

Guide to Doing Business in Portland

The purpose of this publication is to provide businesses with an easy to understand guide to municipal services, from business licensing and permitting to financial assistance, taxes and much more.

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I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES

City Hall
389 Congress Street, Room 308
Portland, ME 04101
Phone: (207) 874-8683
Fax: (207) 756-8217

E-Mail: ljn@portlandmaine.gov

Website: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/485/Economic-Development>

The Economic Development Department (EDD) stands ready to assist and support your business growth in Portland. To streamline doing business in the City, one call or email to the EDD can set in motion informational, educational, financial, and regulatory assistance for businesses of all types and sizes. Our collaboration with State and local business assistance and development agencies can connect you to an even wider range of services to further enhance your business opportunities in Portland. All business assistance services are free and confidential.

Let us help with:

- » Site location assistance;
- » Permitting, regulatory and licensing guidance;
- » Business technical assistance;
- » City commercial loan programs;
- » Job creation grants;
- » Tax increment financing.

A. Site Location Assistance

Confidential site location assistance is available to find suitable space for lease or purchase for those seeking a Portland site to start up, grow or relocate a business. The EDD works in partnership with commercial real estate brokers and property owners to arrange site visits and evaluate location options.

B. Permitting, Regulatory and Licensing Guidance

The EDD offers guidance to businesses on the City's regulatory, approval and licensing processes, helping to enhance knowledge and efficiencies. If we don't know the answers to your questions, including the status of a pending application with the City, we'll find someone who does.

C. Business Technical Assistance

We partner with organizations whose sole purpose is to provide free business counseling assistance. Some of these include the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, Women's Business Center, StartSmart, and others all right here in Portland. Depending on your business needs, we'll refer you to the organization that can best help you.

D. Commercial Loan Programs

The City has its own commercial loan programs to assist Portland businesses and facilitate economic growth and job creation. Loans are made to all types and sizes of businesses, from the smallest establishment to the largest corporation. They range from as little as a few thousand dollars to as much as \$250,000.

Businesses are encouraged to establish relationships with banks and credit unions, and to access conventional financing whenever possible. The City's loan programs are intended to assist when there's a financing gap or when businesses are not able to access bank financing. Most City loans are provided as **gap financing** in which the City partners with a lead lender (generally banks and credit unions). For start-ups and even existing businesses that are not yet bankable, City loans may be available, particularly through the Micro Loan Program.

Loans from the City can help to **fund a wide range of activities**. These include building construction and renovations, leasehold improvements, machinery and equipment purchase, permanent working capital (e.g., inventory and receivables), purchase of an existing business, refinancing (if the project also includes a business expansion component at least 25% over the debt amount to be refinanced), acquisition of fishing vessels and marine related machinery and equipment, acquisition of real estate.

Fixed **interest rates** are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Portland Development Corporation (PDC), the City's lending board, which is appointed by the City Council. While current rates are slightly higher than those offered by the banks, the specific rate for each particular loan will depend upon a variety of considerations, such as anticipated job creation and retention, collateral, level of risk, credit worthiness, etc.

For more information on City loans or to download a loan application, visit the following link online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/523/Financing-Programs>. You are also welcome to contact the EDD's Business Programs Manager at (207) 756-8019 or stop by the Economic Development Office in room 308 in City Hall.

An overview of each of the City's loan programs follows:

60/30/10 Portland Business Program:

- » Loans of \$50,000 to \$200,000;
- » Generally, 60% lead lender (with possible guarantee from SBA or FAME), 30% City, 10% equity from borrower;
- » Flexible terms up to 20 years with a 10-year balloon;
- » Especially useful for projects between \$250,000 and \$500,000 for which the SBA 504 may not be cost effective;
- » May be used for working capital;
- » No prepayment penalties;
- » For real estate acquisition, property must be 51% owner occupied.

Micro Business Loan Program and Creative Economy Loan Program

- » Loans up to \$50,000;
- » Maximum loan term up to 7 years;
- » Prefer minimum private investment to Micro Loan dollar ratio of 1:3
(for example, \$30,000 project: \$22,250 Micro Loan, \$7,500 borrower).

Real Estate Development Loan Program

- » Loans up to \$200,000;
- » Can be used to finance non-owner occupied real estate;
- » Minimum private investment to RLP ratio of 1:1, including minimum 10% equity investment from borrower;
- » Maximum loan term of 30 years with 10-year balloon;
- » Cannot be used for refinancing.

Regional Economic Development Loan Program (FAME)

- » Loans up to \$250,000
- » Maximum loan term of 20 years with 10-year balloon;
- » Business must have 50 or fewer employees or annual sales of \$5,000,000 or less.

Portland Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Brownfields Cleanup RLF provides loans and grants for remediation/cleanup of Brownfields sites slated for redevelopment in the city of Portland. They are designed to encourage the cleanup of eligible sites associated with removing, mitigating, or preventing the release, or threat of a release, of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant from Brownfields sites.

Loan terms include:

- » Loan amount limited to the balance of the loan fund;
- » Maximum term of 5 years;
- » Brownfields site, business assets, outside collateral, and/or personal guaranties may be required as security for a loan.

Applying for a clean up loan or grant from the City requires the same materials that a bank would request, for example, historical financials, projections and personal financial statements, along with a business plan when the applicant is a new business. A link to more information and an application can be found at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/525/Brownfields-Loan-Program>

E. Business Assistance Program for Job Creation

Matching grants are provided to new and expanding Portland businesses for projects that result in the creation of permanent net new jobs. The maximum grant is \$20,000 for the creation of two net new **full-time jobs for low/moderate income individuals.**

- » Maximum Grant: \$20,000
- » Required Minimum Dollar Match: Equal to grant amount;
- » Match Sources: At least 50% applicant cash equity; the remainder may include a bank or credit union loan or, if not accessible, a loan from the City's loan program;
- » Job Creation: Each \$10,000 grant must provide at least one net new full-time job to be filled by a low/moderate income individual. Jobs will be tracked for one year;
- » Eligible Funding Activities: Purchase of equipment and machinery; Working capital; Up to \$1,000 for business consulting services (e.g., accounting, marketing, software training, and legal assistance); Leasehold improvements, renovation, reconstruction or restoration of vacant, under-utilized or deteriorated space. (Construction projects must comply with Davis Bacon federal labor standards.)

F. Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development program authorized under state law to support municipal projects. The TIF program allows municipalities to provide financial assistance to local economic development projects and programs – from infrastructure, municipal economic development programs and staff, to business expansions - including workforce training, by using new property taxes that result from new commercial or residential investment associated with the corresponding increase in property value.

Portland TIF Policy supports investment in municipal economic development programs, infrastructure investment (which is generally through the establishment of area wide or neighborhood TIF districts) and individual project site specific TIF districts to support either infrastructure or individual private project financing needs.

The City is committed to invest in infrastructure located within the public rights-of-way that encourage economic development. Use of TIF investment to invest in infrastructure recognizes the savings which occurs through the TIF Program tax sheltering benefits.

“Infrastructure” is defined, but not limited to: traffic upgrades, public parking facilities, roadway improvements, lighting, sidewalks, water and sewer utilities, storm water management improvements and placing above ground overhead electric and telecommunications lines underground.

II. BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST

- √ Before establishing your business in Portland, you should be aware of a variety of Federal, State, and municipal governmental resources that can assist you. The following list can be used as a general reference guide:
- √ **Business Assistance:** Contact the **Economic Development Department** in Room 308, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8683, for business assistance programs, services, financing and referrals.
- √ To operate as a **sole proprietorship or partnership**, you must file a d/b/a (“doing business as”) with the Portland’s Licensing and Registration office, Room 307, telephone (207) 874-8557. You can download the application from the website at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>. In order to file, you must show picture identification.
- √ If you wish to **incorporate** or become a limited partnership or a **limited liability company**, you will need to register your entity with the State of Maine Bureau of Corporations at the Office of the Secretary of State. You can access information needed online at www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/ or by calling (207) 624-7736.
- √ If you want to determine whether your company name is in use and protected by **trademark, service mark**, or incorporation, again, contact the Secretary of State’s Bureau of Corporations at (207) 624-7736 or online at [www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp.](http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/)
- √ If you will be hiring employees, you will need to:
 1. Obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service Office (FORM SS-4, EIN). This can be done by an online application at [http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-\(EINs\)](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-(EINs)) or call the toll-free Business and Specialty Tax Line at 1-800- 829-4933.
 2. If you already have an EIN, you will need to notify the IRS that you wish to activate as an employer by calling 1-800-829-4933. This will start the process of setting you up with federal withholding and unemployment.
 3. Sign up with the State of Maine Income Tax Withholding. This can be done online at <https://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/suwtaxreg/index>, or for questions call (207) 621-5129.
 4. Obtain Worker’s Compensation Insurance on your employees. Check with the company that provides you with business insurance. Information regarding the Workers’ Compensation Act can be obtained by contacting the Maine Workers’ Compensation Board Portland Regional Office at (207) 822-0840, or toll free (Maine only) at 1-888-801-9087, or by accessing its website at <http://www.maine.gov/wcb>.
 5. Register your business for unemployment tax by either calling the Maine Department of Labor at (207) 621-5120 or by applying online at <https://gateway.maine.gov/dol/meris/>

- √ To determine whether you need a **State license** or permit to conduct your business, try the free online Business Answers Service at <http://www.maine.gov/online/businessanswers/> or the Maine.gov Business Licensing page at <http://www.maine.gov/portal/business/licensing.html> for more information and links. You can also call the State’s Business Answers line at 1-800-872-3838 in-state or 1-800-541-5872 out-of-state.
- √ To determine whether your business is required to hold a **municipal business license**, refer to the business license section in this guide, call (207) 874-8557 or go online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>
- √ To determine **compliance** with Portland’s **Land Use ordinances**, check with Portland’s Permitting and Inspections Department, Room 315, City Hall, (207) 874-8703. The Land Use Ordinance can be viewed on line at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1080> and click on “Codes, Regulations and Ordinances” on the left side of the web page, then click on “Land Use Code”.
- √ To apply for a **State of Maine Sales Tax Identification Number** if you plan to sell a taxable product or service, contact the State Bureau of Taxation at (207) 624-9693. You can access the application online at <http://www.state.me.us/revenue/salesuse/homepage.html> and click on “Application for Tax Registration”. This application is also used to register for State of Maine income tax withholding.
- √ To determine compliance with the **Occupational Safety and Health Act** (www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=2743&p_table=OSHACT), contact the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, at (207) 623-7900 or online at <http://www.maine.gov/labor/bls/>.
- √ For information on **real estate and personal property tax assessments**, contact the Tax Assessor’s office in Room 115, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8486, or online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/135/Assessor>
- √ For **registration of vehicles**, including special arrangements for fleet registration, contact the Treasury office in Room 102, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8491, via e-mail at veh-reg@PortlandMaine.gov or online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/238/Treasury>
- √ During your site selection process, contact the Finance Department, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8490, to determine any **outstanding taxes or sewer fees** on the property. Any outstanding fees will affect your ability to obtain any licenses or permits for your business.
- √ Contact the Parking Division in Room 20, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8443, for parking regulations, as well as assistance with your business parking needs, or go online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/351/Parking>

III. BUSINESS LICENSING

The Permitting and Inspections Department's Licensing and Registration Division is responsible for issuing all business licenses for Portland. The Licensing and Registration office is located in City Hall, Room 307, and can be reached at (207) 874-8557. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Wednesday and 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. The following information is meant to act as a general guide to the most commonly asked questions about the business licensing process. To see if a City license is required to conduct your business or if you have other licensing questions please contact the Licensing and Registration Office. A State of Maine License may also be required. All food service establishments need a state license. Please contact 207-287-5675.

A. Business Licenses Are Required For:

- » Bowling Alley
- » Brewery, Winery and Distillery
- » Entertainment Licenses
- » Farmer's Market
- » Fire Permit
- » Flea Market
- » Food Service Establishment
- » Food Truck/Pushcart/Ice Cream Truck
- » Liquor – On or Off Premise Consumption
- » Massage Establishment/Massage Therapist (Non AMTA or ABMP Members)
- » Motion Picture
- » Outdoor Dining
- » Scrap Metal Recycling Facilities
- » Second Hand Dealer/Junk Collector/Flea Market Seller – Antiques, collectibles, pawn shops, etc.
- » Sidewalk Sale – Use of Sidewalk In Front of Establishment
- » Street Goods Vendor – Non-food Sales – For Special Events Only
- » Taxi/Tour/Livery/Bike
- » Temporary Food Service – For Special Events Only
- » Towing/Wrecker Service
- » Transient Seller – Door to Door Sales
- » Valet Parking

Check with **Zoning** in City Hall, Room 315, telephone (207) 874-8703, before submitting an application to make sure your type of business meets zoning requirements in the location you have in mind. During

the site selection process, it is important to contact the **City Treasury Office**, in City Hall, Room 102, telephone (207) 874-8856, to determine if there are any outstanding taxes or sewer fees on the property. Any outstanding fees due will affect your ability to obtain your business license until they are brought current.

B. License Fees

Fees vary for each type of license. The fee schedule can be viewed on-line at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing> under the Permitting and Inspections Department. All annual business licenses require an application fee and license fee annually. All licenses are non-transferable. Regardless of the type of business license applied for, if the applicant intends to operate as a sole proprietor or a partnership, a d/b/a (doing business as) must be filed.

d/b/a Filing Fee: \$10.00, plus \$5.00 notarization fee

C. Inspections

Once you have turned in your application and fee, and prior to receiving a City license to conduct a business, most business types require inspections and/or approvals from the Fire Department, Inspections Division, Health Division, and/or Police Department (see contact information below). Inspections and/or approvals vary depending on the type of license for which you are applying. If you are doing any construction work (including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc.) necessary for your business or changing the use of an existing commercial space, a building permit will be required. Staff will help you understand what will be required in order to obtain a license. This will help to eliminate confusion and unnecessary delays.

Zoning/Building Permit Approval

Permitting and Inspections/Zoning
City Hall
3rd Floor, Room 315
Telephone: (207) 874-8703.

Food Service Inspections

Licensing and Registration Office
City Hall
3rd Floor, Room 307
Telephone: (207) 756-8365

Fire Prevention Inspection – Fire Department

Central Fire Station on Congress Street
Telephone: (207) 874-8405.

State Bureau of Investigation/PPD Background Check

This will be taken care of by the Licensing and Registration Office.

Please allow approximately 4 – 6 weeks from the date of application for issuance of your license. If you are renovating your space or changing use of your establishment, this could extend the license issuance time frame.

***Some licenses will require City Council approval. You will be made aware of this upon submission of application.*

IV. TAXICAB BUSINESS AND TAXICAB DRIVER LICENSING

A. Taxicab Business

Refer to the Business Licensing Division webpage for application and license fees (current fees are listed on each application form): <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>

To operate a taxicab business in the City you must:

1. File an application with the Licensing and Registration Office at City Hall, Room 307, telephone (207) 874-8557;
2. The application must include all fees and a copy of a valid State certificate of registration for each vehicle to be licensed, an insurance certificate listing all vehicles to be licensed and listing the City of Portland as a certificate holder providing prior notice to the City of cancellation of the policy;
3. The taxi meter must be tested and sealed by the city's appointed meter sealer and the meter seal report must be included with the application;
4. When the vehicle is completely set up to be a taxi contact Ground Transportation at the Jetport to schedule an appointment for the final inspection, telephone (207) 879-1903;
5. License is granted upon completion of application, fees paid, documentation provided, and successful completion of meter test and inspection;
6. For information on operating at the Jetport contact the Ground Transportation booth located outside Baggage Claim, telephone (207) 879-1903;
7. Please read Code of Ordinance Chapter 30, Vehicles for Hire for information regarding operating a taxicab in the City. <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1096>

B. Taxicab Drivers

Refer to the Business Licensing Division webpage for application and license fees (current fees are listed on each application form): <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>

To obtain a taxicab drivers license in Portland you must:

1. File an application and fees with the Licensing and Registration office at City Hall, Room 307, telephone (207) 874-8557;
2. Applicants are subject to a 10 year criminal and driving history check;
3. Applicants must submit two (2) full face 2" x 2" color photos with the application;
4. License is granted if there are no disqualifying events from background checks;
5. Applications can take up to two (2) weeks for processing;
6. Please read Code of Ordinance Chapter 30, Vehicles for Hire for information regarding operating a taxicab in the City. <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/citycode/chapter030.pdf>

V. PERMITTING AND REGULATIONS

The Permitting and Inspections Department, located in Room 315 of Portland City Hall, (207) 874-8703, is where applications for building, electrical, and plumbing permits originate, and where zoning interpretations are made. Staff will work with you to help you understand the review process and help you

determine up-front what requirements you will need to meet in order to streamline the approval process. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday and Friday.

