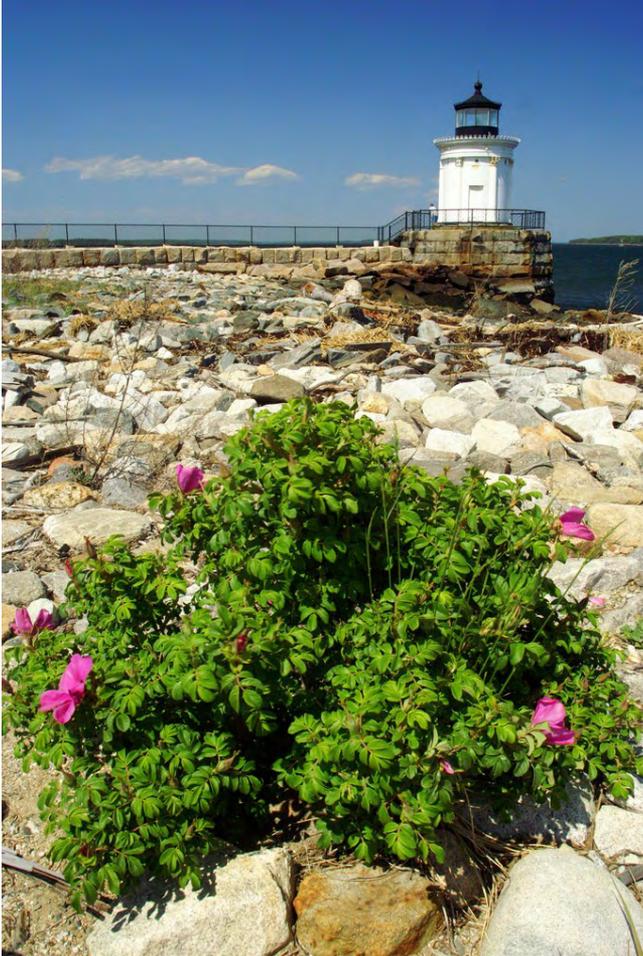


City of  
*South  
Portland*



**Business Guide**





**Executive Department**

**James H. Gailey  
City Manager**

Dear Business Owner,

As a current or potential business owner in the City of South Portland, technical assistance often plays a large part in whether your business plan is successful, or even gets off the ground. Many times resources to assist businesses are difficult to obtain due to the limited resources of municipal departments. A new business can find this process overwhelming. Through the development of this business guide, the City hopes that by consolidating important information in single valuable resource, a road map is created for the business community in the City.

Over the last thirty years, South Portland has seen significant growth in the commercial and industrial sectors. The 80's, 90's, and 00's have been a tremendous time for growth and prosperity for business. The strength of South Portland's business sector has remained, and the city has withstood the downward trend of the last few years. We seek renewed prosperity in the years ahead. Throughout this period, the City has contributed to the pro-business attitude, through the availability of incentive programs, attractive locations, a skilled workforce, collaborative city officials, and residents who care and understand and support the balance between residential life and economic growth.

With helpful and knowledgeable staff, a consistent regulatory and permitting process, in a welcoming community, these attributes show South Portland is a great place to run a business, raise a family, and enjoy broad recreational opportunities that the community affords.

Please call our office at any time for assistance. We are here to serve you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James H. Gailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

James H. Gailey  
City Manager

## **Hours of Operation**

### **Assessor's Office**

41 Thomas Street  
207-767-7604

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

### **City Clerk's Office**

City Hall  
25 Cottage Road  
207-767-3201

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm  
City Clerk open till 6:30pm on Thursday

### **Economic & Community Development**

City Hall  
25 Cottage Road  
207-767-3201

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

### **Planning & Development**

496 Ocean Street  
207-767-7603

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

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## **Economic & Community Development**

25 Cottage Road

PO Box 9422

South Portland, ME 04116-9422

207.347.4135

Fax – 207.767.7629

[ecarson@southportland.org](mailto:ecarson@southportland.org)

### **Your Success is Our Success**

The Economic & Community Development office and City Manager's office are here to help you and your business locate, develop, grow and thrive here. This Guide to Doing Business in South Portland is designed to help you navigate the process as quickly as possible.

