

# Portsmouth Community Conversation: Transportation, Land Use and Transportation

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INPUT FOR THE PORTSMOUTH  
CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

ORGANIZED BY PORTSMOUTH SMART GROWTH AND  
THE PORTSMOUTH TRANSPORTATION & CLIMATE ACTION GROUP

JUNE 29, 2023

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The Portsmouth Community Conversation on Transportation, Smart Growth and Climate was held at the Portsmouth Library on June 29, 2023. The meeting was cosponsored by Portsmouth grass roots organizations – [Portsmouth Smart Growth](#), [Portsmouth Climate Action](#), and the [Transportation and Climate Action Group](#) to discuss how transportation choices in Portsmouth are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions (estimated at 20-30%) and potential reduction strategies.

The meeting addressed the question: are there smart transportation and land use choices that will reduce emissions, for example, by providing attractive and affordable new forms of mobility, making walking and biking safer, encouraging electric vehicles, or improving low carbon accessibility choices for new development?

This was the first in a series of small and informal Community Conversations as part of community engagement for [the Portsmouth Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#). This summary will be provided to city staff and the CAP consultant as input for the CAP, distributed to meeting participants, and posted on the PSG and TCAG websites. Meeting organizers also posted a [list of resources](#) on the TCAG website that will be updated periodically.

The meeting had approximately 60 participants – primarily residents with an interest in the relationship between transportation, smart growth, and climate change.

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## **You are invited to a Community Conversation on Transportation, Smart Growth and Climate**

Please join your neighbors, community groups, and city representatives for a conversation on Thursday, June 29 to help determine Portsmouth's Climate Future.

**Portsmouth Smart Growth, Portsmouth Climate Action, and the Transportation and Climate Action Group** are cosponsoring this conversation to discuss how transportation choices are major sources both of greenhouse gas emissions (20-30%) and potential reduction strategies. We will address the question: are there smart transportation and land use choices that reduce emissions, for example, by providing attractive and affordable new forms of mobility, make walking and biking safer, encourage electric vehicles, or improve accessibility choices for new development?

This is the first in a series of small and informal Community Conversations organized by Portsmouth grass roots organizations as part of community engagement for the **Climate Action Plan (CAP)**. The conversations will address the urgency of the Climate Crisis through support for developing and implementing the CAP as individuals, neighborhoods, businesses, the city, and Seacoast region.

For additional information: **[PortsmouthTCAG@gmail.com](mailto:PortsmouthTCAG@gmail.com)**. For those interested, readings will be posted at the PSG and TCAG websites before the meeting.

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Join us in-person on

**Thursday, June 29 from 6:30 to 8 PM**

**Portsmouth Public Library - Levenson Room**

# PORTSMOUTH

transportation & climate action group

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## PORTSMOUTH **SMART GROWTH**

### **ABOUT PORTSMOUTH SMART GROWTH:**

Portsmouth Smart Growth presents ideas and encourages discussion and policy development around planning issues in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Our goal is to support the creation of a vibrant, sustainable, livable, and walkable community compatible with the principles of smart growth, the historic nature of Portsmouth. Learn more at [portsmouthsmartgrowth.org](http://portsmouthsmartgrowth.org).



## **PORTSMOUTH CLIMATE ACTION**

## **A Community Conversation about Transportation/Land Use and Climate Change: Input for the Portsmouth Climate Action Plan**

Organized by Portsmouth Climate Action, Transportation and Climate Action Group  
and Portsmouth Smart Growth

Levenson Room, Portsmouth City Library  
Thursday, June 29, 2023, 6:30-8:00 pm

### **Agenda:**

- **Welcome and Introductions** (10 minutes)
  - PCA/TCAG (Bill Lyons)
  - PSG (Emily Chadwick)
  - Participants' Check-in: (Bert Cohen, PCA)
  
- **Goals and structure of meeting** (Bill Lyons) (5)
  
- **Update on Portsmouth CAP:** Peter Britz, City of Portsmouth (3)
  
- **Topic Overviews for Breakouts** (20)
  - *Shared Mobility/Public Transit:* Bill Lyons, Peter Vandermark (PSG)
  - *Walking, Biking:* Matt Glenn, Annie Poubeau (TCAG/SABR)
  - *EVs:* Tom Morgan (PSG), Fred Calcinari (PCA/TCAG)
  - *Land Use/Smart Growth:* Emily Chadwick, Deb Chag (PSG)
  
- **Facilitated topic breakouts:** (25)
- **Groups report back on actions to reduce GHG emissions in CAP** (15)
  
- **Close meeting** (5)
  - BrightAction Platform
  - Next Steps

To stay engaged on Transportation, Smart Growth and Climate activities:

\* TCAG: [PortsmouthTCAG@gmail.net](mailto:PortsmouthTCAG@gmail.net) or <https://searei.org/tcag/>

\* Portsmouth Smart Growth: <https://www.portsmouthsmartgrowth.org/>

\* Portsmouth Climate Future/CAP:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/planportsmouth/portsmouths-climate-future>



## Discussion Questions for Breakout Groups

The following discussion questions were adapted from [the Portsmouth Climate Forum 5/4/23](#) and developed for the CAP Community Engagement and Climate Ambassador program. Notes from the breakout groups are on page 52.

### Topics for breakout group discussions:

- 1) Walking or Biking: Nonmotorized or Active Transportation
- 2) Shared Mobility/Public Transit: transportation shared among users, including traditional public transit (fixed route/schedule buses); micromobility (bike sharing, scooter sharing); carsharing, rides on demand (Uber, Lyft, flexible minibuses) or ridesharing (carpooling and vanpooling).
- 3) Electric Vehicles: vehicles (cars, trucks, scooters, bikes, buses) and charging infrastructure.
- 4) Smart Growth/Land Use: policies, plans, or projects that encourage reduced vehicle trips, miles, and GHG.

### Questions: for above topics, assigned to each group

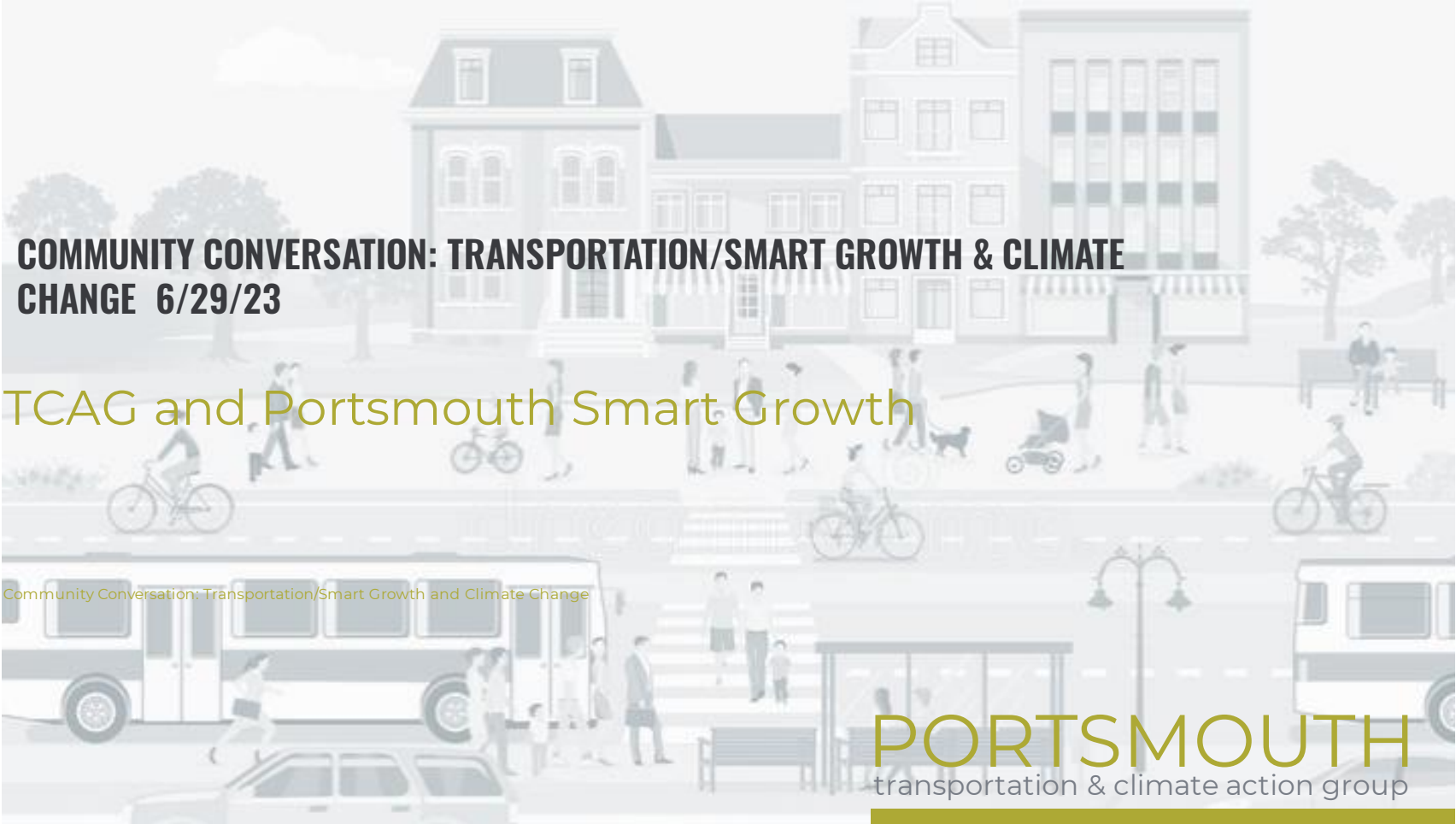
- 1) Where and how do you think the City (government operations) and Community (residential, commercial, institutional) should focus efforts to reduce transportation sector GHG emissions? (10 minutes)
- 2) What barriers do the City, community, or you personally face in supporting solutions identified in Question 1? (5 minutes)
- 3) How aggressive should the City and Community be in pursuit of transportation strategies to reduce GHG emissions? (5 minutes)
  - How should the City and Community prioritize climate actions? What criteria should be applied, for example, cost effectiveness or “co-benefits” in addition to GHG reductions (e.g., social equity/affordability, safety/public health, livability, economic development), political and public support, or impact/scale)?
- 4) Any concerns about whether any population groups can contribute to or benefit from these actions? (5 min)  
If time permits:
- 5) How can the City promote education and awareness of climate goals and these suggestions?
- 6) The group can prioritize suggested actions for the CAP based on question 1.

