



**Progressive
Portland**



2016 City Council Scorecard

Greetings!

You're holding the first annual **Progressive Portland City Council scorecard**.

Progressive Portland was founded in the wake of the 2016 election, when it became clear that with Donald Trump in the White House, Republicans in control of Congress, and Paul LePage still in the Blaine House, the only way we would be able to make any progress is at the local level.

The good news from the 2016 election is that while our federal government lurched to the right, Portland went the other way.

The city overwhelmingly voted for statewide ballot initiatives to:

- legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana like alcohol;
- enact a 3 percent surcharge on household incomes exceeding \$200,000 per year to fund public education;
- require background checks on gun sales;
- raise the minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2020 while phasing out the subminimum wage for tipped workers, which contributes to the gender wage gap, leads to more sexual harassment in the workplace, and allows restaurants to pay their workers a paltry \$3.75 hour; and
- institute statewide ranked-choice voting for U.S. Senate, Congress, Governor, State Senate, and State House elections.

Four of those initiatives passed statewide, and in the cases of marijuana legalization and education funding, Portland voters provided the decisive margins of victory.

At the same time, Portland elected Pious Ali to the city council, making him one of the highest elected African-born immigrant Muslims in the country. We replaced longtime incumbent Councilor Ed Suslovic—who, according to this scorecard, had the most conservative voting record on the council in 2016—with progressive newcomer Brian Batson.

While Donald Trump won the Electoral College, it's fair to say that based on the Portland Democratic caucus results, if Portland alone had gotten to pick the president, America likely would have inaugurated President Sanders in January.

Progressive Portland was founded to keep the progressive momentum going by mobilizing grassroots support for smart, compassionate policies backed by the majority of Portland voters and taxpayers.

About the Scorecard

This scorecard started when a group of Progressive Portland members went looking for information on the voting records of their city councilors and discovered that the information was surprisingly hard to find.

Frequently, the Press Herald doesn't list who voted which way on key split votes on the council. And to find the votes on the city's website, you have to go through PDF copies of council meeting minutes that include so much obscure shorthand and legal jargon that the average constituent is at a loss.

In developing the scorecard, we selected votes that we believe represent the key progressive values shared by the majority of Portland voters: Racial justice and gender equity. Strong public schools. Great public parks. Access to health care. Affordable housing for people who work and live here. A clean environment. Sane drug policy. A welcoming community for immigrants. An end to corporate handouts. An economy that serves the interests of working people, not just wealthy businesses.

Like all scorecards, **this document by itself is insufficient to evaluate the performance of any elected official.** By sticking to objective, hard data, we are unable to factor in less quantifiable but often very important aspects of councilors' work, such as constituent service or leadership on key issues.

We also recognize that not everyone will agree with our view on what the "right" vote was on any given issue. All the councilors believe their votes were the right votes, and most of the time, they can articulate clear reasons why.

This scorecard is intended to be a conversation starter, not a conversation ender. It's our take, from a progressive point of view. Portland is a place where many views thrive, so we know our view is not the only one.

We believe transparency and public accountability are essential for democracy. Elected officials should expect to be asked to explain their votes, even—and especially—to constituents who disagree with them.

We look forward to continuing the conversation. As always, thanks for all you do for Portland.

Signed,
The Progressive Portland Steering Committee
Bill Linnell, Karin Roland, Marena Blanchard, Michael Langenmayr, Patricia Washburn, and Steven Biel



The Votes

Elks Lodge property rezoned for offices, not housing, 1/20/16

Reduce developer fee increase, 3/7/16

Green buildings incentive, 3/7/16

Grandfather developer permit fees, 3/21/16

India Street finance committee vote, 4/21/16

North Carolina and Mississippi travel ban, 4/25/16

Partial restoration of India Street funding, 5/16/16

India Street final budget, 5/16/16

Raise tobacco age to 21, 6/20/16

Trans inclusion in city health plan, 6/20/16

Ocean Avenue solar project, 9/7/16

ImmuCell no-strings-attached tax break, 9/19/16

Energy use reporting (benchmarking), 11/7/16

Marijuana retailer moratorium fast-tracking, 11/7/16

Below-market Thames Street sale, 11/21/16

Ban Section 8 discrimination, 11/21/16

Leeway for no-fault evictions, 11/21/16

Protect Fort Sumner Park, 11/21/16

Office of New Americans, 12/19/16

*Councilor Suslovic was replaced by Brian Batson in the 2016 election.

**Councilor Hinck was replaced by Pious Ali in the 2016 election.

The Scores

Strimling



83%

Ray



47%

Thibodeau



67%

Suslovic*



37%

Costa



56%

Breneman



44%

Hinck**



78%

Duson



56%

Mavodones



42%

Strimling	Ray	Thibodeau	Suslovic*	Costa	Breneman	Hinck**	Duson	Mavodones
-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	A
+	-	+	-	-	-	+	A	A
+	-	A	-	-	-	+	-	-
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+Councillor cast progressive vote (see following pages). -Councillor opposed progressive vote. A Absent

Vote Descriptions

Rezone Elks Lodge property for offices instead of homes (Order 84-15/16)

January 20, 2016

Motion by Councilor Suslovic

The council voted to rezone the Elks Lodge property on Congress Street across from the Portland Jetport for offices instead of housing, despite a housing crisis that has caused the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment to rise from \$1,136 to \$1,572 per month from 2012 to 2015, according to the Portland Press Herald.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Amendment passed 6-3 (Duson, Mavodones, and Ray voted no).