In this Guide you will find all those things that will help locate, permit, start, license, and fund your business. We are home to over 1200 small, medium, and large businesses, from single person shops to international giants in their respective industries. We are home to quality schools and a regional community college that together stand ready to build your workforce, or provide training for you existing staff and managers in a cost effective environment. We welcome you all, and will work with you to make your business experience with the City of South Portland positive and supportive.

### **Working with the City of South Portland**

The most important thing we offer is communication: communication between your business and our staff, those that provide licenses or implement or manage regulations, and those agencies and boards that regulate your operations. Our services are free, our fees fair and reasonable, and we always treat your questions confidentially.

## **Business Assistance**

The City offers services in the way of loans, grants, and other financial instruments to support and grow the business sector. Any new or existing business in South Portland is eligible. Key components are the strength of the businesses' financial statements, the creation or retention of jobs, and the need for the funds as "gap" financing. Information regarding these programs can be obtained by speaking with the Economic & Community Development Director.

## **Municipal Revolving Loan Fund**

The key goals are to:

1. Provide gap financing for businesses that intend to relocate or expand within the City of South Portland, and to create and retain high quality jobs, preferably within the manufacturing and technology sectors;
2. Promote the economic well being of South Portland by helping to finance projects which maximize private sector investment, offer benefit to low and moderate income people, and continually add value to the economic base of the City; and
3. Encourage maximum utilization of existing vacant and underutilized buildings, particularly those historic buildings listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



## MRLF Program Requirements:

- Recipients must either own property prior to or as the result of receipt of RLF program funds, or be a resident of the City of South Portland; or
- Own a business, or as the result of receipt of RLF program funds, purchase or open a new business in the City of South Portland;
- Individual loans of \$5,000 to \$10,000 can be funded solely through the City's program. Loans up to a maximum of \$100,000 can be provided in conjunction with another lending source.
- Eligible project activities including business expansion, start-up and buy out.
- Preference, where possible, is extended to South Portland residents for new jobs created.
- Acceptable collateral may include real estate and other assets, but not licenses or equipment. Second or subordinate positions in assets may be accepted.
- The interest rate will be based on the discount rate as listed in the Wall Street Journal, and decided on a case by case basis with emphasis on the applicant's repayment ability and the project's financial structure. In no case will the minimum interest rate be less than two percent (2%).
- The loan period may be up to ten (10) years depending on the size of the loan and the type of the project. Payments of principal and interest are made monthly. There are no prepayment penalties.

A full copy of the MRLF program is available through the Economic & Community Development Office (207.767.7606).

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

There is a need to improve the economic well-being of the city and its residents, by providing new employment opportunities and by improving and broadening the tax base. State law provides the authorization to establish development districts as a means of achieving this goal.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are the means to that end. By capturing the increase in property valuation as measured pre- and post-development, and then that added value can be used to fund public infrastructure, building and property purchases, new construction, and other eligible uses. Proposals are reviewed by the City Manager, who then makes a recommendation to the City Council.

## **Greater Portland Council of Governments' Brownfield Program**

The *Greater Portland Council of Governments*, which provides service for the Cumberland County communities in a number of areas (transportation planning, regional economic development, etc.) has received funding from the U.S. Dept. of Environmental Protection for funding to eliminate developable areas suitable for redevelopment. The funding is specifically for Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental remediation engineering, particularly related to in ground contaminants from past or historic sources ("brownfields"). The City can assist you in determining if the property you are contemplating developing or re-developing might be able to take advantage of these funds.

## **Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation**

The City is a member of the *Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation*, a private-public regional organization made up of the six metro Portland communities dedicated to bringing new business to the area, and expanding existing business opportunities within the region. We have an active 18 member Board of Directors, and the Corporation is a certified 501(c)6, It has the capacity for loans, grants, bonding, and other aspects of business support.

## **Greater Portland Public Development Commission**

The *Greater Portland Public Development Commission* (GPPDC) was established after World War II in an effort to redevelop the former shipyards on both sides of the Fore River, at the easternmost end of the City. Over the years, the GPPDC has funded a number of projects, and provided several small business loans and grants.

The GPPDC consists of five members, alternating in majority between Portland and South Portland. It has the capacity for loans, grants, bonding, and other aspects of business support, through application to the GPPDC.

### **Business Start-up**

One of the most challenging and rewarding aspects about owning a business is the start up. Proper planning, training, financing, marketing and implementation all lead to either success or failure. Fully one half of all business start ups fail. Our goal, together with the resources listed below, is designed to help you succeed. Your success is our success.