# Overview Slides: Portsmouth Context and Best Practice Examples

## Presenters:

- Transportation and Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Bill Lyons (TCAG)
- Topic 1 Shared Mobility and Public Transit: Bill Lyons
- Topic 2 Biking and Walking: Matt Glenn (TCAG and SABR)
- Topic 3 Electric Vehicle Charging: Tom Morgan (PSG)
- Topic 4 Land Use/Smart Growth and Transportation: Emily Chadwick (PSG)





**COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: TRANSPORTATION/SMART GROWTH & CLIMATE CHANGE 6/29/23**

TCAG and Portsmouth Smart Growth

Community Conversation: Transportation/Smart Growth and Climate Change

**PORTSMOUTH**  
transportation & climate action group

# Overview

- ❖ First in series of Community Conversations to provide input for Portsmouth Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- ❖ Supports Climate Ambassadors Program
- ❖ Organized by Portsmouth Climate Action, Portsmouth Transportation Climate Action Group, Portsmouth Smart Growth

# Purpose & Agenda

- ❖ Develop climate-friendly transportation and smart growth strategies for the Portsmouth Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- ❖ Input to City and CAP consultant
- ❖ Develop “community of practice” to support CAP implementation

## Agenda:

- ❖ Topic Overviews
- ❖ Breakout Discussions
- ❖ Groups Report Back
- ❖ Next Steps

# Principles: Climate Friendly Transportation

1. Goal: reduce transport sector GHG emissions
2. Sustainability
  - Balance Environment, Economy, Equity (3 Es)
  - Focus on Co-benefits
3. Systems approach
  - Improve multimodal connectivity
  - Focus on performance of the system
4. Public engagement and political will for implementation

# Transportation & GHG emissions

- ❖ Transportation sector is a major source (20-30+%) of GHG emissions in Portsmouth, in the U.S. and world-wide
- ❖ Transportation emissions can be reduced by:
  - ❖ reducing trips and vehicle miles by single occupant fossil fuel burning personal vehicles
  - ❖ Shifting to lower carbon modes (walking, biking, shared mobility/public transit)
  - ❖ Eliminating trips - remote work, on-line shopping, demand management (parking charges)
  - ❖ Shift to EVs (cars, trucks, or e-bikes).
  - ❖ Land use/smart growth

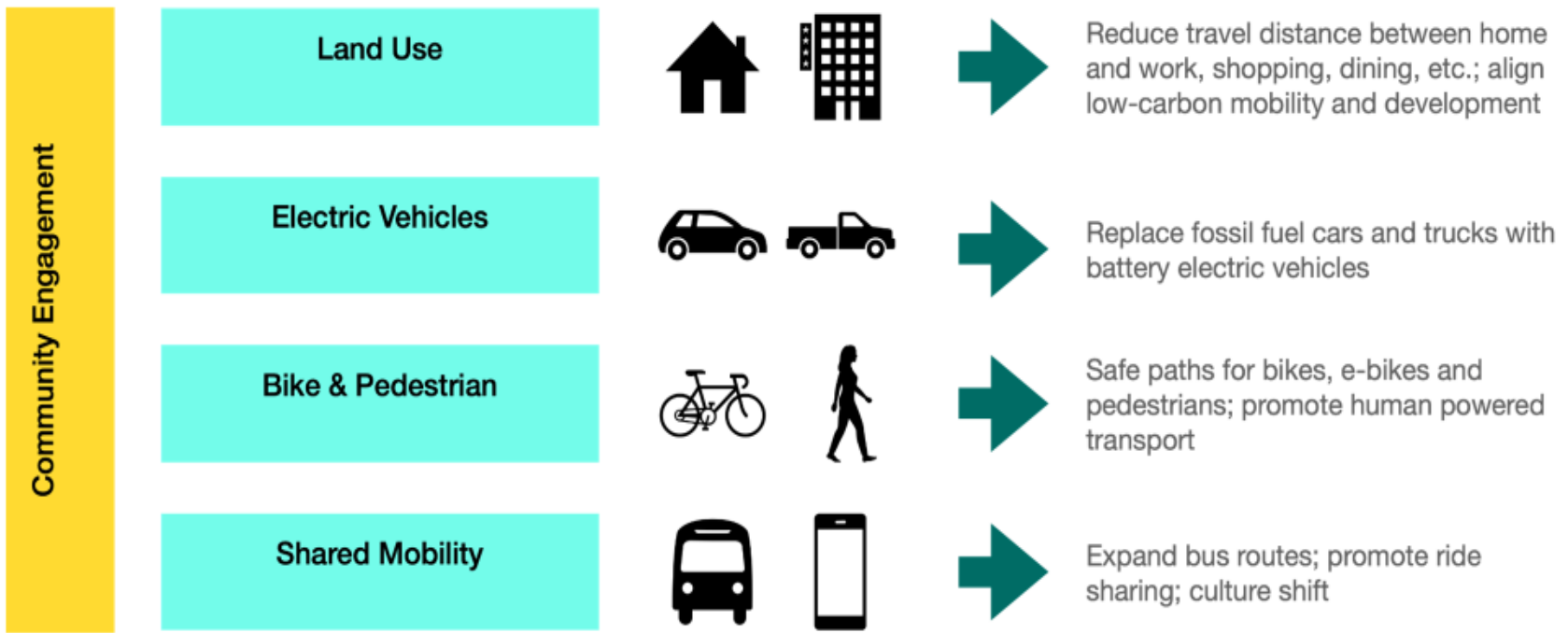
Transportation



CAP - GHG  
Reductions

Smart Growth

# A BALANCED APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION GHG REDUCTIONS FOR THE CAP



PORTSMOUTH  
Transportation & Climate Action Group

# Topic 1: Shared Mobility/Public Transit

## OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

- **Can shared mobility/public transit significantly reduce transport GHG?**
  - How can we increase from current 1.7% public transit mode share?
  - Funding challenges – NH 49<sup>th</sup> in state support for operations
- **Can innovative Shared Mobility attract riders, reduce car trips, GHG?**
  - Fixed or flexible routes and scheduling (microtransit)
  - Public-private partnership (developers, tourist industry, operators)
  - Single platform: seamless app for routing, scheduling, fare payment
- **How to improve connectivity?**
  - Bus, first mile/last mile, bike/pedestrian, micromobility, shared mobility?
  - Connecting COAST, UNH Wildcat, C&J?



