Sustainability and Climate Commission

Power to the Youth Retreat – Monday, February 23, 2026 – meeting minutes

Commissioner attendance

Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
José Gamero-Georgeson – D1	x		Charity Fain – D3	x	
Damon Motz-Storey – D1		x	Stephanie Kaza – D3	x	
Celeste Ruiz – D1	x		Dan Trifone – D3	x	
Jessica Zahn – D1	x		Leah Almeida – D4	x	
Alina Pawchareune – D2	x		Sriya Chinnam – D4		x
Maya Puggarana – D2	x		Angus Duncan – D4	x	
Greg Retsinas – D2	x		Luna González González – D4	x	
Vivek Shandas – D2	x		Eesa Taylor – D4	x	
Galen Whalen – D2	x		Dana Visse – D4	x	
Nora Apter – D3	x		Suze Wehr – D4	x	

Alternate attendance

Name	Present	Absent
Garrett Wong – D2	x	
Carla Chen – D3	x	
Holland Burd – D4	x	
Skai Dancey – D4		x

Staff attendance

Name	Role/bureau
Vivian Satterfield	Chief Sustainability Officer, Sustainability Office
Elaine Vizka Livingstone	Coordinator, Sustainability Office
Ingrid Fish	Strategic support, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Wing Grabowski	Meeting and engagement support, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Camille Trummer	Lead facilitator, Interplay

Portland State University attendance

Name	Role
Beth Gilden	Sustainability and Resilience Partnership Manager, Center for Public Service
Justin Huber	Graduate student mentor to youth commissioners
Amy Johnson	Graduate student mentor to youth commissioners

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services contact 311 (503-823-4000), for Relay Service & TTY: 711

Sustainability and Climate Commission

Power to the Youth Retreat – Monday, February 23, 2026 – meeting minutes

Agenda

5:00 p.m. Warm welcome

Youth commissioners opened the meeting and introduced themselves. Youth commissioners reviewed the agenda, the notes about the meeting slide and working agreements.

Chief Sustainability Officer, Vivian Satterfield, thanked the many partners who helped organize the retreat, including Meyer Memorial Trust which contributed funding to support youth participation on the Sustainability and Climate Commission. She shared thoughts about the purpose of the youth retreat, spoke about power dynamics and asked adult commissioners to allow youth to lead at this retreat. Discussions at this retreat will inform the development of the Commission's youth framework which will inform the development of the City's updated Climate Action Plan. The youth framework will be released at the Earth in Motion Kick-Off event on April 11th.

5:10 p.m. Icebreaker activities

Commissioners participated in a speed dating icebreaker activity. The purpose of the activity was to facilitate Commissioners getting to know each other better. During the second icebreaker activity, Commissioners worked together to determine which essential equipment would be needed during an emergency event. The purpose of the activity was to understand fellow commissioners planning, strategy and leadership styles and to practice working together via a simulated scenario.

6:10 p.m. Youth commissioner presentations

Each youth commissioner presented on a climate-related topic. Presentations represented their own research and thinking related to the topic area.

Transportation:
Commissioner Celeste Ruiz presented about transportation. Please reference retreat slide deck for information about the presentation.

Commission discussion themes included:

- **Fare-Free Transit:** Commissioners discussed the concept of free transit for all riders, including potential benefits such as increased ridership and improved safety.
- **Funding Considerations:** Possible funding sources for expanded transit access were discussed, including transportation pricing mechanisms and climate-related funding programs.
- **Access Barriers to Youth Passes:** Discussion addressed disparities in youth pass distribution, including school district funding differences, limited supply, waitlists, and challenges for students in obtaining passes.