A. Building and Construction Permits

Building permits are required if a property owner intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, convert, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or any structure. Please visit the Permitting and Inspections Department web site at: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1728/Permitting-Inspections>. Frequently asked questions are answered on this site. Applications are submitted online through the Citizen Self Service Portal, the link and instructions are available on this page.

Once the requirements are outlined, staff from the Permitting and Inspections Department will work closely with staff in the Planning and Urban Development Department to assist you in the application and review/approval process. In some cases, multiple reviews can happen concurrently if more than one review body is involved. More than one review is required when large commercial buildings are being developed, commercial work that includes site alterations, projects located in the historical districts, subdivisions, etc. No construction can begin until a building permit has been issued. Permits expire in six months if the project is not started or if construction work ceases for six months.

Building construction is required to comply with all codes and standards adopted and enforced by the City of Portland. For a complete list of construction codes, see here: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2325/Building-Codes?bidId=>

Building inspection procedure after the permit is issued please call (207) 874-8703 to schedule your inspections. Required inspections and sub permits will be listed on your building permit. The Owner or their designee is required to notify the Permitting and Inspections office for the following inspections, and notice must be called at least 48 hours in advance in order to schedule an inspection:

- » Footing/Building Location Inspection: prior to pouring concrete;
- » Re-Bar Schedule Inspection: prior to pouring concrete;
- » Foundation Inspection: prior to placing ANY backfill;
- » Framing/Rough Plumbing/Electrical: prior to any insulating or dry walling;
- » Final/Certificate of Occupancy: prior to any occupancy of the structure or use. A Certificate of Occupancy is not required for all projects. Your inspector can advise you if your project requires a Certificate of Occupancy. Certificates of Occupancy must be issued before the space may be occupied.
- » All projects require a final inspection.
- » Some types of construction may require additional inspections, such as large commercial projects.
- » If any of the inspections do not occur, the project cannot go on to the next phase, regardless of the notice or circumstances.

Building Permit Fees:

Refer to the Fee Schedule on the Permitting and Inspections website:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2300/Building-Permits-and-Inspections-Fee-Schedule?bidId=>

Impact Fees:

The City of Portland charges impact fees for new development and changes of use that result in an increased impact to City facilities to cover the cost of providing infrastructure to serve new development. The City of Portland’s impact fee ordinance applies to any new building or building addition which results in net new residential dwelling units, non-residential building square footage, hotel rooms, or water meters. The ordinance also applies to changes of use which result in an increase in impact per the city’s adopted impact fee schedule. Impact fees are calculated during the building permit application review process and must be paid prior to certificate of occupancy.

More information on impact fees is available at

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23424/Impact-Fee-FAQs>.

B. Plumbing Permit and Inspection Fees

Plumbing permit fees are based on number of fixtures, type of septic system, individual components, disposal field, and other system components (i.e., pump station). In addition to those fees or under any state law, the City charges a ten dollar (\$10.00) base fee for plumbing inspections. For a complete list of permit fees, please go to

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2300/Building-Permits-and-Inspections-Fee-Schedule?bidId=> Plumbing inspection procedure is the same as the building inspection procedure noted above.

C. Electric Permit and Inspection Fees

The City’s Electrical Code can be found in [chapter 6 of the City Code of Ordinances](#), Section 6–32 to 6–85. The electrical permit fee must be paid prior to the issuance of the permit. The amount of the fee is to be determined based on the uses ranging from each number of receptacles, smoke detectors, outside lighting, generators, alarm systems, among others. For a complete listing of these items and corresponding fee, please go to

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2300/Building-Permits-and-Inspections-Fee-Schedule?bidId=>. The **electrical inspection procedure** is the same as the building inspection procedure noted above.

D. Signage/Awning Permits

Any outdoor signage for your business must be issued a sign permit. Information about sign permits or to apply online go to the website at <https://portlandmaine.gov/1728/Permitting-Inspections>.

The following must be submitted with a sign application:

1. Certificate of Liability listing the City as an additional insured;
2. A copy of the signed lease or letter of permission from the owner indicating specific permissions granted;
3. Sketch plan of the lot, indicating the location of buildings, driveways, and any abutting streets and right-of-ways, length of building frontages and street frontages;
4. Indication on plan of all existing and proposed signs;
5. Computation of the following:
 - a. Sign area of each existing and proposed building sign;
 - b. Sign area, height, and setback of each existing and proposed free-standing sign;

6. Sketch or Photo of the proposed sign(s) indicating dimensions, materials, source of illumination, and construction method;
7. UL # is required for lighted signs at the time of final inspection;
8. Details for sign fastening, attachment, or mounting in the ground;
9. Evidence that all fees and taxes on the property are current.

Sidewalk Signs:

All portable sidewalk signs must be of an A-frame type design. To obtain a copy of the design guidelines and application, stop by the Permitting and Inspections Department, Room 315, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8703, or download the documents from the website. To apply for a permit, you will need:

1. Certificate of liability insurance naming the City as an additional insured; and,
2. Drawing of sign showing dimensions.

Sign/Awning/Sidewalk Sign Permit Fee: Refer to the Fee Schedule on the Permitting and Inspections website:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2300/Building-Permits-and-Inspections-Fee-Schedule?bidId=>

E. Outdoor Dining Permits

Permits are required for expanding food service establishments outside on City property. Outdoor dining permits are part of your food service establishment license and are issued by the Business Licensing office, Room 307, City Hall, (207) 874-8557. To obtain an application, stop by the Business Licensing office or download it at

<https://portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>

Submit the following with the permit application:

1. Proof of insurance naming the City as an additional insured;
2. Sketch plan showing the site and where the tables and chairs will be located allowing for free and safe passage of pedestrian traffic. Please provide dimensions of the area plus the remaining passable sidewalk.

F. Other Permits by the Permitting and Inspections Department

The Permitting and Inspections Department also permits many other activities. Separate permits are required for each of the following: Demolition of a Structure, Home Occupation, Temporary Tents and/or Stages, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning units or system, Fire Alarm and Sprinkler/Suppression System, Commercial Cooking Appliances and the installation or removal of an exterior propane tank. For a complete listing of these permits and associated fees, please go to

<https://portlandmaine.gov/1730/Applications>.

VI. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SERVICES

Projects involving development in Portland often require review and approval under one or more ordinances, including site plan, subdivision, or historic preservation. **Smaller projects may be approved at the staff level, while the Planning Board and/or Historic Preservation Board, as appropriate, will review larger projects.** In some special cases, it is possible to seek an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to enable a project to go forward, a process that involves both the Planning Board and the City Council.

The Planning Board is appointed by the Portland City Council to review Level III site plans, subdivisions, specific conditional uses as listed in the applicable zones, inclusionary zoning conditional uses, zoning amendments, as well as street vacations and discontinuances. Planning Board workshops and public hearings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The Historic Preservation Board meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

Costs for development review services include specific application fees, advertising and noticing charges, and for all but historic preservation reviews, hourly fees for professional time of planning, legal, and engineering services. (See fee schedule at the end of this section.)

Each development review and review process is summarized briefly in the sections that follow.