# SHARED MOBILITY

## BEST PRACTICES - SAVANNAH GEORGIA "DOT"



HOME ROUTES & SCHEDULES RIDER TOOLS PLAN YOUR VISIT ABOUT US Q



Source: Savannah Mobility Management, Inc. connectonthedot.com

# PORTSMOUTH

transportation & climate action group

# Evolving Approaches: Mobility as a Service (MaaS)



## MyRide by GMT

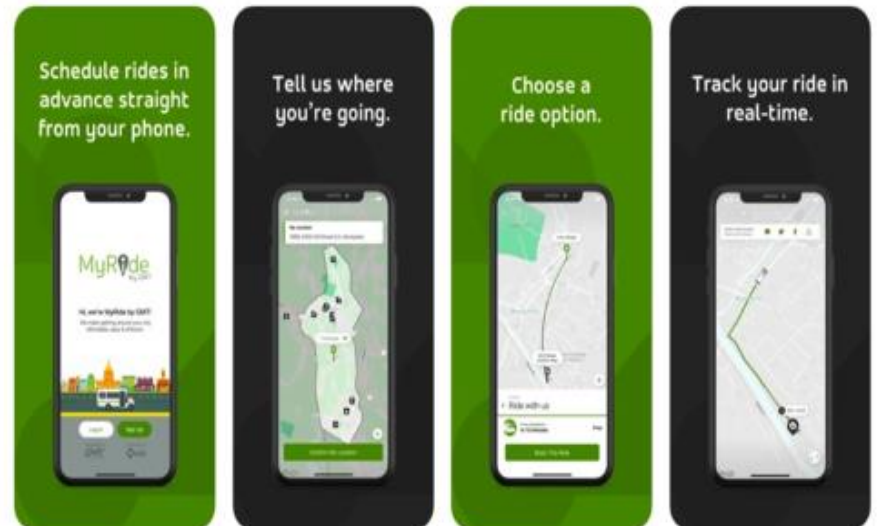


### Introducing MyRide by GMT

*MyRide by GMT* is a new flexible-schedule, flexible-route service in Montpelier. Operated by GMT, *MyRide* features technology-enabled vehicles that provide curb-to-curb service, taking you when and where you need to go.

## Montpelier, VT

<https://ridegmt.com/myride/>



**PORTSMOUTH**  
transportation & climate action group

## SHARED MOBILITY: Evolution for Portsmouth?

- **Climate focus: how to build support for attractive options to reduce car trips, VMT, GHG?**
- **Explore partnerships for low carbon transportation:**
  - Bus operators (COAST, UNH Wildcat, C&J)
  - Private partners: developers, schools, tourist industry, other employers
    - Align with improved first mile-last mile connectivity
    - Focus on priority corridors, future development, affordable housing
- **Downtown Mobility Hub:** connecting all modes, seamless connectivity
- **Sustainable Mobility Plan:** multimodal vision -- align with regional plans (RPC)
- **Possible expanded circular loop?**
  - Fixed or flexible scheduling and routing - complement existing bus service
    - Direct links: historic district, tourism, parking, jobs, housing, parking
    - "Proof of concept" pilot – access new federal programs (including climate focus)

## Topic 1: Presentation on Shared Mobility/Public Transit

To maximize GHG reductions from transportation, it's critical to take a balanced and comprehensive approach, looking for ways to improve connectivity between different modes of transportation and avoiding a fragmented or stove-pipe approach.

Systems approach – we travel from origins to destinations, typically combining types of transportation, walking or biking to the bus, driving to C&J park and ride then commuter bus to work or on to Logan, flying great distances, and then Uber, bus, train, or rental car to our final destination.

Often planning and managing these modes of transportation is fragmented, done in silos by mode or geographic area, rather than considering how to improve the efficiency, safety, affordability, or environmental impact of complete trips.

There are important opportunities to understand and improve connectivity of all modes, to focus on the efficiency of complete trips, including the ability to reduce GHG and meet other goals.

Although we're focusing today on how to reduce GHG, transportation policy, plans, and projects always consider broad co-benefits for transportation, related to sustainability – safety, reduced traffic delay, affordability and social fairness, and economic development.

Starting with 20-30% of emissions, Transportation is certainly a big part of the problem. In Tom's EV overview he actually has a bigger number for NH. The CAP will have current and more accurate measures as a baseline or starting point.

But can transportation be a major part of the emission reduction solution? That's the question for tonight and for the CAP.

What are possible strategies? What are barriers starting with the obvious one of cost, plus the difficulty of changing behavior, and political will.

Our first overview is on Shared Mobility, including public transit. In Portsmouth and the Seacoast, this is primarily fixed route public bus operated by COAST, UNH Wildcat, and CJ for commuters and to Logan.

According to the Public Transit overview on the NHDOT website, NH is 49<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states for state funding provided for public transit operations, far behind our New England neighbors.

How well do we connect our neighborhoods, downtown, and other major destinations by public transit? And how can we navigate current funding limitations?

Can we learn from best practices? Are there innovations we can try to provide attractive, affordable, and competitive, options for personal vehicles? This will be essential if transportation is to make an important contribution to GHG reductions in the CAP.

Last year I visited Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC as a tourist. These are larger but similar historic cities with a major tourist economy, with a compact and active center.

I didn't have or want a car. In fact, the opportunity for a car free visit, taking CJ to Logan, Uber to downtown Savannah, and walking and riding the shuttle loop bus around the historic center of Savannah is what prompted our vacation source.

In both places there was a free publicly operated shuttle bus that served visitors and residents.

In Savannah, the public bus service is managed by an authority representing the city, the public transit operator, and private sector, including hospitality industry.

Stable funding comes from public as well as private sources, including a hotel or bed tax paid by visitors. This has come up in Portsmouth but has encountered some legal obstacles.

This is a case where a similar best practice may require a legal and regulatory solution, perhaps developed and funded as a pilot through new federal infrastructure or climate programs.

As a 2nd quick example, Green Mountain Transit (GMT) in Montpelier VT provides a nearby peer example of an innovative emerging approach to mobility, within the broad category of Mobility as a Service or MaaS.

MaaS integrates various forms of transport and related services in a single comprehensive, on demand mobility. It uses Technology-enabled vehicles and apps to provide curb to curb service for multiple passengers heading in the same direction in a shared vehicle.

GMT's flexible schedule, and flexible route service using vans or small vehicles. This innovative approach to shared mobility is typically coordinated with existing fixed routes, usually bus service.

It can be publicly operated or by private companies under public contract to service the public. Can provide first mile/last mile service (e.g., to C&J)

There are Important cost considerations for Portsmouth based on current funding policies and availability of federal, state, and local revenues, so it's important to consider public private partnerships such as the Savannah example, where local business, particularly the tourist industry are strong supporters of public transit.

To return to the earlier questions: if transportation is either a major or the major source of emissions in Portsmouth, and the current mode share for public transit by COAST is 1.7%, are there opportunities to expand shared mobility and public transit? Is there "low hanging fruit" for reducing GHG emissions, by combining innovative approaches to mobility and new technologies, with public-private partnerships and funding opportunities? Are there best practices that we should consider?

How could a new initiative be part of a connected system with current bus services, improved first mile/last mile connectivity, serving the city as part of the greater region?

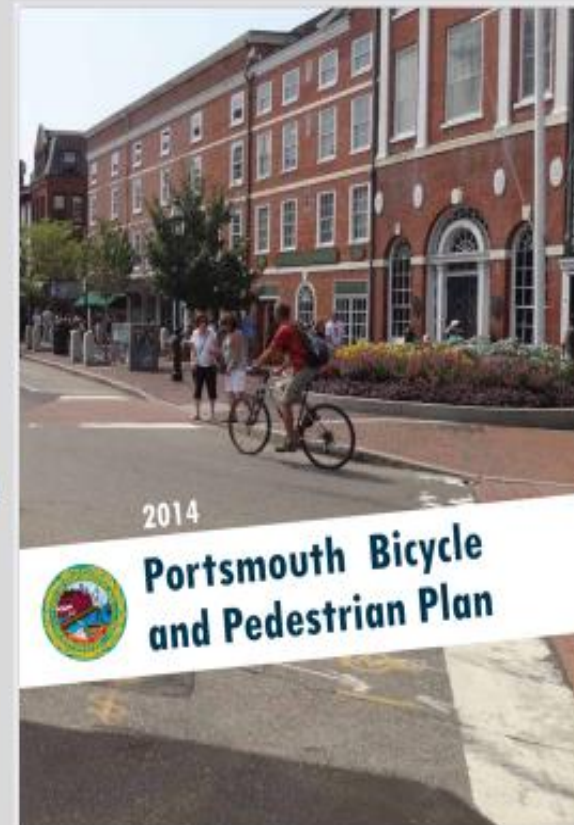
This is an excellent opportunity to access significant new federal funds for transportation and innovation, particularly climate-related, with programs that encourage innovation and pilots.