### **Business Start-up Checklist**

There are a number of regulations, requirements, and resources available from the City, State, and federal government resources for the establishment of a business.

- Business Assistance – City of South Portland, Economic & Community Development. We are here to help you get started or acclimated.
- South Portland City Clerk’s office – business licensing, permits, and registration.
- For incorporation, the Secretary of State’s office in Augusta will help you with this filing.

- Business Answers, a section of the State's Dept. of Economic & Community Development will assist you with State regulatory and permitting issues, as well as help you establish business marketing and client contacts ([www.maine.gov/dec/d](http://www.maine.gov/dec/d)).
- A federal employer identification number (EIN) is necessary for all federal tax, business, and licensing requirements ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).
- The Maine Dept. of Labor can help you with all of your unemployment and wage scale issues ([www.maine.gov/dol](http://www.maine.gov/dol)).
- Establishment of worker's compensation insurance coverage is critical and required if you plan on having employees.

### **SCORE training/workshops**

The *Service Corps of Retired Executives* (SCORE -100 Middle St., Portland, ME) is a business service non-profit whose goal is to provide focused workshops and training on the nuances of starting, developing the proper budget, and marketing the business. The three course programs are three hours long each, and provide a very good basis. SCORE can be reached at 207-772-1147.

### **Business Financing**

In addition to the financing possibilities listed above, there are a number of commercial and non-profit lenders in the community, many with a strong commercial and business basis. These can be found by contacting the lending institutions' commercial lending departments directly, or by contacting the Small Business Administration's *Small Business Development Center* in Portland at 207-780-4420.

**City Clerk's Office**  
25 Cottage Road  
PO Box 9422  
South Portland, ME 04116-9422  
207-767-7628  
Fax – 207-767.-620  
[jhanscombe@southportland.org](mailto:jhanscombe@southportland.org)

## **Business Licensing (overview)**

The City Clerk's Office is located on the first floor of City Hall and is responsible for issuing all business licenses for the City of South Portland.

There are numerous types of Business Licenses and many require other approvals from numerous Departments such as; Code Enforcement, Fire Department, Planning Department, Police Department, Public Works and Water Resource Protection. Additionally, some of the licenses require approval from the City Council. You may also need to obtain State Licenses. All business licenses require an application fee. All fees, application and license, must be paid on an annual basis. All applications may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office. You may request them in person, by phone or via email.

Business licensing hours are Monday through Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm, with extended hours on Thursday until 6:30pm. For additional information, please call 207-767-7628.



## **Amusements**

- Adult Use Establishment
- Amplified Sound-per event
- Bingo/Beano/Games of Chance
- Bowling Alley
- Carnival/Circus-per day
- Coin Operated-per device
- Fireworks
- Poolroom/Billiard Parlor (per table)
- Roller Skating Rink
- Special Amusement w/ dancing
- Special Amusement w/out dancing
- Shooting Gallery
- Theater-999 or less per screen
- Theater-1000 or more per screen

The licenses that need to go before City Council in this category are: Adult Use Establishments, Coin Operated Amusement Devices, and Special Amusement with or without Dancing. These applications will need to be turned into our office two weeks prior to the City Council Meeting. That will give ample time for a Legal Notice to be placed in the newspaper and for the appropriate departments to be notified.

## **Automobile**

- Automobile Graveyard/Junkyard
- Automobile Recycling Business
- Automobile Service Center
- Automobile Used Car Lot
- Car Wash
- Flammable Liquids Storage
- Towing/Wreckers
- Transfer Station
- Trucking, refuse removal

The licenses that need to go before City Council in this category are: Automobile Graveyard/Junkyard and Automobile Used Car Lot. These applications will need to be turned into our office two weeks prior to the City Council Meeting. That will give ample time for a Legal Notice to be placed in the newspaper and for the appropriate departments to be notified.

In order to be on the Police Department call list, you must obtain a Wrecker License.

Any storage of diesel, gasoline, heating oil, kerosene, oil, or propane needs a license.

### **Food Establishments without Liquor**

- Food Service Only-Prep Onsite
- Food Service Only-No Prep
- Food Service Catering
- Mobile Ice Cream
- Mobile Vending
- Pushcart
- Stationary Vending Unit
- Temporary- Less than 2 weeks

Any temporary or mobile unit must be 500 ft from a fixed food establishment. You must also obtain written permission from the property owner.