Please consult the applicable ordinances for the standards of review and submission requirements in order to ensure that all of the required information is included for a complete application. Pre-Application meetings are recommended and are held every Wednesday at noon and 12:30 p.m. To request one of the 30 minute meetings, please submit the form and supplemental information on the City's website: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2313>

Applications referred to below can be found online at: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/754/Applications-Fees>

***Note:** Development projects also require permits, such as building permits, demolition permits, and change of use permits, etc., prior to the start of construction. These applications are in the Permitting and Inspections Department, Room 315 on the third floor, as well as available online at <https://portlandmaine.gov/1730/Applications> and scroll down to the end of that page for listing of applications. The reviews for these permits may be done concurrently with reviews being undertaken by the Planning Division/Planning Board/City Council. (For these permits, please refer to Permitting and Regulations section of this Guide.) In addition, there may be permits required from the Department of Public Works for activities such as street openings, sealed sewer drains, street occupancy, and sewer connection permits.*

A. Site Plan Review

Development projects may be subject to site plan review. In these cases, site plan approval must occur prior to issuance of a building permit. The Site Plan Ordinance is Article V of the Land Use Code and is available on the Department of Planning and Urban Development's page of the City's website. The categories of review are summarized below. Please consult the Site Plan Ordinance for the complete information regarding applicability, standards of review, and submission requirements.

1. Applicability

Administrative Authorizations

Administrative Authorization of work may be requested for projects with less than 500 sq. ft. building addition or with less than 1,000 square feet of new impervious surface area. If the application meets all of the review criteria, then the Administrative Authorization will be granted site plan review by the Planning Authority. However, if the application does not meet the criteria, the Planning Authority will notify the applicant in writing as to what level of site plan review will be required or whether a partial review is needed. An Administrative Authorization may be reviewed concurrently with the review of a building permit application.

Level I: Minor Residential Development - Single Family and Two Family Building Permits

Proposals for a single or two family home are reviewed administratively by City staff and the application is a joint site plan and building permit application, which is submitted to the Department of Permitting and Inspections. Please note that the addition of a dwelling unit may also trigger this application. The following projects qualify for a Level I: Minor Residential review:

- New construction for single-family or two-family homes;
- The addition of a dwelling unit to a building initially reviewed as a two-family dwelling or multifamily structure (if the additional dwelling unit does not trigger subdivision review).

The application checklist and application are found on the Permitting and Inspection Department web page:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2810/New-One--and-Two-Family-Dwelling-Application> and the instructions for applying are found here:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1730/Applications>

Please note: As of September 16, 2010 all new construction of one and two family homes are required to be sprinkled in compliance with NFPA 13D. This is required by City Code. (NFPA 101 2009 ed.)

Level I: Site Alteration

The following projects qualify for a Level I: Site Alteration review, which are reviewed administratively by staff. The proposed site changes may or may not require a building permit; staff will advise applicants:

- Alteration of a watercourse or wetland as defined in Section 14-47 of the City Code.

- Alteration of a site. The disturbance of land areas of less than one (1) acre that are stripped, graded, grubbed, filled or excavated. The Planning Authority shall exempt from review the loam and seeding of lawns and the cumulative placement of less than fifteen (15) cubic yards of fill on any lot provided such loaming or placement does not alter a drainage course, swale, wetland or redirect water onto adjoining property and does not violate any other provision of the Portland City Code or state or federal law. “Disturbed area” does not include routine maintenance, but does include re-development and new impervious areas.
- The construction of any temporary or permanent parking area, paving of existing unpaved surface parking areas between 1,000 and 7,500 sq. ft., or creation of other impervious surface areas between 1,000 and 7,500 sq. ft.
- The rehabilitation or reconstruction, but not new construction, of piers, docks, wharves, bridges, retaining walls, and other structures located within the shoreland zone.
- A site alteration in which vehicle access is proposed from more than one (1) street.

Level II: Site Plan

These projects are reviewed and approved administratively by City Staff. The developments or site changes that trigger a Level II: Site Plan review are as follows:

- New construction of structures with a total floor area of less than 10,000 sq. ft. in all zones, except in Industrial Zones.
- New construction of structures with a total floor area of less than 20,000 sq. ft. in Industrial Zones.
- Any new temporary or permanent parking area, paving of an existing unpaved surface parking area in excess of 7,500 sq. ft. and serving less than 75 vehicles, or creation of other impervious surface area greater than 7,500 sq. ft.
- Building addition(s) with a total floor area of less than 10,000 sq. ft. (cumulatively within a 3 year period) in any zone, except in Industrial Zones.
- Building addition(s) with a total floor area of less than 20,000 sq. ft. in Industrial Zones.
- Park improvements: New structures or buildings with a total floor area of less than 10,000 sq. ft., facilities encompassing an area of greater than 7,500 sq. ft. and less than 20,000 sq. ft. (excludes rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities).
- New construction of piers, docks, wharves, bridges, retaining walls, and other structures within the Shoreland Zone.
- Land disturbance between 1 and 3 acres that are stripped, graded, grubbed, filled or excavated.
- A change in the use of a total floor area between 10,000 and 20,000 sq. ft. in any existing building (cumulatively within a 3 year period).
- Lodging house, bed and breakfast facility, emergency shelter or special needs independent living unit.
- Signage subject to approval pursuant to Section 14-526 (d) 8.a. of the Land Use Code.
- Any new major or minor auto service station with less than 10,000 sq. ft. of building area in any permitted zone other than the B-2 or B-5 zones.
- The creation of day care or home babysitting facilities to serve more than 12 children in a residential zone (not permitted as a home occupation under section 14-410) in any

principal structure that has not been used as a residence within the 5 years preceding the application.

- Any drive-through facility that is not otherwise reviewed as a conditional use under Article III.

Level III: Site Plan Development

Level III site plans are larger scaled projects or subdivisions which are reviewed by City Staff and then forwarded to the Portland Planning Board for review and approval. The applicant has the option of submitting a preliminary site plan for review and then submitting a final plan to be considered at a public hearing. The developer has the option to request a workshop with the Planning Board. In general, neighborhood meetings meeting the City's guidelines are required to be held by the developer. The types of proposals that trigger a Level III review include the following:

- New structures with a total floor area of 10,000 sq. ft. or more except in Industrial Zones.
- New structures with a total floor area of 20,000 sq. ft. or more in Industrial Zones.
- New temporary or permanent parking area(s) or paving of existing unpaved parking areas for more than 75 vehicles.
- Building addition(s) with a total floor area of 10,000 sq. ft. or more (cumulatively within a 3 year period) except in Industrial Zones.
- Building addition(s) with a total floor area of 20,000 sq. ft. or more in Industrial Zones.
- A change in the use of a total floor area of 20,000 sq. ft. or more in any existing building (cumulatively within a 3 year period).
- Multiple family development (3 or more dwelling units) or the addition of any additional dwelling unit if subject to subdivision review.
- Any new major or minor auto business in the B-2 or B-5 Zone, or the construction of any new major or minor auto business greater than 10,000 sq. ft. of building area in any other permitted zone.
- Correctional prerelease facilities.
- Park improvements: New structures greater than 10,000 sq. ft. and/or facilities encompassing 20,000 sq. ft. or more (excludes rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities); new nighttime outdoor lighting of sports, athletic or recreation facilities not previously illuminated.
- Land disturbance of 3 acres or more (includes stripping, grading, grubbing, filling or excavation).

Master Development Plan

Applicants may submit a Master Development Plan for a large, multi-phase development program consisting of multiple buildings and associated site improvements on a site of one (1) acre or more of total land area, which is designed as a cohesive and integral development program. The purpose of a Master Development Plan is to provide for a mix of land development responsive to the assets of a site. A Master Development Plan is a well-integrated development in terms of land uses, functional activities, and major design elements such as buildings, roads, utilities, drainage systems and open space. The Master Development Plan is deemed appropriate to large scale mixed use projects that are intended to be developed in phases. The Master Development Plan

shall be reviewed by the Planning Board and may be reviewed independently or concurrently with review as a site plan for a phased development. The type of project that is eligible for a Master Development Plan review is as follows:

- A Master Development Plan is applicable for a site with one acre or larger in cumulative lot area that is designed as a cohesive and integral development program consisting of multiple buildings and associated site improvements proposed to be built in phases.
- The Master Development Plan option shall not apply in residential zones, except for institutional uses.