## Topic 2: Bicycle and Pedestrian

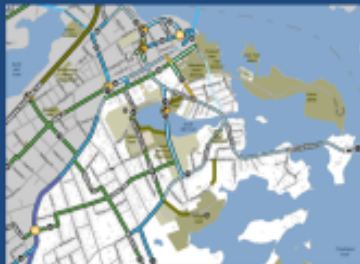
- Portsmouth is a relatively compact city in which many people live within easy walking or biking distance to jobs, shopping, and recreation- in fact, Portsmouth has been named “most walkable in the state”
- According to the 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 5.7% of commutes were on foot and 2.4% were by bicycle, motorcycle or taxi- well above the national average but with much room for growth
- A [nationwide survey](#) from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities found that a whopping two-thirds of U.S. residents would be more likely to bike if they were separated from cars by a physical barrier

**Existing policies and plans that can be leveraged include:**

- Walk Friendly Community Policy, Bike Friendly Community Policy (2013)
- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) (2014) and Update (2018)
- [Blue Ribbon Committee on Transportation Policy Report to the City Council](#) (2013)
- [Complete Streets Policy](#) (2013)
- [Portsmouth 2025 Master Plan](#)



## Bicycle Improvements



LEGEND	SPOT IMPROVEMENTS	PROPOSED FACILITIES	EXISTING FACILITIES
	Keep Gate Open and Close for Ped and Bike Access	Street-Lane	Street-Street
	Cracking Improvements	Shoulder, 1-Side	Bike Lane
	Intersection Geometry Improvement	Shoulder, 2-Side	Four Feet Bike Lane
	Signal Improvements	Cycle Track	Climbing Lane
		Buffed Bike Lane	Controlled Bike Lane
			Segment Route
			Project ID

## Pedestrian Improvements



LEGEND	SPOT IMPROVEMENTS	PROPOSED FACILITIES	EXISTING FACILITIES
	Keep Gate Open and Close for Ped and Bike Access	Shared-Like Park	Shared-Like Park
	Cracking Improvements	Shoulder, 1-Side	Shared Street
	Intersection Geometry Improvement	Shoulder, 2-Side	Shared-Like Street
	Signal Improvements	ADA Compliant 1-Side	Shared-Like Lighting
	Bar Stop Improvements	ADA Compliant 2-Side	Shared-Like Management
	Cracking Improvements	Shoulder-Like Park	Project ID

# Prioritization Criteria

Safety

Connectivity

Equity

Feasibility

Capital Improvement Plan

Lifecycle Cost

From 2018 Update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan



# Non-Infrastructure Recommendations

- The 5 Es
  - Engineering
  - Education
  - Encouragement
  - Enforcement
  - Evaluation

Safe Routes to School

Bike Friendly Business Program

Volunteer Snow Clearance

Speed Feedback Signs

Mode Share Goals

Law Enforcement Education

Walk to Work Days

From 2018 Update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

## **More Portsmouth Context:**

- The 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was updated only once in 2018, despite recommending annual reporting
- Projects are not ranked by ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by enabling a mode shift
- We have a Parking and Traffic Safety committee, but no pedestrian and bicycle advisory committee like many other cities
- Traffic calming, bike lanes, parking reductions, and any change from the “status quo” will generate controversy
- Much enthusiasm exists, as seen at the recent kids Bike Rodeo and Mayor’s Ride, and by soaring sales of e-bikes, e-scooters, and other forms of non-motorized mobility

## Topic 2: Presentation on Biking and Walking

The presentation is based on research by Matt Glenn with Anne Poubeau, Jonathan Sandberg, Kenneth Ferrer, and TCAG.

Portsmouth context: “most walkable city” in the state, and there are above average rates of biking and walking, but there is also much opportunity for growth. Many homes, workplaces, and other destinations are close enough for non-motorized transport.

Studies show great interest in biking if there were protected infrastructure, and we already have many examples of best practices from other parts of the U.S. and the world.

Portsmouth has great policies and plans in place (complete streets, bike and walk friendly community, master plan, and bike/ped plan) but progress is slow. The bike/ped plan was done in 2014 and only updated once in 2018 with a single report to council, but this could happen annually.

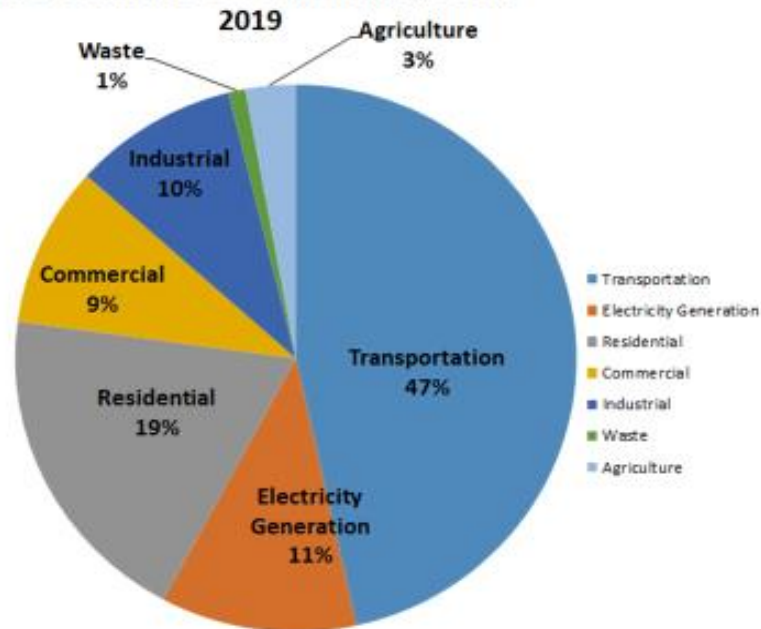
There is a Parking and Traffic Safety Committee which does some good work around traffic calming, but there is no city group charged with moving the bike/ped goals forward. Policies and plans also do not rank projects based on their likelihood of reducing GHG emissions alongside other goals.

Changes from the status quo involving street design or parking have generated backlash or “bikelash” in the past. Single projects aren’t very effective until there is a safe and connected network for biking, connected to other modes such as walking and public transit. All the same, there is widespread support for better biking and walking. There are also a great number of co-benefits beyond GHG reductions.

## Electric Vehicle Fast Chargers



### NH Greenhouse Gas Emissions By Sector

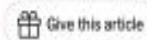


Data Source: NH Department of Environmental Services

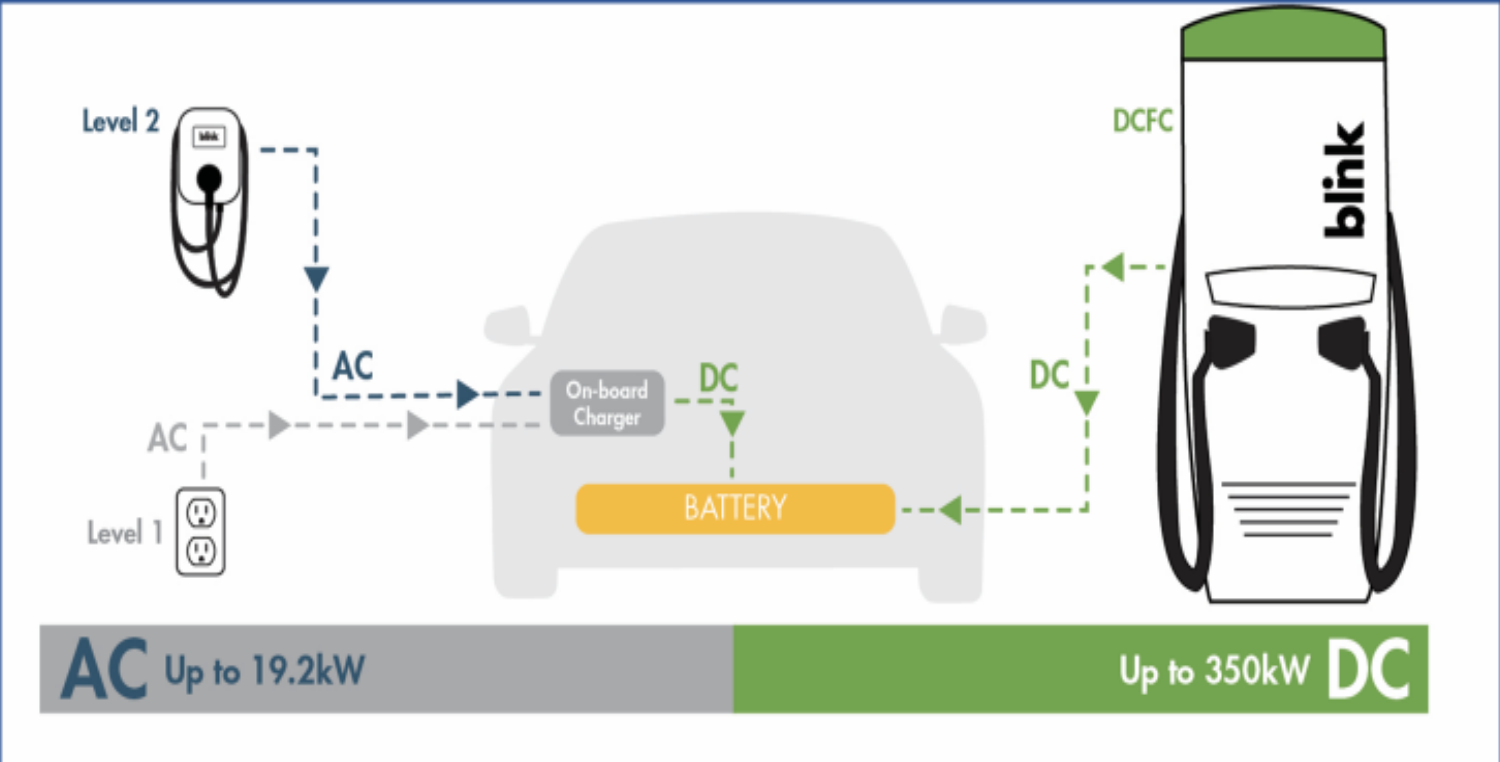
The transportation sector is responsible for 47% of GHG.