Reducing fee increase for developers (Order 165-15/16)

March 7, 2016

Motion by Councilor Brenerman

While debating a proposal to increase building fees from 1.1 percent to 1.6 percent to pay for increased staffing to speed the processing of building permits, Councilor Brenerman proposed lowering the fee increase to 1.5 percent, a loss of revenue that will push up taxes for middle-class homeowners and low-income seniors and cost the city resources for parks, schools and other priorities.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion passed 7-0 (Mavodones and Duson were absent).

Incentives for Green Buildings (Order 165-15/16)

March 7, 2016

Motion by Councilor Hinck

While debating a proposal to increase building fees from 1.1 percent to 1.6 percent to pay for increased staffing to speed the processing of building permits, Councilor Hinck proposed exempting buildings that meet green building standards from the fee increase to incentivize environmentally friendly construction.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion failed 3-4 (Brenerman, Costa, Ray, and Suslovic voted no; Mavodones and Duson were absent).

Exempting grandfathered developers from new permit fees (Order 196-15/16)

March 21, 2016

Motion by Councilor Ray

After the council voted to increase fees charged to developers, the council voted to grandfather in developers who applied for permits before March 31. Wealthy developers like Federated Companies gained a windfall that will push up property taxes for Portland's middle-class homeowners and low-income seniors and cost the city resources for parks, schools, and other priorities.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion passed 6-2 (Strimling and Hinck voted no; Thibodeau was absent).

Finance Committee vote to shutter India Street Health Clinic

April 21, 2016

Budget proposed by City Manager Jon Jennings

The Finance Committee voted unanimously to endorse a municipal budget that includes the shutdown of the India Street Health Clinic, which provides health care to more than 1,000 patients, including those with and without health insurance, and transfer services to the Portland Community Health Center in the West End. India Street was the only place in greater Portland where a person could receive low-cost STD testing, free treatment for STDs, harm-reduction education, clean needles and injecting equipment, and comprehensive HIV medical care under one roof. Polling shows that just 27 percent of Portland voters support closing India Street, while 51 percent oppose the plan.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Budget passed 3-0 (Mavodones, Suslovic, and Ray all voted yes).

Ban state-funded travel to anti-LGBT states (Resolve 8-15/16)

April 25, 2016

Motion by Councilor Suslovic

In response to laws passed in Mississippi and North Carolina that allow businesses to refuse service to gay, lesbian, and transgender people, the council voted to ban nonessential state-funded travel to these states.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9-0.

Partial restoration of funding for India Street Health Clinic (Order 254-15/16)

May 16, 2016

Motion by Councilor Ray

The council voted to restore \$19,000 a year in funding for the lease at the India Street Health Clinic for one year, allowing the needle exchange, HIV/sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment services, and Free Clinic to continue to operate—but closing the HIV Positive Health Care Clinic. Also passed unanimously at the same meeting (but not scored separately) were motions requiring patient involvement in transition planning and regular briefings on the transition of services every two months.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9-0.

Fiscal year 2016–2017 budget, including closure of the India Street HIV Positive Health Care Clinic (Order 254-15/16)

May 16, 2016

Motion by Councilor Mavodones

The final budget included the closure of the Positive Health Care Clinic at India Street and the transition of those services to the Portland Community Health Center (now known as Greater Portland Health) in the West End. According to the Portland Press Herald, as of January 2017, just 33 of the 229 HIV patients previously treated at India Street were successfully transitioned to Greater Portland Health.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion passed 8–1 (Hinck voted no).

Raise minimum age to buy tobacco to 21 (Order 303-15/16)

June 20, 2016

Motion by Councilor Suslovic

Nearly nine out of ten U.S. smokers first tried cigarettes by age 18, while each day more than 3,200 American youths aged 18 years or younger smoke their first cigarette, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The council unanimously voted to increase the minimum age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. More than 100 cities nationwide have done this, but Portland was the first in Maine.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9–0.

Remove transgender restrictions from the city health care plan (Resolve 9-15/16)

June 20, 2016

Motion sponsored by each member of the council except Councilor Suslovic

The council voted unanimously to join more than 60 other cities in removing exclusions for transgender health coverage for city employees. The move brought the city's plan in line with a May 2016 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services rule prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in all health programs receiving federal financial assistance, including insurance plans on the Affordable Care Act exchanges.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9–0.

Ocean Avenue Landfill Solar Array (Order 39-16/17)

September 7, 2016

Motion by Councilor Hinck

The cost of solar power has fallen dramatically over the last decade and is on pace to be even cheaper than coal, the cheapest fossil fuel, within a decade. Despite Maine's high energy costs, surveys show Portland that lags far behind the rest of the country in solar energy production. The council unanimously approved a major solar project to be located on the city's closed Ocean Avenue landfill. It will generate enough electricity to power City Hall and Merrill Auditorium. The idea for the project was initiated by the Sierra Club's Portland Climate Action Team.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9-0.

