



# Planning Assistance Program Request Form

[www.portsmouthva.gov/181/Planning-Department](http://www.portsmouthva.gov/181/Planning-Department)

801 Crawford Street, Portsmouth, Virginia 23704

The Planning Assistance Program provides direct assistance in navigating the Zoning and Planning development processes to prospective applicants and developers. The Planning Assistance Program staff tailors guidance efforts specifically to applicants to ensure an easy to understand process for successfully executing potential projects. Participation in the Planning Assistance Program is voluntary and free.

## Services Provided

1. Individualized consultation with Planning staff team to provide assistance in directing proposed projects to comply with zoning regulations and development standards
2. Explanation of pertinent zoning regulations related to the proposed project
3. Explanation of the Use Permit, Rezoning, Subdivision, Special Exception, Flood Protection, Chesapeake Bay Protection Area, and other Planning processes that apply to the proposed project
4. Break down of applicable requirements to proposed project in simple to understand language
5. Provide available options to best meet project/development goals
6. Early identification of potential “pitfalls” or other impediments to the proposed development and assistance with identifying potential solutions and options available for proposed project
7. Identify other City department contacts who will be needed during the development process such as Engineering, Building Official, Public Utilities, etc.

## Process

1. **Email the completed form to Amy Mervine at [mervinea@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:mervinea@portsmouthva.gov) or Julie Chop at [chopj@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:chopj@portsmouthva.gov) or Meg Pittenger at [megp@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:megp@portsmouthva.gov) and one of the Planning Assistance Program staff will get back to you within 2 business days.**
2. Staff will set up initial in-person or virtual consultation with applicant and their team
3. Staff will go over all the relevant aspects of the Zoning Ordinance that apply to proposed project including historic districts and Downtown Overlay District guidelines, Use Permit process, Rezoning process, Special Exception process, Subdivision process, etc.
4. Items addressed will include:
  - Uses permitted on the lot including Use Permit requirements and other requirements
  - Landscaping and screening requirements
  - Lot requirements
  - Open space set-aside requirements
  - Building setbacks
  - Additional design guidelines and regulations
  - Density requirements
  - Use-specific standards
  - Parking requirements
  - Resilient site and building bonus options
5. Staff will identify any potential “pitfalls” or other impediments to the development early in the process and work through potential solutions and options available.
6. Staff will answer questions that the applicant have regarding their project.
7. Staff will identify all options available so that applicant can make informed decisions about their project.
8. Staff will provide brief overviews of other relevant but separate review processes/regulations such as Site Plan Review, stormwater regulations, and erosion and sediment control, etc.
9. Staff will advise applicant of the full City Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting should that be applicable to their project.
10. Staff will provide contact information for other City departments who will be needed during the process such as Engineering, Building Official, Public Utilities, Zoning, etc.
11. Staff will provide follow up emails with necessary application(s), application requirements, and any applicable deadlines related to their project.
12. Upon request, team will continue to assist the applicants until they are ready to submit their project for formal review at which time the formal review process will commence.

### 1. General Project Information

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Submission Date: |  |
| Project Address: |  |

### 2. Primary Point of Contact (Applicant) Information

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Primary Point of Contact Name: |  |
| Mailing Address:               |  |
| Phone Number(s):               |  |
| Email Address:                 |  |

### 3. Uses of the Site

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Existing Use(s) of Site (if applicable) |  |
| Proposed Use(s) of Site (if applicable) |  |

### 4. Project/Development Description

Provide a brief description (if available) of proposed project/development.

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### 5. Questions (if applicable)

List any questions you may have that you would like to have answered regarding the proposed project/development.

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### 6. Meeting Preferences/Requested Dates/Times to Meet

|  |   |                           |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| If you would like to meet with staff, please list several dates & times. |   |                           |
| Meeting Preference   | In Person<br>(Planning Conference Room – 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Portsmouth City Hall) | Virtual (Microsoft Teams) |

### Suggested Submittal Materials

The more information provided, the better staff will be able to provide guidance.  
*Submit digital copies of any documents, if possible.*

#### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

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| Request Form - filled out with available applicable information |
| Conceptual site plan (if available)                             |
| Any additional information and/or supporting documents          |