## ***E.P.A. Is Said to Propose Rules Meant to Drive Up Electric Car Sales Tenfold***

In what would be the nation's most ambitious climate regulation, the proposal is designed to ensure that electric cars make up the majority of new U.S. auto sales by 2032.

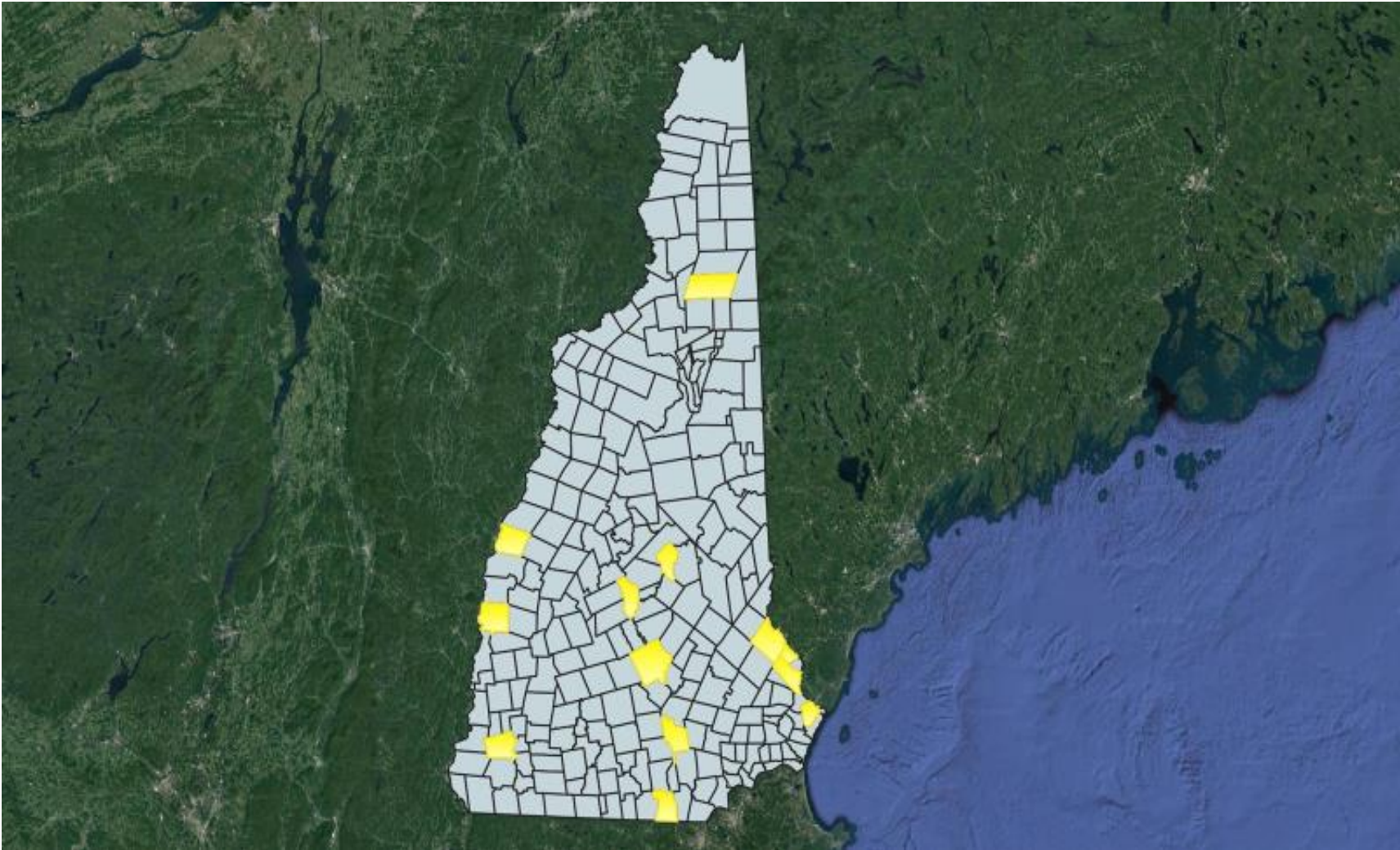


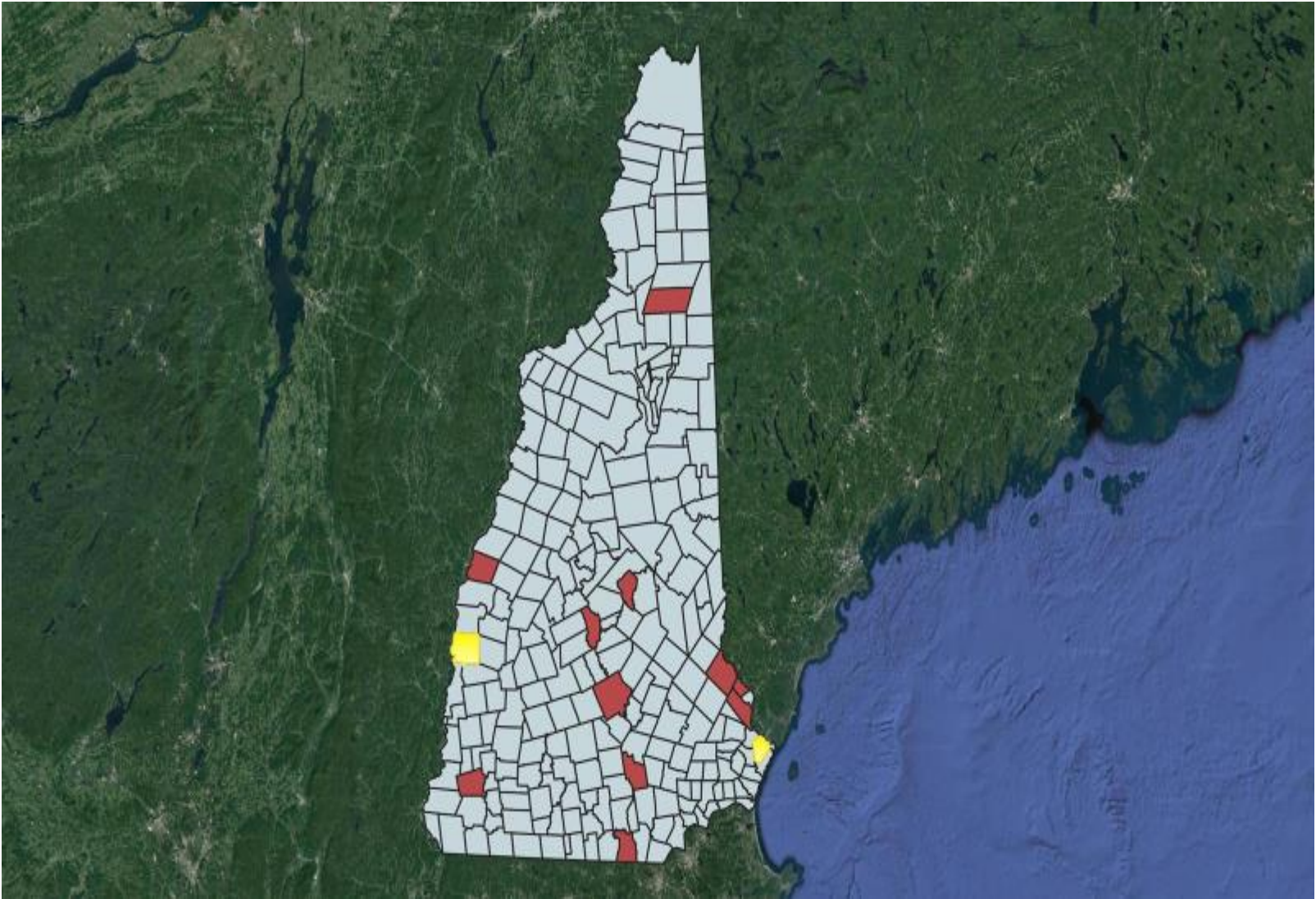
President Biden delivered a speech at a General Motors electric vehicle assembly plant in Detroit in 2021. The new rules would exceed his earlier goal that half the cars sold in the United States be all-electric by 2030. Doug Mills/The New York Times











## **Motor Vehicle Service Station**

An establishment that sells fuel (including but not limited to gasoline, diesel, natural gas, electricity or hydrogen) to individual vehicles.

Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance  
Page 15-27





190,444 sf  
1 space for every 300 sf  
635 parking spaces  
27% occupied

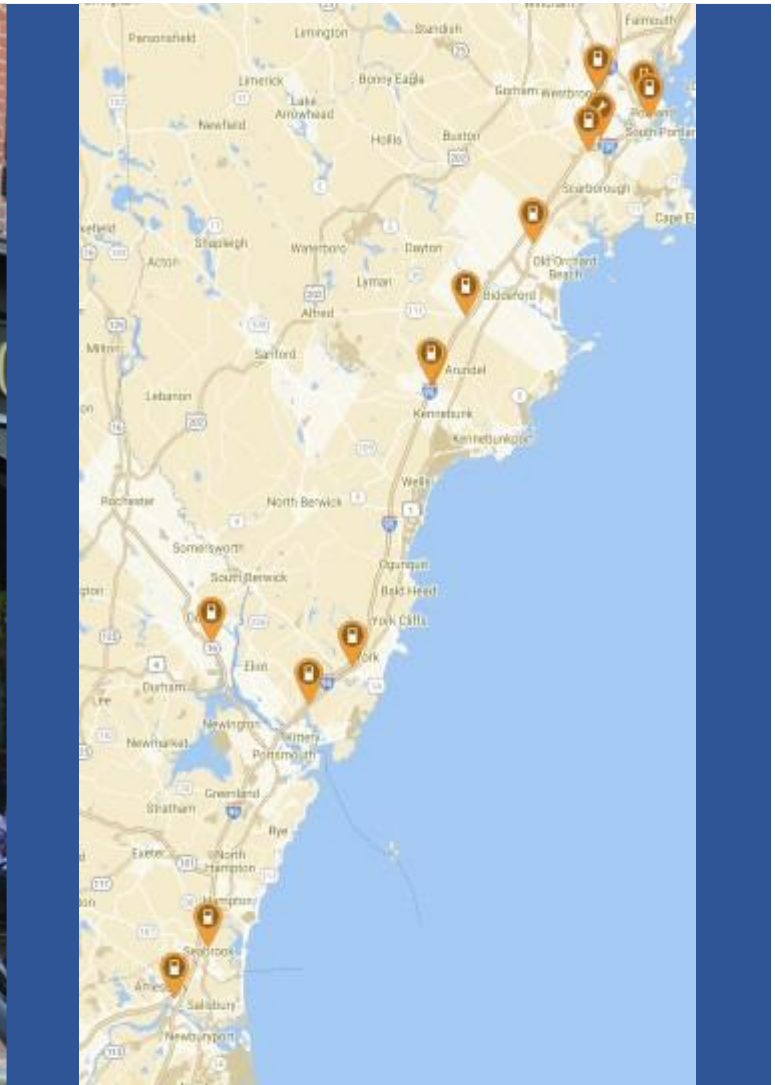
By Degrees: Covering Climate Change

# Over 2 million more electric vehicles estimated in New England over next decade

New Hampshire Public Radio | By Sarah Gibson  
Published February 28, 2023 at 3:54 PM EST



Don Gault / NHPR



# Challenges

- 1) In order to enable a timely transition to electric vehicles, chargers must be ubiquitous.
- 2) EV Equity: 46% of Portsmouth residents rent their homes. Landlords have little incentive to install Level 2 chargers.
- 3) City Hall's regulatory obstacles place our tourist sector at a competitive disadvantage vs. other tourist destinations.



What do you think?



## Topic 3: Presentation on EV Chargers

EV Fast Chargers - EV Forecast, Overview on the technology.  
Where are we? Where do we want to go?

Why is this important? Pie chart on NH GHG. 47% due to transportation.

For the EV transition to actually happen, this infrastructure must be ubiquitous.

Lev 1, 2, and DC fast. Aerial of Walmart Seabrook to illustrate inverter and transformer.

Where are each appropriate?

Statewide pic – EV chargers in NH. 126 plugs.

11 out of 13 NH cities have DC chargers. Ports vying with Claremont for last place. Donut hole NH. Portsmouth is the donut hole in the donut hole.

Importance to Portsmouth economy - map of chargers in I-95 corridor.

How did Portsmouth fall so far behind?

2013 gas = EV zoning amendment adopted, defining “motor vehicle service station.” This zoning provision seems disconnected from the real world and gas station management’s business model. Lack of space for EV. Folks do not want to hang around a gas station for 25 minutes, nor do the gas station operators want them to.

2015 - Tesla was denied a downtown installation by City of P staff. Following Portsmouth’s denial, Tesla installed 8 plugs by Panera in Seabrook, the first EV fast charger installation in NH.

2017 - MP quote from page 18.

2017 - Electrify America, a subsidiary of Volkswagen. They have a \$2 billion budget dedicated to installing fast chargers across the USA, at no cost to local taxpayers. Rejected at Walmart by City of P. If other similar applications have been rejected the policy should be reviewed. Following Portsmouth’s rejection, EA installed 4 plugs at Walmart in Seabrook.

2021 - City Council ordered staff to lift the ban.

May 2022 - Councilor Denton submitted zoning amendment to lift the ban.

June 2023 - PB members inform me that they have not received the Denton amendment.

Where do we go from here?

# Topic 4: Land Use

The Human Scale City



## The Human Scale City

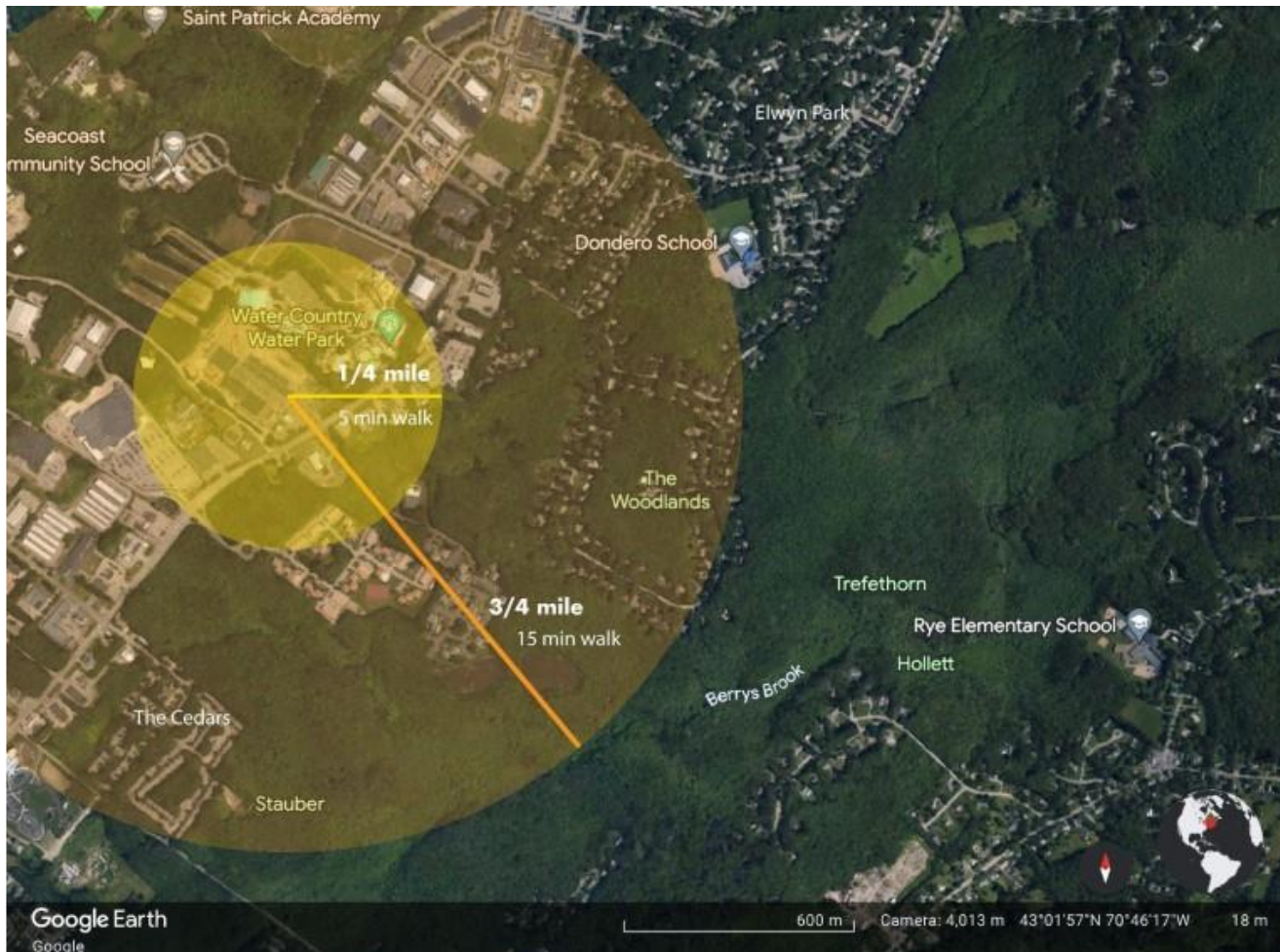
- services and amenities
- accessibility
- housing variety
- mixed use
- lively street presence
- flexible and temporary uses
- parking requirements
- promotion