A State Department of Health License is required to sell any type of food.

## **Food Establishments with Liquor**

- Club w/liquor
- Hotel w/liquor
- Restaurant w/liquor
- Catering
- Restaurant w/ malt and/or vinous
- Retail store w/ malt and/or vinous
- Class A Lounge w/ Liquor
- Tavern w/ malt
- Bottle Club

All applications for licenses in this category need to go before the City Council. These applications will need to be turned into our office two weeks prior to the City Council Meeting. That will give ample time for a Legal Notice to be placed in the newspaper and for the appropriate departments to be notified.

Any business that sells liquor for on premise consumption or off premise consumption must obtain a license from Maine State Police Liquor Licensing and Compliance. [www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/dps/liqr/index.html) .Their phone number is 207.624.7220.

The owners of the businesses in this category will have State Bureau of Investigation checks, which are \$25.00 each.

## **Lodging**

- Lodging Establishment

Applications for this license need to go before the City Council. These applications must be turned into our office two weeks prior to the City Council Meeting (first and third Monday of the month). That will give ample time for a Legal Notice to be placed in the newspaper and for the appropriate departments to be notified.

## **Massage**

- Massage Establishment
- Massage Therapist
- Combined Establishment/Therapist
- Conditional Therapist

The State Bureau of Investigation performs background checks on Massage Therapists, for which there is a fee.

## **Sole Proprietor/ Partnership**

This license is \$10.00 and must be applied for if the applicant intends to do business as a Sole Proprietor or Partnership. (This is also referred to as a *d/b/a* or “*doing business as*” license.)

## **Taxi Cabs**

- Certificate of Public Convenience
- Taxicab
- Driver

Applications for the Certificate of Public Convenience must go before the City Council. These applications will need to be turned into our office two weeks prior to the City Council Meeting. That will give ample time for a Legal Notice to be placed in the newspaper and for the appropriate departments to be notified.

- The applicant must have their Taxicab inspected by the South Portland Police Department.
- They must also have an inspection done a State Licensed Meter Sealer.
- A current Vehicle Registration and copy of the Insurance Binder are required at time of application.
- The State Bureau of Investigation performs background checks on all Taxicab Drivers, for which a fee is charged.

## Vendors

- Christmas Trees
- Farmers Market
- Flea Market Operator
- Flea Market Vendor
- Pawnbroker
- Second Hand Dealer
- Vendors – 30 days or less
- Vendors – 30 days or more

The State Bureau of Investigation performs background checks on Pawnbrokers and Second Hand Dealers , for which a fee is charged.



**Planning & Development**  
496 Ocean Street  
PO Box 9422  
South Portland, ME 04116-9422  
207-767-7603  
Fax – 207-767-2197  
[pdoucette@southportland.org](mailto:pdoucette@southportland.org)

## **Permitting & Regulations**

The Code Enforcement Office issues permits, including, but not limited to building, heating, electrical, trailer, sign, tents, blasting, curb cuts, plumbing, and appeals, permits for new houses built on grandfathered lots of record (aka “in-fill” lots), or on lots newly created without subdivision review. Street opening permits and excavator license fees are also processed in this office. The Code Enforcement Office works with the Board of Appeals to process application for variances from the City’s Code of Ordinance.

### COMPLYING WITH THE REGULATIONS

The majority of businesses planning to locate in South Portland go into existing buildings as a permitted use. In this case, you will need to obtain a building permit for any interior work that will be completed and a sign permit for your new business. Electrical, plumbing and heating permits may also be applicable. Lastly, before you open your doors to the public, you must obtain a Certificate of Occupancy.

For businesses that wish to build a new facility, expand an existing one, and/or locate in an area not designated for commercial or industrial use, there are processes (regulations/standards) that must be met.

Regulations regarding occupancy, parking, fire regulations, signs and interior layout will be reviewed by staff. The Staff of the Planning & Development Department are available to help you through these regulations. The Planning & Development Department is located at 496 Ocean Street. Our office hours are 8AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Friday. Telephone: 207-767-7603.

Here are questions you should ask to determine the process that may best apply to your project.

1) *Is the location I've chosen properly zoned for my use?*

The City of South Portland is divided into several zoning districts, many of which are designed specifically for varying degrees of commercial and industrial use. The various zoning districts are located on an official zoning map (see pages 24-25). Please contact the Code Enforcement Director with any questions about zoning and permitted uses.

