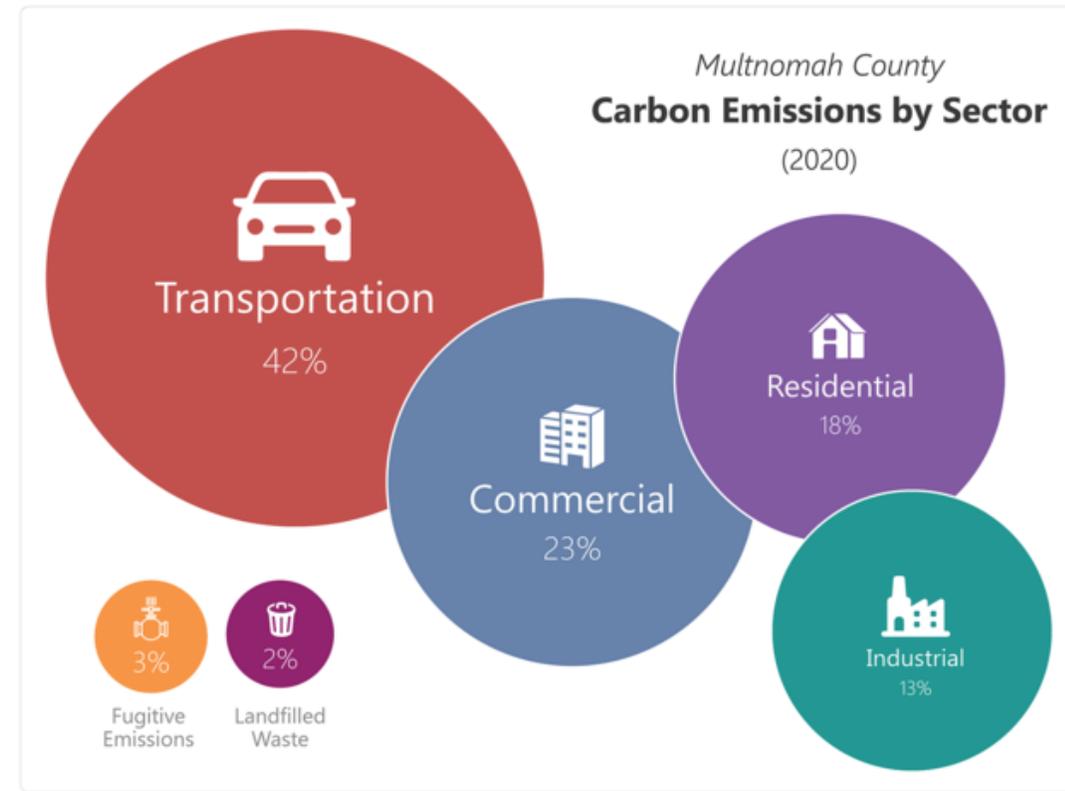
Source: City of Portland Climate Emergency Workplan 2022-2025

Educational presentation City of Portland's Climate Emergency

Making Portlanders resilient to climate change

To meet the net zero carbon goals the City created the Climate Emergency Workplan that will:

- Reduce Carbon from the sectors that produce it (transportation, industry and buildings)
- Reduce carbon from the consumption of food, goods and materials
- Sequester carbon in trees and green spaces
- Build Portlanders' resilience to the impacts of climate change and focusing on those most vulnerable.



What we heard in phase I engagements

Climate from Community

Almost eight percent of all public comments received by the Charter Commission relate to climate and environmental justice

- Urgency and no time to wait
- Establish a climate oversight committee or commission
- Establish a bureau or office of climate and environmental justice
- Establish a bill of environmental rights and responsibilities
- Embed a climate and environmental justice overlay into the charter

COMMUNITY PROPOSALS

PEACE	350PDX	Sunrise Movement PDX
Office of Climate Emergency	Climate assembly	
Climate as a special power and core value	Environmental rights and responsibilities	Binding climate test
Portland as a carbon emission free city and community by 2040	Fossil fuel phase-out*	Fossil fuel phase-out
Renewable energy alignment		
Protect rights of nature, right to nature		
Regenerative circular economy		
Expanded representation for youth		
	Participatory budgeting	
<i>*Emerging proposals</i>	Prior consent & Tribal consultation*	Prior & informed consent for Tribes

What's Next Climate Declaration

The Climate & Environmental Justice Subcommittee is interested in adding a climate declaration or climate as a core value statement into the Charter



What's Next

Climate Related Bureau Proposed Amendments

- A proposal from **Portland Parks & Recreation** to update language to reflect the City's and Portland Parks & Recreation's role in protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural systems and natural areas, and to mitigate against the public health, economic, and threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and invasive species.
- A proposal from the **Bureau of Planning & Sustainability** to delete the charter prohibition from the city's mandating weatherization of structures built before September 1, 1979.
- A proposal from the **Bureau of Environmental Services** to add specific power to the city to protect and manage natural features that convey, store, retain, infiltrate, clean or evaporate water in a manner that is necessary for the management of sewer and storm drainage.

What's Next

Learning more about Participatory Budgeting

PB Explained

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. It gives people real power over real money.

The Climate & Environmental Justice Subcommittee is also interested in learning more about participatory budgeting as a tool for ensuring climate & environmental justice can have funding allocated towards its initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

Upcoming Meetings

Sept 20

Climate & environmental justice subcommittee meeting

Oct 3

Full Commission meeting

Thank You!

5-minute break followed by
small group discussions

STAY ENGAGED IN CHARTER REVIEW

**Give verbal public
comment at full
Commission meetings**

**Join & engage in
virtual committee
meetings**

**Sign up for monthly
email updates**

Join charter events

**Submit written
comment via email or
comment form**

**Watch past
recordings online**

**Request a briefing or
meeting with
Commissioners
and/staff**

**Engage through our
partner
organizations**

Email: CharterReview@portlandoregon.gov