## Topic 4: Role of Land Use in Transportation GHG emission reduction

One of the most important aspects in getting people to reduce vehicle use is to eliminate the need to use a vehicle. If people could find the majority of their daily needs within their own neighborhoods, it would be much easier to reduce vehicle trips and ideally not need a vehicle at all.

This approach has been adopted in a number of cities around the world and has been referred to by various names such as a human-scale city, complete neighborhoods, or vital neighborhoods. It breaks down the old planning paradigm of separating and grouping use types within the zoning code so that all the retail was location in one area, office parks in another, housing in another, and government in another area. The more these things are decentralized and mixed together within a neighborhood, the more accessible they become by walking or biking. In addition to the role they play in reducing GHG emissions, they have the added benefit of supporting local economies and creating deeper social ties.

Tonight, we hope to explore some of the aspects of a Human Scale City and how they might apply to Portsmouth. In the discussion groups following the presentation we would like to collect feedback from the group as to what is most relevant and important to the Portsmouth Climate Action Plan.

### **1. Create a list of the most important amenities and services**

- Elements to consider include:
  - Connection to public transportation
  - Local employment opportunities
  - Pharmacy
  - Fresh food
  - Bank
  - Post Office
  - Health facilities (doctors, dentists, urgent care)
  - Schools
  - Daycare
  - Library
  - Playgrounds and parks
  - Green spaces
  - Sports and recreation
  - Community Center
  - Housing variety
  - Housing availability
  - Safe walking and biking routes
  - For more metrics: [https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/urban\\_livability\\_checklist4pp-a3-aw-002.pdf](https://cur.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/urban_livability_checklist4pp-a3-aw-002.pdf)

- - Portland OR mapping analysis of walkable access to commercial services and amenities as part of their CAP to better understand and address gaps. 'Hot Spot' map considers types of pedestrian access including sidewalk, street connectivity and topography. (<https://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?a=288098&c=52256>)
  - Review and document the existing zoning and other city initiatives (like the master plan, bike ped plan, complete streets, etc.) that support a human-scale city approach. Are these goals being upheld? Which ones need to be updated?
- 2. Increase new housing opportunities and types in areas with access to amenities**
    - Encourage more form based zoning and mixed-use zoning with a
    - Focus on creating hubs or corridors of walkability and bikeability
    - Prepare hubs to connect with larger potential public transit systems
    - Ensure equitable and inclusive access to amenities, services and transit
  - 3. Increase infill opportunities in existing neighborhoods with access to amenities**
    - Reevaluate the current ADU zoning to improve the process of creating ADUs
      - <https://shelterforce.org/2022/05/03/adus-laws-and-uses-dos-and-donts/>
      - <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/rip>
    - Allow by right more small-scale multi-family in single family residency zones.
  - 4. Activate ground floor level to create lively, active street presence**

[https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/15-minute-cities-How-to-develop-people-centred-streets-and-mobility?language=en\\_USv](https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/15-minute-cities-How-to-develop-people-centred-streets-and-mobility?language=en_USv)
  - 5. This can be addressed through mixed use development with active business use on the ground floor and housing above**
    - Active ground level makes making more appealing and feel safer
  - 6. Allow for more temporary and flexible uses**
    - Zoning and planning policy take a long time to implement and take effect
    - Keep space activated and used more efficiently with things like markets, food trucks, pop-ups,
    - Flexible use can be based on time of day or day of the week. Ex; farmers market
    - Temporary use can fill vacant spaces while the new use is being determined/ built
    - Meanwhile Space in London: Meanwhile Space brings vacant assets into use for affordable and easy access space for startup enterprises, communities, and better places. Meanwhile Space's model reduces the financial risk to individuals, which encourages entrepreneurship and reduces the financial burden for those who are financially excluded <https://www.meanwhitespace.com/about>

**7. Eliminate or reduce the parking requirements to create more usable space.**

- De-emphasize driving, create more lively space than car storage
- Allow bike parking, EV charging and shared mobility spaces to be used toward parking count
- Somerville, MA adopted a zoning change that created a parking maximum for developments instead of a parking minimum.  
(<https://www.tuftsdaily.com/article/2020/01/somerville-zoning-overhaul-establishes-housing-environmental-standards-new-development>)

**8. Create educational opportunities to improve awareness**

- Changing zoning from the status quo can feel like an unknown to many residents, providing information and resources about the reason and benefits of changes is important to changing the conversation
- We also need mechanisms to review and reassess and make sure that any changes serve the goals in the intended way and haven't caused unexpected consequences.

Look at Portsmouth with distance overlays:

- A lot of potential available, how to improve the structure that is there
  - Portsmouth provides an abundance of services, daily needs, and entertainment without leaving town.
  - Organize needs by frequency of use. People need frequent access to work, groceries, medicine, banks, schools/ childcare and green space, and regular access to health services, entertainment, shopping.
  - What does Portsmouth need more of? Where?

# Notes from Breakout Groups

## **Breakout Group Facilitators**

- Topic 1 Shared Mobility and Public Transit: Bill Lyons (TCAG) and Peter Vandermark (PSG)
- Topic 2 Biking and Walking: Matt Glenn and Annie Poubeau (TCAG and SABR)
- Topic 3 Electric Vehicles: Tom Morgan (PSG) and Fred Calcinari (TCAG)
- Topic 4 Land Use and Transportation: Emily Chadwick and Deb Chag (PSG)

The following discussion questions for the breakout discussions were adapted from [the Portsmouth Climate Forum](#) 5/4/23 and developed for the CAP Community Engagement and Climate Ambassador program.

Topics for breakout group discussions:

- 5) Walking or Biking: Nonmotorized or Active Transportation
- 6) Shared Mobility/Public Transit: transportation shared among users, including traditional public transit (fixed route/schedule buses); micromobility (bike sharing, scooter sharing); carsharing, rides on demand (Uber, Lyft, flexible minibuses) or ridesharing (carpooling and vanpooling).
- 7) Electric Vehicles: vehicles (cars, trucks, scooters, bikes, buses) and charging infrastructure.
- 8) Smart Growth/Land Use: policies, plans, or projects that encourage reduced vehicle trips, miles, and GHG.

Questions: for above topics, assigned to each group

- 7) Where and how do you think the City (government operations) and Community (residential, commercial, institutional) should focus efforts to reduce transportation sector GHG emissions? (10 minutes)
- 8) What barriers do the City, community, or you personally face in supporting solutions identified in Question 1? (5 minutes)
- 9) How aggressive should the City and Community be in pursuit of transportation strategies to reduce GHG emissions? (5 minutes)
  - How should the City and Community prioritize climate actions? What criteria should be applied, for example, cost effectiveness or “co-benefits” in addition to GHG reductions (e.g., social equity/affordability, safety/public health, livability, economic development), political and public support, or impact/scale)?
- 10) Any concerns about whether any population groups can contribute to or benefit from these actions? (5 min)  
If time permits:
- 11) How can the City promote education and awareness of climate goals and these suggestions?
- 12) The group can prioritize suggested actions for the CAP based on question 1.