2) *Is my proposed use permitted in the zone "automatically" or by "Special Exception"?*

If your proposed use is permitted in the zoning district, then all you need do is apply for a permit to do alterations to the space, if needed. Your move may require electrical permits, plumbing permits, mechanical permits and/or a sign permit. At the least, you must apply for a permit to occupy the space. Prior to opening your doors to the public, you must obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. Applicable building permit fees are listed in Section 5-60 of the Code of Ordinances. Electrical fees are listed in Section 7-44. Plumbing permits fees are based on State Statute; the City does add a \$10.00 administration fee to each plumbing permit. Do not hesitate to contact Staff with any questions regarding permit fees.

If your proposed use is a “Special Exception,” then you must apply to the Planning Board for a permit. This is normally a one meeting process. The Planning Board traditionally meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. The Planning Board will review your application based on your proposed use, location, proposed fencing and screening, proposed landscaping, vehicular access, circulation and parking, signs, hours of operation, number of employees, and any other applicable land use issues that may apply. Staff have up to 30 days to review the application, though it doesn’t normally take that long. Plan on at least two weeks after that to get to the Planning Board hearing.

3) *If the location I have selected does not permit my proposed use, what do I do?*

You must apply for a Zone Change or a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. An application for a zone change or text amendment means that you are asking the City to amend its official zoning map to change the zoning boundaries so that your location will be included in a zone that permits your use. Or you may request a change to the language in a zoning district to include your proposed use. Please contact the Community Planner with any questions you have about a proposed zone change or text amendment. A pre-application meeting with the Planning & Development Staff is required.

The request for a zone change and/or text amendment starts with the Planning Board. The Planning Board will have a public hearing regarding the request and based on comments from Staff and the public, and will make a recommendation to City Council regarding the request. The City Council will hold a workshop and two Public Hearings on the request. A zone change or text amendment requires a majority vote of the City Council. This process can take up to six months, so ahead.

*4) Does my proposed project meet all space and bulk regulations within the zoning district in which you propose to locate?*

Each zoning district has a set of space and bulk regulations regarding minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, maximum height of buildings and maximum building coverage of the lot. The regulations are in the ordinance following the list of permitted and special exception uses. If your project is unable to meet one or more of the regulations, you may apply to the Board of Appeals for a variance. The Board of Appeals meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month and the fee to request a variance is \$100.00. Applications and further explanations can be provided by the Director of Code Enforcement. Variances are typically very hard to get.

*5) Are you building a new building or adding to your existing building?*

If the answer is yes, and the new construction is no more than 999 square feet in area (area includes all floors), then simply come in and apply for a building permit. For new commercial construction and alteration, please provide the Building Inspector with 2 sets of plans. Please plan at least ten (10) working days for review and processing of your permit application processing. If you have any questions about your submittal, please contact the Building Inspector.

If your new construction is more than 999 square feet in area, you must obtain Site Plan approval from the Planning Board. Your site plan application is typically reviewed and approved in one meeting. A pre application meeting with Planning & Development staff is required. Staff will guide you through the process to ensure that your project receives Planning Board review and approval without unnecessary delays. A Site Plan review is typically handled in one meeting before the Planning Board. Your completed application will be placed on a Planning Board agenda within thirty (30) days.

6) *Are you proposing to divide land for sale or lease into three or more parts? Are you constructing a building that will be divided into three or more spaces?*

If the answer is yes, you will need to apply to the Planning Board for Subdivision Approval.

A pre-application meeting with Planning & Development staff is required to ensure that your project receives Planning Board approval without unnecessary delays.

The Staff of the Planning & Development Department will also be your first contact for information regarding the purchase of City owned or tax acquired properties and for permission to vacate a paper street or discontinue a City accepted street.

A copy of the City’s zoning map can be found on our web site ([www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org)). Choose *City Departments* on the right side of the front page, then *Planning & Development*. On the right side of this page under *GIS*, click *Zoning Map*. If you need help interpreting the map, please do not hesitate to contact our Staff. Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances deals with zoning and lists all of the City’s zoning districts, the permitted and special exception uses and space & bulk regulations. The *Code of Ordinances* is also on the right side of the front page of our web site. Applications and all applicable fees for building, demolition, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, signs and street openings are also listed on the web site. Choose *City Departments* on the right side of the page, then click into *Code Enforcement*. All Planning Board applications and fees can be found by going into *Planning & Development* under *City Departments*.