2. Submission Requirements

Site plan applications must be submitted electronically through the [Citizen Self Service Portal](#) (CSS). Applicants will register with CSS and follow the instructions under the **How do I...** and **Before I Apply** sections of the webpage. Checklists for ensuring you have submitted the appropriate documentation and additional instructions can be found on our website at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/2308/Citizen-Self-Service-Portal>.

The application checklist and application for single and two family applications (Level 1 Minor Residential) are found on the Permitting and Inspection Department web page: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2810/New-One--and-Two-Family-Dwellin-g-Application> and the instructions for applying are found here: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/1730/Applications>

3. Development Review Process

Pre-Application Meetings

Applicants for a Level II, Level III, or Master Development Plan development review are encouraged to schedule a pre-application conference to introduce the development concept. The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize the applicant with the review procedures, application submission requirements and applicable review standards. A pre-application conference shall not cause the plan to be a pending application or proceeding under Title 1 MRS 302. No decisions relative to the plan shall be made. Nor shall any advice or information provided by the city be construed as a decision.

Pre-Application meetings are held on Wednesdays at noon and 12:30 p.m. Representatives from Planning, Historic Preservation, Public Works, Zoning, Permitting and Inspections, and others attend the meetings to provide guidance on the required review process. To request one of the 30 minute meetings, please submit the form and supplemental information on the City's website:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2313>

Preliminary Site Plan Review

A preliminary site plan is an option within Portland's development review process. A preliminary plan provides an existing site inventory and analysis along with the potential design layout for a proposed development. If a developer chooses to submit a preliminary plan for a Level III development, or other application type that requires a neighborhood meeting, then the

neighborhood meeting shall be held within 30 calendar days of submitting the preliminary application.

City staff review comments will be compiled and submitted to the applicant for their consideration. The Planning staff will provide a recommendation to the applicant as to whether to re-submit revisions or proceed to the final plan stage. The applicant chooses how to proceed with the review. An applicant may request a workshop with the Planning Board for a Level III project. Proposed revisions are to be submitted to the Planning Division in the same manner as the initial application.

Final Site Plan Review

A final site plan will be reviewed for conformance with the City's site plan standards.

***Please note:** If an applicant did not choose to submit a preliminary plan for a Level III development, or other development type that required a neighborhood meeting, then a **neighborhood meeting** must be held within 21 calendar days of submitting the final plan application.*

The Planning staff will provide a recommendation to submit a revised Level III application or to proceed to a public hearing. The revised plan will undergo the same review steps as the initial application. A public hearing is scheduled with the Planning Board for Level III applications at the next available meeting.

The Planning Authority renders an administrative decision on the final plans for Level I and Level II applications.

Master Development Plan

The Master Development Plan is a review option for large, multi-phase development program consisting of multiple buildings and associated site improvements on a site of one (1) acre or more of total land area, which is designed as a cohesive and integral development program. A workshop with the Planning Board and a neighborhood meeting conducted by the applicant are requirements of the Master Development Plan process.

Public Notice Requirements for Site Plan Reviews

Public notice is required for most types of site plans; City staff will advise if required. The Planning Division prepares and distributes public notices (except notices for neighborhood meetings) and places legal ads in the Portland Press Herald and on the City's web page.

Generally, property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development are notified (1,000 feet for industrial subdivisions). The receipt of application notice is covered in the site plan application fee, but the applicant will be billed and is responsible for the actual or apportioned costs of required advertising and notices for workshops and public hearings. Lastly, mailed notices to abutters are required and sent by the Department of Permitting and Inspections for single family, two-family, and the addition of a unit being reviewed as a Level I minor residential site plan.

If an applicant is required to hold a **neighborhood meeting** under the City's regulations, then the applicant is responsible for notifying property owners according to the regulations. The neighborhood meeting is to be held in the Portland neighborhood in which the project is proposed, and the notice must include a project description and the location and time of the neighborhood meeting. Once an application is deemed complete, then the addresses are available in an excel spreadsheet on the CSS Portal. The meeting notice must be e-mailed to the Planning Division for distribution through the City's notify me and interested citizen list. Detailed information about holding a required neighborhood meeting is available on the City's web site: <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2299>

Portland Technical Manual and Portland Design Manual

Portland's **Technical Manual** contains information on the adopted technical standards and engineering specifications to meet the standards of the site plan and subdivision ordinances.

The Portland **Design Manual** contains standards of review for projects within specific zones that require design review or certain development types.

Both manuals are available on the City website at

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/756/City-Codes-Ordinances-Regulations-Maps>

Site Plan Approval and Post Approval Requirements

Once a site plan approval has been received and all conditions are met, a performance guarantee, in the form of a letter of credit or escrow account, must be posted for the cost of required site improvements and improvements required in the public right-of-way. The performance guarantee packet with the instructions, cost estimate form, and templates are found here:

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/551/Development-Review> Before construction can begin, a pre-construction meeting must be held with city staff and can be scheduled with the Development Review Coordinator in the Planning Office. Approval of a site plan does not constitute approval for any other required City permits, including but not limited to demolition permits, building permits, street opening permits, and other applicable permits.

Fees: See fee schedule, below.

B. Subdivisions

A subdivision is the separation of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into three (3) or more lots, including lots of forty (40) acres or more, within any five-year period whether accomplished by sale, lease, development, or building. Subdivisions also include the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into three (3) or more dwelling units within a five (5)-year period.

Subdivisions are reviewed by the Planning Board according to the subdivision standards. The process for review and the submission requirements are similar to a Level III site plan. Some multi-family or mixed use projects are reviewed under both site plan and subdivision standards, which are reviewed concurrently before the Planning Board. A required neighborhood meeting held by the applicant is required for a subdivision of five or more units or lots.

Fees: See fee schedule, below.

C. Zoning Amendments: Map Changes, Text Amendments, and Conditional/Contract Zones

The Zoning Ordinance guides development in a manner consistent with Portland's Comprehensive Plan. In some cases, a property owner or applicant for development proposes to use property in a manner not allowed by current zoning. It may be appropriate in such cases, after consulting with the Planning Division, to consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate such a project. Amendments might involve zoning text changes, revision to the zoning map, or creation of a conditional zoning agreement specific to the property and proposal

The Planning Board reviews proposed zoning amendments and considers whether the amendments are consistent with Portland's Comprehensive Plan. The Board makes a recommendation to the Portland City Council, which then either approves or denies the request at a public hearing.

The process for amending the ordinances generally takes three to four months, and it may take longer for large or complex projects that have significant planning and policy implications that must be considered. Extensive public input and involvement is not unusual in rezoning decision-making (see Note below).

***Note:** Residents and property owners within 500 feet (1,000 feet for an industrial rezoning request) of the proposed development are mailed a notice, and a legal advertisement is placed in the local newspaper at the applicant's expense. A neighborhood meeting is required.*

Fees: See fee schedule, below.

D. Affordable Housing Incentives and Requirements

Division 30 of the City's Land Use Code provides incentives and sets requirements for providing workforce or low-income housing units in residential development of 10 or more new units and for hotel projects. For developments of 10 units or more, and for hotel projects, there are requirements for provision of workforce housing units or for a fee-in-lieu. This requirement is part of a conditional use review the Planning Board. In addition, there are incentives for more affordable housing, such as higher density along commercial corridors, reduced parking, and reduced dimensional standards within certain zones, as well as fee reductions for permits.

Applications for the Conditional Use Inclusionary Zoning are found on the Planning and Urban Development website: <https://www.ci.portland.me.us/2002/Applications>

Additional information regarding Inclusionary Zoning is provided here:

<https://www.ci.portland.me.us/1999/Inclusionary-Zoning>

E. Impact Fees

The City of Portland charges impact fees to cover the cost of providing infrastructure to serve new development. The City of Portland's impact fee ordinance applies to any new building or building addition which results in net new residential dwelling units, non-residential building square footage, hotel rooms, or water meters. The ordinance also applies to changes of use which result in an increase in impact per the city's adopted impact fee schedule. Impact fees are calculated at the time of building permit application and must be paid prior to certificate of occupancy. More information on impact fees is available at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23424/Impact-Fee-FAQs>.