## **Topic 1: Notes from Breakout Session on Shared Mobility/Public Transit**

### **Where and how the City and Community should focus efforts on reducing GHG emissions in the CAP:**

- More people would ride buses if access were easier and safer. There should be more and better bus shelters. Improve shelters gradually, beginning with high use locations like Route 1 south.
- Access to buses needs to be safer. Many bus stops are not accessible by safe sidewalks. For example, parents do not feel that it is safe for children to ride a bus to Water Country and other destinations when there are inadequate or no sidewalks.
- Considering costs and the potential to gradual increase public transit use, begin by improving bus service and shelters and walk/bike access along a visible priority corridor like Route 1 or Islington Street. Useful to reference priorities in Bike/Ped Plan.
- Strong support for a new shuttle loop service that accesses key destinations with frequent and fast service, providing direct service to major destinations (e.g., downtown, large housing developments, hospital, C&J) without intermediary stops.
- High interest in trying a flexible-schedule, flexible route system with curb-to-curb service such as MyRide in Montpelier, VT.
- Residents unfamiliar with the current bus service, unsure how to ride, and need help to learn what's available to try the bus and get riding it. Few know about schedules, routes, and very reasonable fares. There would be a great benefit in marketing and education to motivate and change travel habits relying on cars. Consider Ride Free Day or discounts at shops, coffee shops as promotions to try the bus.
- Consider public private partnerships between the city, bus operators, and major businesses such as the Shipyard, Pease, and downtown, with satellite parking and shared costs with major employers or into the city.
- Target students with flexible service around school hours instead of large buses on traditional routes and schedules.
- Encourage employers to offer tax-deductible transit benefits to employees similar to what is available with free parking. The City could provide a model for staff.
- Try innovative approaches to shared mobility as pilots, e.g., focus on priority corridors, public transit with first-mile last mile improved walking/biking access, or shuttle loop. Explore the use of significant new federal transportation funding in programs related to providing affordable access and climate friendly projects.
- Availability of cheap or free parking downtown makes it difficult to encourage use of public transit, walking, or biking. The CAP should consider how to combine parking strategies with improved public transit, biking, and walking strategies to reduce trips by personal vehicles.

### **Barriers to adapting above strategies:**

- Lack of awareness of available public transit and how to use it.
- Seniors find it difficult to access.
- Still too easy and too cheap to drive and park downtown.

## Topic 2: Notes from Breakout Session on Biking and Walking

### Where and how the City and Community should focus efforts on reducing GHG emissions in the CAP:

- Participant one: focused efforts on downtown because of the tourists, how about the outside of the city?  
For example route one bypass: we see pedestrians walking on the side it's not safe. On route 33 there is no pedestrian accommodation. There's nothing along the corridors where the new residents are moving to; we need to build connectors between corridors.
- Participant number two: around North Mill Pond we need to increase priority of road maintenance. For example, on the causeway on Maplewood you have to ride in traffic because the bike lane is not in good shape. We should put more money into programs for streets in certain corridors  
We need to prioritize maintenance, not just building new roads.
- Participant number three: the average person is not going to ride a bike, that's not going to happen. Look at Dover or Durham, there's on-street parking that's free for residents on Saturday morning for 30 minutes, it makes it easier to get all your shopping done and then you don't need to drive anywhere. We should be able to park anywhere if we are Portsmouth residents.
- Participant number four: more people would like it if it were safe to ride a bike. I don't feel safe anywhere. We need connecting routes. Lincoln Avenue is supposed to be a bike boulevard, kids ride their bike on it, but cars don't stop/slow down for them.
- Participant number five: I walk 365 days a year, the brick sidewalks are dangerous when it snows. The center of the city should be car free. In European cities the centers are usually car free.
- Participant number six: can the city make it safer for bikes and slow down the cars? it's impossible to get a cab.
- Participant number seven: we need more traffic calming measures. When I'm walking the loop in Newcastle, safety is a major issue; there's a lot of traffic on the weekend; Tourists do not know the city.
- Participant number eight: how about a free shuttle from outside to bring people to the center of town, it would keep the cars out (free shuttle at Christmas time). Also, we need to revisit our parking requirements. The Peverly Hill Road development is bringing a lot of cars.



- Participant number 9: there's currently no bike connector between where people live and where the grocery stores are; same between town and the beach. We need safe connectors.
- Participant number 10: how should we prioritize the traffic calming measures? how can the community be listened to? We need more separated bike lanes; we need incentives for stores to give discounts to bikers.
- Participant number 11: what would be useful is a city bike map; this would help people find their way if they're riding a bike.
- Participant number 12: how aggressive should the city be? how do you do this? it's hard when the city staff has to deal with a new City Council every two years.
- Recurring themes: safety (or lack of); connectors between corridors; maintenance vs new construction; awareness

### **Topic 3: Notes from Breakout Session on Electric Vehicle Charging**

#### **Where and how the City and Community should focus efforts on reducing GHG emissions in the CAP:**

- Renewable generating capacity should be expanded concurrently with the rollout of EV chargers.
- Participants asked if there is enough electrical power coming into Portsmouth to power the additional load of EV chargers. We agreed that currently there is sufficient power, but more would need to be needed in the future.
- Participants asked if the transmission network in the city center can carry the load? Answer: yes.
- The facilitator asked the group to identify sites in Portsmouth that would be ideal sites for EV *fast* chargers. Food markets, the city center, shopping centers, and apartment complexes were cited.
- When asked for appropriate locations for all levels of chargers, the answers were as follows: shopping areas, places of work, homes and apartment buildings, hotels, downtown parking garages, and highway rest stops.
- We also discussed what types of chargers would be most desirable at the various locations. It came down to the consideration of how much time you expected to be parked in a given location, and how far you had to go to get to your next destination.
- If you're going to be parked for a few hours and don't have far to go, level 2 chargers can be adequate.
- The optimal time at a DCFS station is about 30 minutes, so it's most appropriate for when you don't have much time and when you need a big charge to continue on a long journey. A possible location is near the traffic circle where we could encourage travelers to stop at local fast-food restaurants while their cars are plugged in.
- The most convenient way for Portsmouth residents to charge is to plug in at their homes overnight. That includes multifamily homes and apartment buildings. So the CAP should include recommendations for building codes that make accommodations for charging infrastructure on all new residential construction.

- Similarly new commercial development building codes should include a requirement for charging infrastructure.
- For residents of older buildings that are difficult to retrofit, the city could plan for neighborhood charging areas that provide DC fast chargers or level 2 chargers depending on usage patterns.
- As the city provides more charging stations at public parking lots and garages, they should also look into installing photovoltaic arrays over those facilities so that at least some of the power for the chargers come from renewable sources. (In China, some EV charging stations include a solar array and a large storage battery so that cars can take advantage of renewable power at any time of day.)
- The group agreed that Portsmouth's tourist economy needs EV fast chargers to stay competitive vs. other tourist destinations.
- Agreed that the absence of chargers would slow the transition to electric vehicles.

**Barriers to adapting above strategies:**

- The Zoning Ordinance makes it difficult for the private sector to install fast chargers.
- Portsmouth does not seem to have a citywide plan for EV chargers.

## **Topic 4: Notes from Breakout Session on Land Use/Smart Growth and Transportation**

### **Where and how the City and Community should focus efforts on reducing GHG emissions in the CAP:**

- Encourage more density
- Drop parking requirements
- Focus on getting the most 'bang for the buck' (gave the analogy of solar panels sounding cool, but actually targeting food waste is more productive)
- Change the narrative around land use
- Greater emphasis on connecting existing neighborhoods outside of the downtown area through safer mixed-use paths and public transit, better access from existing housing to existing amenities
- Proactively build infrastructure for walking and biking instead of just reacting to unsafe conditions
- Allow/ incentivize more mixed-use zoning in residentially zoned areas, especially for things like convenience stores and markets

# DISCUSSION & NEXT STEPS

- Have we identified promising Topics and Strategies? How about:
  - Regional trips originating/ending outside of Portsmouth?
  - Other modes: air, rail, maritime?
- Next steps?
  - Input to BrightAction platform
  - Ongoing support for CAP community engagement
  - Continue to share ideas and build support for CAP going forward
    - Expand involvement of stakeholders and partners
    - Identify funding sources for strategies
    - **Implementation!**
  - How to continue going forward? Follow -ups?
  - A Community of Practice?