Please don't hesitate to ask a question or request a meeting with the staff of Planning & Development. Schedule a pre application meeting with the Community Planner and the Director of Code Enforcement for any Planning Board application. The Building Inspector, Electrical Inspector and Street Opening Inspector are also available to address any of your questions regarding your project. Unanswered questions or concerns from staff could hold up your application.

### **Permits – Generally**

1. Building & Construction Permits – required for most projects. Please check with Code Enforcement if you are unsure.
2. Plumbing Inspection – required for all work that requires a licensed plumber.
3. Electrical Inspection – required for all work requiring a licensed electrician, e.g. new or upgraded electrical service or installations.
4. Mechanical Inspection – in conjunction with State officials, inspections of mechanical systems (HVAC) and elevators.
5. Sign Permitting – required for new or substantially altered signs affixed to a building, electronic signs, or freestanding signs.
6. Certificate of Occupancy – a certificate that the premises have been inspected and are suitable for the intended use.



## **Planning & Development Review**

### List of Planning Board Applications -

1. Special Exception Uses
  - a. Accessory Dwelling Units
  - b. Special Exception Uses - Modified Site Plans
  
2. Site Plans
  - a. Minor Site Plans
  - b. Amended Site Plans
  - c. Modified Site Plans for a Stationary Vending Units
  - d. Non-conforming Lots of Record (< 5,000 SF and/or less than 50-feet of street Frontage)
  
3. Subdivisions
  - a. Minor Subdivisions
  - b. Preliminary Major Subdivisions
  - c. Final Major Subdivisions and Site Plans
  - d. Amended Subdivision Approvals
  
4. City Council Land Use Recommendations
  - a. Request to Purchase City Owned Properties
  - b. Tax Acquired Properties
  - c. Paper Street Vacations
  - d. Request to Discontinue City Accepted Streets
  - e. Zoning Map Change Requests
  - f. Zoning Text Amendment Requests
  - g. Conditional or (Contract) Zoning Requests
  
5. De Minimis Change Requests to a Planning Board Approval
  
6. Transfer of Ownership of a Planning Board Approval

## **Planning Review**

### Site Plan Review Process-

- Step 1: Scheduling a pre-application with the Community Planner or the Code Enforcement Officer (767-7603) to determine the project requirements;
- Step 2: Pre-submission meeting with the Community Planner;
- Step 3: Submission of the application at the Planning and Code Office;
- Step 4: Twenty four (24) day staff review of the application by City Departments;
- Step 5: Staff comments letter provided fourteen (14) days prior to the application's scheduled hearing;
- Step 6: Seven (7) days prior to scheduled hearing applicant's response letter and revised plan sets to the Planning and Development Department;
- Step 7: Seven (7) days prior to scheduled hearing public notices are mailed;
- Step 8: Planning Board public hearings and decision and findings of fact are approved ;and,
- Step 9: Within fourteen (14) days of the Planning Board's decision the Director of Planning and Development issues approval letter.



# ZONING DISTRICTS

## Residential Districts

-  Rural Residential District (RF)
-  Residential District (AA)
-  Residential District (A)
-  Residential District (G)
-  Village Residential District (VR)
-  Transitional Residential District (RT)

## Mixed Use/Commercial Districts

-  Limited Business District (LB)
-  Village Commercial District (VC)
-  Village Commercial-Willard District (VCW)
-  Spring Point District (SP)
-  Suburban Commercial District (CS)
-  General Commercial District (CG)
-  Professional Office District (PO)
-  Transitional Central & Regional Commercial District (CCRT)
-  Central and Regional Commercial District (CCR)
-  Commercial District (C)

## Industrial Districts

-  Light Industrial District (IL)
-  Shipyard District (S)
-  Industrial District (I)
-  Non-Residential Industrial District (INR)

## Residential Conditional/Contract Districts

-  Conditional Residential District (A-1)
-  Conditional Shipyard District (S-1)
-  Conditional Residential District (G-1)
-  Conditional Residential District (G-2)
-  Conditional Residential & Limited Commercial Use District (G-3)

## Mixed Use, Commercial, Industrial Conditional/Contract Districts

-  Conditional Armory Zone District (CAZ)
-  Conditional Clark's Pond Central and Regional Commercial District (CPCCR)
-  Conditional Non-Residential Industrial Municipal Solid Waste Transfer District (INR-MSW-1)