Climate Justice:
Commissioner Leah Almeida presented about climate justice. Please reference retreat slide deck for information about the presentation.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services contact 311 (503-823-4000), for Relay Service & TTY: 711

Commission discussion themes included:

- **Student Organizing in Schools:** Commissioners asked about factors that support youth organizing within schools. Responses highlighted both opportunities and challenges, including navigating school administrative processes when implementing sustainability initiatives.
- **Global Environmental Impacts:** Discussion addressed how consumption and pollution in the United States affect other countries. The discussion emphasized that environmental impacts are often shifted to other regions, underscoring the need for systemic change.
- **Environmental Justice Education:** Commissioners asked about how environmental justice education is introduced in schools. Responses noted that exposure varies widely and may depend on student-led initiatives or the availability of environmental coursework.
- **Reducing a Culture of Disposability:** Discussion explored potential actions to address overconsumption and waste, including expanding infrastructure and systems that make repairing and reusing goods more accessible and affordable.

Air Quality:
Commissioner Eesa Taylor presented about climate justice. Please reference retreat slide deck for information about the presentation.

Commission discussion themes included:

- **Air Pollution and Equity:** Commissioners asked whether available data shows links between air pollution exposure and low-income communities. The discussion noted that air quality data can be layered with demographic information and correlations exist between pollution exposure and lower-income neighborhoods.
- **Youth Pollution Exposure:** The discussion explored how youth may be exposed to air pollution in their daily environments, including proximity to high-traffic corridors, diesel transportation routes, and nearby industrial or logistics facilities.
- **Community Data:** Commissioners noted that community-based organizations and neighborhood groups have collected and shared air quality data that can help inform local understanding of pollution exposure.

Intergenerational Communication:
Alternate Commissioner Holland Burd presented about intergenerational communication. Please reference retreat slide deck for information about the presentation.

Commission discussion themes included:

- **Intergenerational Dialogue:** Participants discussed the importance of creating spaces for intergenerational conversations, noting that school-based clubs and community groups can provide opportunities for youth and adults to engage in shared discussions.
- **Awareness of Engagement Spaces:** The discussion emphasized the value of increasing awareness of existing spaces where youth participation and dialogue with adults can occur.
- **Sustaining Youth Engagement:** Participants noted that youth membership in advisory bodies often changes frequently. Building intentional opportunities to learn about new members' backgrounds and perspectives was identified as important for maintaining continuity and meaningful engagement.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services contact 311 (503-823-4000), for Relay Service & TTY: 711

Climate Education and Green Workforce:
Commissioner Luna González González presented about climate education and green workforce. Please reference retreat slide deck for information about the presentation.

Commission discussion themes included:

- **Implementing Climate Projects in Schools:** Commissioners discussed challenges schools may face when navigating administrative processes to implement climate-related initiatives. Partnerships with local businesses were noted as one potential way to support project implementation.
- **Green Jobs Awareness:** Discussion addressed opportunities for youth to learn about careers related to climate and sustainability. Commissioners noted that exposure to green careers may be limited and emphasized that climate considerations are increasingly relevant across many professions.
- **Youth Engagement in Climate Planning:** Participants emphasized the importance of decision-makers to listen to youth perspectives and create opportunities for youth to ask questions and contribute ideas to climate planning processes.
- **Access to and Communication of Environmental Data:** Discussion highlighted that while environmental data exists, it can be difficult for community members – especially youth – to access and interpret. Participants emphasized the importance of improving communication and engagement around environmental data so youth can better understand impacts within their communities.

6:50 p.m. Break – group photo

7:00 p.m. Commission collaboration

Commissioners broke into small groups to discuss the five topics youth commissioners spoke about in their presentations: transportation, climate justice, air quality, intergenerational communication and climate and green workforce. The purpose of the small group discussions was to give adult commissioners the opportunity to listen and learn from youth experience, expertise, and leadership; and engage in dialogue. Each youth commissioner facilitated a small group, based on their presentation topic. Worksheets were provided to facilitate the conversation. Worksheets prompted individual reflections, group discussion, and identifying key themes and principles.

7:50 p.m. Retreat close

Commissioners were encouraged to complete the meeting feedback form. They were reminded to spread the word and encourage youth to apply to become youth commissioners. Youth commissioner applications are currently being accepted. The deadline to apply is March 23rd.

The next regular Commission meeting will take place Thursday, March 19th.

The meeting was adjourned.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access. To request translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, or other auxiliary aids or services contact 311 (503-823-4000), for Relay Service & TTY: 711