F. Historic Preservation Program

The Historic Preservation Ordinance provides for the ongoing protection and enhancement of significant landmarks and historic neighborhoods in the city. Ordinance regulations apply to 63 individually designated landmarks throughout the city as well as approximately 1800 properties located within Portland's nine historic districts.

Maps of the historic districts, as well as copies of the ordinance, review standards and guidelines and historic preservation resources, are available online at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/766/Historic-Preservation> where you can also download an application.

Construction activities affecting any property within a historic district or other protected property – including demolition, exterior alterations, signs, building additions, new construction and site improvements – are reviewed and approved according to historic preservation ordinance standards, whether or not the project requires a separate building permit. Historic Preservation staff in the Planning Division provide the day-to-day administration of the ordinance and will work closely with you on your application in preparation for review. Applicants often meet with staff either on-site or in the office to discuss projects in concept form before submitting a specific application for permits.

Smaller, more routine alterations are often reviewed and approved at the staff level, in a process that usually takes from one to three weeks. The timeframe for review depends on the completeness of the documentation and whether revisions are warranted.

Larger, more complex projects are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board. If the project also requires Planning Board review, the two reviews can move forward at the same time. The Historic Preservation (HP) Board meets twice a month. Many projects, particularly larger ones, are considered at one or more preliminary HP Board workshops to give feedback to applicants before they submit a final proposal for formal review and approval. The HP Board Review process may require three to six weeks, depending on timely submission of all relevant materials and documentation, and the number of preliminary workshops required.

Note: Residents and property owners within 100 feet of a proposed project (within 500 feet for large-scale projects) are mailed a notice prior to a public hearing or workshop with the Historic Preservation Board, and a legal advertisement is placed in the local newspaper at the applicant's expense.

Fees: See fee schedule, below.

G. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

ADA compliance is reviewed by the State Fire Marshal's office and through the development review process. New development or any alteration over \$100,000 must also comply with the State of Maine Human Rights requirements. For further information, call the State Fire Marshal's office at (207) 626-3880 or visit it online at www.maine.gov/dps/fmo.

H . Portland's Delegated Authority for State Required Reviews

Portland's Planning and Urban Development Department coordinates the development review process for site plan, subdivision (as defined in the state statute), and other applications under the city's land use code. Portland has the delegated review authority from the state of Maine for certain reviews under the Site Location of Development Act, Chapter 500 Stormwater Permits, and Traffic Movement Permits.

G. Fee Schedule

Development Review and Historic Preservation Fee Schedule	
Site Plan Application Fees	
Administrative Authorization	\$50.00
Level I Site Alteration	\$600.00
Level II Site Plan	\$800.00
Level III Site Plan Under 50,000 sq. ft.	\$2,750.00
Level III Site Plan 50,000 to 100,000 sq. ft.	\$3,000.00
Level III Site Plan 100,000 to 200,000 sq. ft.	\$4,000.00
Level III Site Plan 200,000 to 300,000 sq. ft.	\$5,000.00
Level III Site Plan Over 300,000 sq. ft.	\$7,000.00
Subdivision Fee	\$500.00 + \$25/per lot + applicable application fee
Master Development Plan	\$1,000.00
Conditional Use – Planning Board	\$100.00
Conditional Use – Inclusionary Zoning	\$100.00
Zoning Map Amendment	\$7,500.00
Zoning Text Amendment	\$7,500.00
Zoning Map and Text Amendment Combined	\$10,000.00

Conditional / Contract Rezoning	\$10,000.00
Street Vacation	\$2,000.00
Amendment to Site Plan/Master Development Plan – Planning Board Review	\$1,500.00
Amendment to Site Plan/Master Development Plan – Staff Review	\$250.00
After the Fact Major and/or Minor Site Plan Review	\$2,000 + applicable application fee
Parking Lots Over 100 Spaces	\$1,600.00
Special Exemption Sign Review	\$75.00
Section 14-403 Review	\$400.00 + \$25/per lot
Traffic Movement Permit	\$1,500.00
Stormwater Quality Permit	\$250.00
Site Location of Development	\$3,500.00 + \$200/per lot if residential project
Fees to be Invoiced Separately	
Fee for Development Review Services – Planning Fee Per Hour	\$54.00/per hour
Fee for Development Review Services – Legal Services Per Hour	\$75.00/per hour
Additional Third Party Review	
Legal Ad for Planning Board Meetings	% of entire bill
Notices mailed to neighbors for Planning Board Workshops and Public Hearings	.75/each
Inspection Fee (for Level I Site Alteration, Level II or Level III Applications) (2% of the performance guarantee or as assessed by Planning or Public Works Engineer at \$54.00 an hour with \$300.00 being the minimum)	

Historic Preservation Application Fees	
Administrative Review	\$65.00
Historic Preservation Board Review Minor	\$125.00
Historic Preservation Board Review Major	\$750.00
After the Fact Review	\$1,000 + application fee
Sign Review for Signs in Historic Districts	\$75.00
Fees to be Invoiced Separately	
Legal Ad for Historic Preservation Board Meetings	% of entire bill
Notices mailed to neighbors for Historic Preservation Board Workshops and Public Hearings	.75/each

VII. TAXES AND DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

A. Tax Assessor's Office

The Tax Assessor's office is located in Room 115 of City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8486. This office can assist you with information on real estate and personal property tax assessments. Visit the Assessor's office on-line at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/135/Assessor> to download tax maps and tax relief applications, do a property search, view the tax rolls, and much more.

1. Real Estate Taxes

The Assessor's Department maintains tax records on approximately 24,000 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 at \$2.00 for 11" x 17" and \$10.00 for 24" x 36". Copies of tax cards are \$.50 per page. Note that most tax map and property record card data is available and printable online.

2. Personal Property Taxes

Personal property taxes are levied against furniture, fixtures, computers, software, machinery, and equipment of business assets. Assets located in Portland on April 1 are taxed and are required to be reported to Portland. The Assessor's Office mails a request for a true and perfect list of all business assets in February and the deadline for filing is May 1st. 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. Qualified property is eligible for reimbursement for up to 12 years.

The reimbursement is scaled back for the remainder of the time the property remains taxable.

Additionally, the legislature has created the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) for qualifying equipment that is placed in service on or after April 2, 2007. Certain assets (excluding furniture and fixtures) located in a non-retail business may be eligible for exemption from taxation.

(For further information on BETR or BETE, call the State at (207) 624-5600 or go online to: www.state.me.us/revenue/taxrelief/homepage.html.)

3. Exempt, Non-Profit Organizations

Records on nearly 1,300 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. Information and an application can be found at:

<https://portlandmaine.gov/138/Exempt-Property-Information>

4. Tax Relief

Various tax relief programs are available for Commercial and Residential property owners. A full list of the programs and applications can be found at: <https://portlandmaine.gov/145/Tax-Relief>

B. Treasury Office

The Treasury office is located in Room 102, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8490, fax (207)874-8661. Office hours are Monday to Friday – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Account information and payment status is available by request.

1. Real Estate/Personal Property Tax Payments/Assessment District Payments

The Treasury office is responsible for the collection of all real estate taxes, personal property taxes, and Portland Downtown District (PDD) assessments (see Item 4 below). Taxes and PDD assessment payments are due in two equal installments during the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Due dates are the second Friday in September and March.

2. Excise Tax; Vehicle Registration

Vehicle registration must be done annually in the State of Maine. The Treasury office (telephone (207) 874-8491 handles new and repeat registrations. With new registrations, the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles provides license plates and collects sales tax for those new registrations (see below).