## Planning Board Review

The Planning Board reviews and approves all Site Plan development projects according to the City's Codes of Ordinances (Section 27-1422), and all Subdivision development as described in Section 24-3. No building permits or certificates of occupancy may be issued for any development projects which involve new commercial construction of 1,000 square feet (SF) or more, ground disturbance of 15,000 square feet (SF) or more, special exception uses in the all the City's zoning districts, and/or single-family residential lot development of less than 5,000 square feet (SF) and/or less than 50-feet of street frontage without Planning Board review. Delays may be avoided if the staff reviews all changes to any Planning Board approved development project that does not substantially change the original Planning Board approval.

### **Pre-application Meetings**

*Applicant & City staff*

Applicant must meet with either the Code Enforcement Officer or Community Planner to review the zoning required, go through the application form requirements, discuss areas of concerns in the City, and outline application fees and other costs. Staff may recommend that the applicant discuss their proposal with other department heads or technical staff. Sketch plans, concept drawings, and/or details of the proposal are recommended as early in the process as possible.

Timeframe: Meeting is initiated by the applicant and can generally be accommodated within a couple of days. Meeting typically last 1 to 2 hours.

Planning Board Workshops: The applicant and Planner may agree to schedule the proposal for discussion at a Planning Board (PB) workshop at any time prior to application complete. This is an opportunity for the applicant to introduce proposal to the Board and for the Board to provide preliminary comments.

**Complete application form, exhibits, and site plan**

*Applicant*

**Applicant and consultants develop materials for Planning Board application submission. City staff is available to respond to questions from the applicant at any time.**

Timeframe: Dependant on the applicant.

**Submit application**

*Applicant*

Planning and Development Secretary will process the submission and provide a receipt for the application.

**Review of submission for completeness**

*City staff*

The Planner issues a “Request for Review and Comment” to City Department heads with informational copies to Planning Board and Conservation Commission, including a copy of request, plan sets, copies of relevant exhibit materials (may include: storm water report and plans, traffic studies, legal information, parking analysis, and response to Code standards.)

Timeframe: Maximum of 28 days

**Application deemed complete or incomplete**

*City Planner*

The Planner will issue “Staff Comments” letter outlining the need for any supplemental documents, reports, or missing exhibits. The letter may require additional redesign of proposal to make the application complete.

Timeframe: Up to 14 days

**Notification of placement on Planning Board Meeting Agenda**

*City Planner*

After all sufficient concerns are satisfied, the Planner will schedule the application on an agenda, and the Planning Board begins their deliberations.

Timeframe: Per Ordinance, within 90 days of receipt of a completed application, but usually within 42 days of the receipt.

**Revised plans and documents, and outside agencies permits at least 7days before agenda date**

*Applicant*

The applicant provides revisions to the Planner to satisfy sufficiency concerns.

Timeframe: Depends on applicant and consultants, and review schedule.

**Preparation of materials for the Planning Board meeting**

*City Planner*

Planner reviews revisions, prepares public hearing notices, Planning Board memorandum and recommendation for the submission, and Findings of Fact. Public notices to owners of property within 500 feet of proposed project are mailed.

Timeframe: Week prior to Planning Board meeting.

**Planning Board public hearing and discussion of submission**

*Planning Board*

The Planning and Development Director presents application to Board, applicant presentation, public comments, and discussion.

Timeframe: As scheduled.

**Planning Board decision**

*Planning Board and Planning and Development Staff*

The Planning Board votes on decision and on Findings of Fact.

Planner follows up with a letter to applicant outlining the decision.

Timeframe: Within 30 days of public hearing, or other period mutually agreed to by the applicant and staff. If the Planning Board approves the application, the decision and Findings of Fact may be voted on at same meeting or Subdivision Plan Mylar may be signed. The Planner will release the signed subdivision mylar upon receipt of applicant's required Performance Guarantees for the project.

**Finance Department**  
25 Cottage Road  
PO Box 9422  
South Portland, ME 04116-9422  
Assessor 767-7604  
Finance 767-7612  
Fax – 207.767.7620  
[glheureux@southportland.org](mailto:glheureux@southportland.org)

### **Tax Assessor's Office**

The Tax Assessor's office is located at 41 Thomas St., across the parking lot from the rear entrance to City Hall (207-767-7604). This office can help you with information on real estate and personal property tax assessments. You may get information online from the Assessor's office ([www.southportland.org/CityDepartment/Assessors](http://www.southportland.org/CityDepartment/Assessors)) to download tax maps and tax relief applications, perform a property search, view the tax rolls, and more.