Tax break for ImmuCell Corporation (Order 37-16/17)

September 19, 2016

Motion by Councilor Brenerman

ImmuCell, an animal health company focused on the dairy and beef industries, received a tax break, or TIF, worth \$375,000 to expand its Riverside-area campus, a loss of city revenue that will push up taxes for Portland's middle-class homeowners and low-income seniors and cost the city resources for parks, schools and other priorities. The council rejected proposals to require ImmuCell to hire 25 percent of its workers from Portland and meet "prevailing wage" standards. Polling shows that 51 percent of Portland voters don't think corporations should get property tax breaks unless they meet these types of standards, and 23 percent don't think corporations should get TIFs at all.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion passed 8-1 (Strimling voted no).

Energy use disclosure for large businesses and residences (Order 67-16/17)

November 7, 2016

Motion by Councilor Hinck

Global warming is already having a serious impact in Maine, from fishermen to farmers to children with asthma. Even if all pollution ended today, the sea-level rise from pollution already emitted would flood much of Bayside. One effective way of reducing global-warming pollution is to increase energy efficiency—the energy you don't use is the cleanest of all. To encourage increased energy efficiency, the council enacted "benchmarking" to require large businesses, residential buildings with more than 50 units, and most city-owned buildings to report their energy usage.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 6-3 (Mavodones, Brenerman, and Suslovic voted no).

Fast track moratorium on retail marijuana sales (Order 84-16/17)

November 7, 2016

Motion by Councilor Suslovic

The night before the Nov. 8 election, the council considered an emergency fast-track moratorium on the creation of retail marijuana establishments. Passage of the measure could have affected the outcome of Question 1, the referendum to legalize recreational marijuana statewide. Question 1 passed with 50.26% of the vote, a result confirmed after a partial statewide recount. Portland voted to legalize recreational marijuana in 2013 with nearly 67 percent of the vote.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion failed 3-6 (Duson, Brenerman, Hinck, Costa, Thibodeau, and Strimling voted no).

Thames Street below-market land sale (Order 91-16/17)

November 21, 2016

Motion by Councilor Hinck

The council considered a proposal to sell a city-owned waterfront parcel of land appraised at nearly \$900,000 to CPB2 corporation for just \$400,000. The conditions of the sale also required the city to spend an estimated \$1.2 million to extend Thames Street by 230 feet for CPB2's benefit, making the sale a net \$800,000 loss for taxpayers. The below-market Thames St. sale is an example of the kind of corporate hand-outs that deprive the city of resources for schools, parks and other needs while driving up property taxes for middle-class homeowners and low-income seniors.

Progressive vote: **No**

Final outcome: Motion passed 8-1 (Strimling voted no).

Ban Section 8 discrimination (Order 76-16/17)

November 21, 2016

Motion by Mayor Strimling

Portland landlords routinely and openly discriminate against Section 8 housing voucher holders by explicitly stating in apartment listings that vouchers are not an acceptable form of payment. This amendment would have explicitly banned Section 8 discrimination in the city of Portland.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion failed 4-5 (Duson, Mavodones, Brenerman, Ray, and Suslovic voted no).

Leeway for no-fault evictions (Order 76-16/17)

November 21, 2016

Motion by Councilor Thibodeau

From 2012 to 2015, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Portland rose from \$1,136 per month to \$1,572, while the average wages of renters in that time actually fell by nearly 9 percent, according to the Portland Press Herald. In response, the council increased the notice required for rent increases from 45 days to 75 days and created a pamphlet to educate renters on their legal rights. The council also considered a proposal to increase the notice required for eviction from 30 days to 90 days. This amendment would have strengthened the Housing Committee bill with a “leeway” program for no-fault evictions, increasing the notice required from 30 days to 90 days with landlord options to “buy out” tenants faster for specified dollar amounts.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion failed 3–6 (Duson, Mavodones, Brenerman, Costa, Ray, and Suslovic voted no).

Development moratorium to protect Fort Sumner Park (Order 73-16/17)

November 21, 2016

Motion by Councilor Ray

Fort Sumner Park on Munjoy Hill boasts the best public view anywhere in the city, a sweeping panorama known as the Top of the City which includes views of Back Cove, the Fore River, magnificent sunsets, and Mt. Washington. Saulnier Development’s proposed six-story building at 155 Sheridan St. would block views of Mt. Washington and parts of Back Cove. The two-month moratorium on development near East End parks is intended to create time for city staff to draft rules protecting Fort Sumner Park as well as other parks threatened by development.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9–0.

Office of New Americans (Resolve 4-16/17)

December 19, 2016

Motion by Councilor Brenerman

To help address the state and city’s growing labor shortage, the city council created the Office of Economic Opportunity. The office will help new Mainers and others who face discrimination find work and job training, connecting immigrants to opportunities that will allow the city to address the shortage of skilled workers in the region.

Progressive vote: **Yes**

Final outcome: Motion passed 9–0.



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The Scorecard is a project of:



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