- a) **New Registrations:** Most citizens can complete his/her entire registration for new vehicles at City Hall, paying excise, sales tax and obtaining license plates. For certain situations and specialty plates, your first stop is at the Treasury office with your title, proof of insurance, and mileage to pay your excise tax. You then go to the Maine State Bureau of Motor Vehicles (125 Presumpscot Street, Portland, (207) 822-6400).

Note: If your vehicle is under a lessor/lessee agreement, you must also provide all title work.

b) Re-Registrations: If your vehicle is currently registered in Maine and will be moved to a Portland base, the re-registration can be completed in the Treasury office. Please bring prior town registration. Proof of insurance and mileage are required. If your vehicle is currently registered in another state, it is considered a new registration.

c) Fleets: If your business registers a fleet of vehicles, the Treasury staff can accommodate you. Please contact the Treasury office at (207) 874-8491 to arrange fleet registration.

d) Boats: The Treasury office handles registration for these items.

3. Sales and Use Tax

The State sales tax is imposed at the rate of 5.5% 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 8% 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.

4. Portland's Downtown District Assessment

Portland's Downtown District (PDD) is a not-for-profit organization created to provide day-to-day asset management and marketing services to its Downtown Portland District. PDD monitors and enhances the area's appearance, access, safety, and the general hospitality. The organization is funded through a special assessment on property within the district boundaries. Each year, PDD negotiates with the City Council to develop a contract agreement for provision of services.

For further information and a map of the district, contact the PDD at (207) 772-6828.

VIII. PARKING/METRO/RIDESHARE

The Parking Division, located in Room 20, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8443, manages on and off street parking to support the safety and parking needs of residents, visitors and businesses helping to make Portland a safe, livable and economically vibrant city. The consistent and fair enforcement of parking regulations, parking meter management, and the operation and oversight of parking garages and lots are the most visible ways in which we support the City's parking mission. Primarily designed for moving traffic, streets in the commercial areas of the City serve many competing interests. Delivery trucks, taxis, buses, and the general public all vie for space making the urban street one of the most sought-after resources. Parking enforcement is vital to ensure this resource is used to the maximum benefit of the community. For more information on Portland's parking services call for a free "Helpful Hints" parking brochure or visit us on-line at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/351/Parking>

A. Parking Assistance

If you have concerns about meeting parking needs for your business, contact the City's Economic Development Division at (207) 874-8683. Together with the staff in the Parking Division and its database of monthly rental spaces, they can assist you in finding a resolution.

The following is a link to our parking survey that lists information on most of the downtown parking facilities. <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1362>

To request changes or installation of new signage, contact the Traffic Division of the Public Works Department at (207) 808-5409.

B. Parking Meters

The City has both single space and [multi-space pay stations](#), along with a [pay by mobile phone app](#). Parking meters are for turnover (short-term) parking, so continuously feeding the meter beyond its original maximum time is prohibited. Vehicles must move to another space after the maximum time has elapsed.

Parking meters are in effect from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. Sundays and Major Holidays are free. Pre-payment is offered between 6:00 AM and 9:00 AM with the PassportParking® app or at multi space meters. If pre-paying, your time does not begin until 9:00 AM. Meters are designed to accept American, nickels, dimes and quarters. Multi Space Meters also accept credit cards and coins. Receipts from the multi space meters are valid at all metered spaces in the city.

The PassportParking app is available city-wide – simply park where you see PassportParking signs & decals, enter the correct zone # and pay for your parking session from your phone, and be on your way! The mobile payment app allows parkers to:

1. Monitor their parking sessions
2. Extend sessions remotely
3. Store funds in a dedicated wallet
4. View payment history
5. Receive email receipts

C. Street Occupancy Permits

Permits are available at the Public Works Department (207) 874-8801, 212 Canco Road. Suite B, or online at <https://portlandmaine.gov/2307/Online-Permit-Services> for individuals who need to reserve parking spaces on the street for an event or construction activity. The cost is \$20.00 per day, per space.

D. Park & Work Program Information

What is it?

The Park & Work program is a discounted parking program for the use of low to moderate income employees, or unpaid volunteers. To qualify for program eligibility, the persons or households utilizing the program must have income levels at or below 50% of the area median income in accordance with annual HUD guidelines for the City of Portland.

How does it work?

Employees present parking tickets to their employer, who in turn will affix one or two stamps to them, depending on the length of workdays.

How much does it cost?

Program stamps will be sold to the employer or to a registered employee at a cost of \$100 per book of 48 stamps. Each stamp is valid for three (3) hours of parking. A maximum of two (2) stamps per ticket may be used. The employer may choose to subsidize all or part of the cost of employee parking. Stamps may be purchased at Portland Downtown (549 Congress Street) with cash (exact change) or check only. Checks should be made payable to Portland Downtown. Park & Work stamps are nonrefundable.

Which parking facilities accept Park & Work stamps?

The City of Portland subsidizes parking for the Park & Work program at City owned and operated parking garages on Elm Street (21 Elm Street) and Spring Street (45 Spring Street).

E. METRO

If you live in Portland or Westbrook, use the convenient and affordable METRO bus to commute to work or park your car at a Park ‘n Ride lot and catch the bus. Monthly passes are available in Room 102 of Portland City Hall and at other convenient area locations. Call METRO at (207) 774-0351 for more information. METRO also accepts Park & Shop stamps for a free ride home!

F. RideShare

Carpool/Vanpool ride matching commuters in Cumberland and York County can call 1-800-280-RIDE to receive a free “match list”. This is a list of neighbors who have similar commutes and want to share a ride. Ask about a guaranteed ride home!

G. Car Sharing

U-Haul Car Share has five locations and 6 vehicles (5 cars and 1 pickup truck) on the Portland peninsula for the public to rent by the hour. Hourly cost includes gas, insurance, and maintenance. Go to uhaulcarshare.com for terms, rates, locations and to make a reservation.

IX. Housing Development and Rehabilitation Services

The City recognizes that a healthy business environment includes healthy neighborhoods and a variety of housing opportunities for its residents and employees. The City offers housing development and rehabilitation programs through the Division of Housing and Community Development, Room 312, City Hall. The Division focuses on neighborhood revitalization through upgrading existing housing stock and encouraging new development.

The City's programs are designed to assist homeowners, non-profit entities, and encourage new housing development. Almost all of the City's housing programs receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Programs are targeted to low and moderate income households as determined by Federal income guidelines. Applications and additional information regarding all of the Division of Housing and Community Development programs are available on-line at <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/775/Housing> or by calling (207) 874-8698.

X. Business Resource Directory

City of Portland Economic Development Department

<https://www.portlandmaine.gov/485/Economic-Development>

lin@portlandmaine.gov

(207) 874-8683

Fax: (207) 756-8217

Portland City Hall

389 Congress Street, Room 308

Portland, ME 04101

Manages city-wide economic development programs, including commercial loans and grants, site location assistance, business technical assistance, tax increment financing, business development and recruitment.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

www.ceimaine.org

cco@ceimaine.org

(207) 871-0800 or (207) 504-5900

2 Portland Fish Pier

Suite 201

Portland, ME 04101

A private, non-profit community development corporation providing financial and technical assistance for development and expansion of industries, small businesses and housing.

Visit Portland

www.visitportland.com

info@visitportland.com

(207) 772-4994

Fax: (207) 874-9043

1375 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04102

A non-profit service and marketing organization providing assistance to convention planners and individual travelers.

Creative Portland

www.creativeportland.com

info@creativeportland.com

(207) 370-4784

84 Free Street

Portland, ME 04101

A non-profit created by the City of Portland to receive donations, grants, and contributions in support of the City's economic development efforts by strengthening, stimulating and supporting Portland's creative industries, enterprises, and workforce, including artists and cultural institutions.

Finance Authority of Maine

www.famemaine.com

info@famemaine.com

(207) 623-3263

Fax: (207) 623-0095

5 Community Drive

P.O. Box 949

Augusta, ME 04332-0949

Provides access to innovative financial solutions to help Maine citizens pursue business and higher education opportunities. Business financing includes guarantee programs and access to capital for businesses to grow and expand.