### **Real Estate Taxes**

The Assessor's Department maintains tax record on approximately 10,000 taxable real estate accounts. Among the documents maintained by the department are real property records, property maps, ownership records, and sales information. Computerized reports are available at a nominal fee. Tax maps are available for purchase in 11" x 17" and 24" x 36".

## **Personal Property Taxes**

Personal property taxes are levied against furniture, fixtures, machinery and equipment of businesses in Maine. The tax rate is the same rate as applied to taxable real estate.

A Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement Program (BETR), administered by the State, is available to any business taxpayer placing eligible personal property into service after April 1, 1995. In addition to BETR, a Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) program has been created where eligible business personal property placed in service after April 1, 2007 is exempt from taxation provided that an exemption request is submitted to the municipality.

For further information on BETR or BETE, call Maine Revenue Services at .207.626.8475 or go online at:

[www.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax/propertytaxbenefits/propertytaxbenefits.htm](http://www.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax/propertytaxbenefits/propertytaxbenefits.htm)

Direct links are provided on the Assessor's Office page.

## **Exempt, Non-Profit Organizations**

Records on over 400 tax exempt real estate accounts are maintained by the Assessor. Eligibility for exempt status is dictated by State statute. Categories include incorporated religious organizations, benevolent and charitable institutions, and literary and scientific institutions.

The information is kept in the Assessor's office. Tax payments are due in two equal installments during the municipal fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Due dates are the first Fridays in September and March. Office hours in the Finance Dept. are Monday to Wednesday and Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM; Thursday 8:00 AM – 6:30 PM.

## **Excise Tax; Vehicle Registration**

The Treasury and Collections division is responsible for the collection of all real and personal property taxes, sewer user fees, automobile and boat excise taxes, as well as miscellaneous accounts receivable. The division is also the central depository for all funds from all municipal and school departments.

The City of South Portland is an agent for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. This means the City has authorization from the State of Maine to process re-registrations and new registrations on most passenger type vehicles and commercial vehicles registered for gross weights less than 10,000 pounds. If your business registers a fleet of vehicles, the Treasury staff can accommodate you without delays. Please contact the Treasury office at 207.767.7612 to arrange fleet registrations.

Please access our City website for information on documentation required for registrations: [www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org)

## **Sales and Use Tax**

The State sales tax is imposed at the rate of 5% of the sale price on retail sales of tangible personal property, telephone and telegraph service, fabrication services, extended cable television, custom computer programming, and on rentals of video tapes, video games, video equipment, and on long-term rental or lease of automobiles; at 7% of the amount charged for rentals of living quarters and on alcoholic beverages for on premises consumption; and at 10% on short-term rentals of automobiles. The use tax is imposed at the same rate on purchases outside the State for use in Maine and on casual purchases of motor vehicles, aircraft, camper trailers, special mobile equipment, and livestock trailers.

Additional information or assistance can be obtained by calling the Bureau of Taxation, Sales Tax Section at 207.624.9693.

## **Parking, Bus Service, Street Openings**

1. On Street Parking Requirements—Overnight parking is banned from November 1st—April 1st to facilitate snow removal.
2. South Portland Bus Service—Go to the City’s website ([www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org)), click on “City Departments”, then “Transportation” for schedules.
3. Street opening Permits—As of August 2, 2011, street opening permits (known as Excavation Permits) are \$320 each. Excavation Permits are granted to excavators licensed by the City for the current calendar year. Excavator Licenses are \$300 and are valid annually through December 31st. Applications for a City Excavator License must be accompanied by a \$10,000 bond and an insurance rider protecting the City. Excavators working only on driveways are charged \$50 each for Driveway Excavation permits.

A separate permit to construct a new driveway, widen an existing driveway, rebuild an existing driveway or create a new curb cut may be taken out by the property owner, but if any digging in the City right of way is involved with the proposed driveway, a currently City-licensed excavator must also take out an Excavation Permit for the driveway and pay the fee. New homes that involve excavation for utilities as well as a driveway will require the basic Excavation Permit, which will cover the water, sewer and driveway excavations.





City of  
*South*   
*Portland*