Greater Portland Council of Governments

www.gpcog.org

info@gpcog.org

(207) 774-9891, (800) 649-1304

Fax: (207) 774-7149

970 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 201

Portland, ME 04103

A non-profit organization that offers a range of planning and municipal services and programs for the Greater Portland Region, including transportation and land use, a data center, revolving loan program, mapping and GIS.

Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation

www.greaterportland.org

(207) 874-8683

389 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

A non-profit corporation joining together private, educational, and public institutions within the communities of Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook to coordinate planning for business development, retention, and expansion.

Maine Department of Economic and Community Development

www.maine.gov/businessanswers

business.answers@maine.gov

1-800-872-3838 in Maine; or 1-800-541-5872 from outside of Maine

Department of Economic & Community Development

State House Station #59

Augusta, ME 04333

A State level program providing information for doing businesses in Maine, tourism, energy, and community.

Maine Health Inspection Program

www.maine.gov/healthinspection

nancy.beardsley@maine.gov

Key Plaza Building, 3rd Floor

Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

(207) 287-5671

The Health Inspection Program exists to provide licensing and inspection services for a number of different types of businesses to protect the public health. These businesses include restaurants, lodging, campgrounds, youth camps, public swimming pools and spas, tattooists, micropigmentation, body piercing, electrolysis, school cafeterias, and mass gatherings.

Maine International Trade Center

www.mitc.com

info@mitc.com

(207) 541-7400

Fax: 541-7420

2 Portland Fish Pier (Marine Trade Center), Suite 204

Portland, ME 04101

State agency providing Maine businesses with international trade assistance.

Greater Portland CareerCenter

<http://www.mainecareercenter.com/locations/region4/portland/index.shtml>

jobbank.careercenter@maine.gov

1-877-594-5627

Fax: (207) 822-0221

151 Jetport Boulevard

Portland, ME 04102

For businesses, the CareerCenter is the place to find workers, the resources to help train them, and other information you need to compete in today's economy. For job seekers, the CareerCenter is the place to start when you're looking for your first job, your next job, a better job – or a whole new career. It's also the place to find information on training and education.

New Ventures Maine

www.newventuresmaine.org

Gigi.guyton@maine.edu

(207) 799-5025

175 Main Street

South Portland, ME 04106

New Ventures Maine creates an empowering environment for Maine people to define and achieve their career, financial, and small business goals. Through tuition-free classes and individual coaching, NVM helps people find good jobs, start or return to college, launch small businesses, manage their money, and build their assets.

Portland Downtown

www.portlandmaine.com

taffy@portlandmaine.com

(207) 772-6828

Fax: 774-4640

549 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

Serving Portland's downtown with day-to-day asset management activities such as marketing, maintenance, safety, events, and visitor information services.

Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

www.portlandregion.com

Chamber@portlandregion.com

(207) 772-2811

Fax: (207) 772-1179

443 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

Coordinates resources to help improve the region's economic and business performance. Representing 1,400 companies, it is the largest business membership organization in Maine, and offers networking, advocacy, benefits and high visibility to its members.

SCORE

<http://portlandme.score.org>

scoremaine@gmail.com

(207) 772-1147

100 Middle Street

Second Floor, East Tower

Portland, ME 04101

Provides free counseling and educational seminars for all types of businesses.

**Small Business Development Center
(SBDC)**

www.mainesbdc.org

mark.delisle@maine.edu

(207) 780-4420

Fax: (207) 780-4810

55 Exeter Street

Portland, ME 04102

Provides free services for Maine's existing and prospective small business owners covering such issues as business feasibility, business plan development, capital acquisition, financial management, marketing and sales, e-commerce, customer service, personnel management, and small business strategic planning, counseling and research.

U.S. Small Business Administration (USSBA)

www.sba.gov

bradley.currie@sba.gov

(207) 248-9040 (Portland)

Portland Area Office

312 Fore Street, Suite 104

Portland, ME 04101

Provides loan guarantee programs for small businesses.

XI. City Resource Directory

City of Portland

389 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

(207) 874-8300

www.portlandmaine.gov

All of the following departments can be accessed on the City’s website at portlandmaine.gov and clicking on “Government” and then “Departments”, and clicking on the appropriate Department.

Airport, Seaport, and Transportation

Portland Fish Exchange

6 Portland Fish Pier

Portland, ME 04101

(207) 773-0017

Portland International Jetport

1001 Westbrook Street

Portland, ME 04102

(207) 874-8877

Port of Portland

389 Congress Street

Portland, ME 04101

(207) 874-8892

Assessor

(207) 874-8486

Provides assistance on real estate and property tax assessments and tax maps.

City Clerk’s Office

(207) 874-8610

Administers vital records, hunting/fishing licenses, marriage licenses and elections/voting for the City.

City Manager

(207) 874-8689

The administrative head of the City of Portland, and responsible to the City Council for all the City's business and financial needs.

Economic Development Department

(207) 874-8683

Manages city-wide economic development programs, including commercial loans and grants, site location assistance, business technical assistance, tax increment financing, business development and recruitment.

Finance Department

(207) 874-8645

Manages all aspects of municipal finance.

Assistant Finance Director

(207) 874-8654

Manages City Department budgets and purchasing.

Treasurer

(207) 874-8856

Manages tax information/collection, car and boat registrations.

Fire Department

(207) 874-8400

Administers emergency fire-fighting services.

Health and Human Services

(207) 874-8633

Works in collaboration with community, state, and federal partners for the health and well-being of the residents of Portland.

Public Health Division

(207) 874-8784

Works with partners to prevent disease, promote health, and protect residents from environmental threats.

Social Services Division

(207) 775-7911

Provides programs to low-income Portland residents that encourage self-reliance in the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency.

Elder Services Division

(207) 541-6620

Addresses issues that present hardships for Portland residents as they age.

Human Resources Department

(207) 874-8624

Administers the hiring, benefits, safety, and employee relations functions for City employees and managers, and oversees risk management for the City.

Parking Department

(207) 874-8443

Administers all parking facilities owned by the City, and manages on-street parking spaces.

Permitting and Inspections Department

(207) 874-8703; Building, Zoning, and Permits

(207) 874-8557 or (207) 756-8131; Business Licensing, Rental Registration

Administers construction permitting, inspections, business licensing, housing (rental) registrations, and food service inspections in the City

Inspections Division

(207) 874-8703

Building, plumbing and electrical permits, building rehabilitation permits and inspections.

Zoning Administrator

(207) 874-8703

Zoning interpretations, enforcement, Zoning Board of Appeals.

Housing Safety Division

(207) 756-8131

Registration of all rental properties (long-term and short-term), inspections of rental properties

Business Licensing/Health Inspection Division

(207) 874-8557

Administers all Business Licenses in the City

Planning and Urban Development Department

(207) 874-8719

Administers the City's Divisions of Planning, Housing and Neighborhood Services.

Planning Division

Minor/major site plan; subdivision; zone change; street vacations, discontinuances, and acceptances; comprehensive planning; Planning Board and Historic Preservation Board.

Housing and Community Development

Community Development Block Grant Programs and Home Investment Partnership Program, and works in partnership with residents, non-profit agencies, and City departments to benefit low and moderate-income residents and improve the neighborhoods in which they live.

Portland Police Department

(207) 874-8601

Administration of all police services.

Public Works Department

(207) 874-8801

Administers City Public Works

Customer Service

(207) 874-8493

Transportation Systems Engineer

(207) 874-8891

Traffic, parking, circulation.

Parks, Recreation & Facilities

(207) 874-8200

Manages all City Public Assembly facilities, parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, and recreation programs.

Public Assembly Facilities

(207) 808-5400

Manages the public assembly facilities for the City:

- Merrill Auditorium
- Portland Exposition Building
- Hadlock Field
- Fitzpatrick Stadium
- Ocean Gateway
- Maine State Pier
- Open Spaces

Recreation Division

(207) 808-5400

Offers vast array of recreation programs and clinics for preschool, youth, families, teens, adults, and senior adults at its four (4) community centers.

Cemeteries Management Office

(207) 874-8934

Manages all municipal cemeteries.

City Arborist

(207) 808-5400

Manages municipal flora.