
Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities

Program Guidelines and Procedures

Approved by the Prince George's County Planning Board December 7, 2017

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Overview

The Planning Assistance to Municipalities and Communities (PAMC) program is offered by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County Planning Department, Community Planning Division, Neighborhood Revitalization Section. Its purpose is to assist in protecting and implementing the County's approved plans, recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans by providing technical planning services at no cost to municipalities or community organizations using Prince George's County Planning Department expertise, and/or to fund consultant services approved by the Planning Board. PAMC projects benefit municipalities and communities that may have limited planning resources but are committed to revitalization and enhancement of the appearance and function of their communities. The number of projects approved each year varies based on staff availability and the PAMC budget.

Goal

The goal of the PAMC program is to further implement the planning policies, strategies and recommendations contained in the County's approved plans, recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans.

Funding

Program funds are made available in the Prince George's County Planning Department's annual budget. The funding cycle corresponds to the Prince George's County fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). The maximum amount of funding per project is \$80,000. If a project exceeds this amount, it could be phased or if additional PAMC funding has not been expended, then funds may be re-allocated and approved based on need, tasks, or timeframe at the discretion of the Planning Board.

Eligible Applicants

Municipalities and community organizations, such as 501(c)(3) nonprofits in Prince George's County, Maryland are eligible to apply. Community organizations without 501(c)(3) status must describe their organizational structure, including officers' titles and terms, and provide a letter from an authorized representative indicating support of the proposed application. The applicant must submit the minutes where the organization voted and approved to send in the application. Applicants may apply for one PAMC project per funding cycle. Active PAMC projects must be completed before a subsequent PAMC application may be approved for the same applicant, unless the original application was intended to be phased over multiple funding cycles.

Ineligible Applicants

M-NCPPC, County, state or federal government agencies or organizations; for-profit organizations or corporations, the City of Laurel.

Eligible Projects

A successful application demonstrates that the project will make a significant contribution to meeting the stated goals of the PAMC program, the applicable approved plans, recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans and have a broad impact on the community. Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss the viability of their PAMC application and how the project meets the goals and guidelines of the PAMC program with planners in the Neighborhood Revitalization Section prior to applying.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Architectural Pattern Books for rehabilitation and new construction
- Illustrative concept plans for the revitalization of commercial areas
- Brochures to highlight or market community assets
- Landscape design plans
- Business Improvement District (BID) preparation
- Mapping or geographic information systems (GIS) services and data analyses
- Community outreach and capacity building
- Market studies
- Connectivity and walkability assessments
- Multimodal transportation studies
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) training workshops
- National Register of Historic Places nominations
- Design and engineering of sidewalk improvements
- Preparation of surveys or questionnaires and analysis and presentation of results
- Design of brochures or logos for municipalities
- Publications or multimedia presentations related to design or planning
- Economic feasibility studies for the reuse of underutilized or vacant properties
- Streetscape improvement plans
- Adaptive use feasibility studies for historic structures
- Tactical urbanism strategies
- Environmental sustainability programs
- Technical writing assistance for the preparation of grants and/or contracts
- Façade improvement programs
- Visioning or consensus-building workshops
- Design concepts for commercial business districts
- Wayfinding signage plans
- Facilitation of community-planning related workshops
- Web applications related to planning or communities
- Gateway or entrance feature concepts
- Planning or design for placemaking initiatives
- Heritage trail design plans
- Housing research (e.g., housing inventory, affordability analysis)
- Historic properties inventories/surveys

Ineligible Projects

Capital projects (physical development, “bricks and mortar” projects).

Application Procedures, Submittal Deadlines, Project Management

The PAMC program has a rolling application process. Applications may be submitted and approved throughout the fiscal year until the PAMC budget has been fully committed.

Prior to submitting a PAMC application, prospective applicants should contact the PAMC Program Manager to express their interest and briefly describe the project. The PAMC Program Manager will obtain initial approval of project eligibility from the division chief, Community Planning Division after assessing whether the prospective project is within the PAMC guidelines and how the project may be structured, i.e., whether it could be undertaken in-house or with consultant services. The PAMC program manager will notify the prospective applicant of this decision and the rationale upon which it is based.

Completed PAMC application packets must be sent to the M-NCPPC, Prince George’s County Planning Department, Community Planning Division, Neighborhood Revitalization Section, PAMC Program Manager, via email attachment to: PAMC@ppd.mncppc.org. To facilitate a thorough review of each project, supporting materials (map, resolution from elected municipal officials or letters of support, if applicable) must be included. Applications lacking the required materials will not be considered.

Application Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

Once submitted, applications will be reviewed for completeness by the program manager. A PAMC Applications Review Committee will review applications against the program goals and the projects’ own goals and anticipated products. The program manager, and members of the PAMC Applications Review Committee may make site visits or interview the applicant during the application review period.

Highest priority in the evaluation of applications will be given to projects that generally incorporate and embrace the following:

- Implementation of planning goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations in approved County plans
- Implementation of recommendations made in Planning Department studies, and strategies and action items in approved Maryland Sustainable Communities action plans
- Innovative or transformative solutions to critical community planning issues
- Collaboration across organizations and/or stakeholders to increase impact and effectiveness
- Projects that plan for long-term sustainability (when applicable)

The PAMC Application Review Committee may consider the following specific criteria in evaluating applications:

- The clarity of the project description, including realistic project goals and projected work products
- The degree to which the project contributes to planning objectives
- The degree to which the project will result in the enhancement of community resources
- The degree to which the project demonstrates County-community cooperation in planning initiatives
- The degree to which the project could stimulate or prompt other planning or educational projects or programs throughout the county and/or community
- Community support for the project

Priority may be given to projects located in an approved Maryland Sustainable Community, Priority Funding Area (PFA), Plan 2035 Neighborhood Reinvestment Area, Plan 2035 Employment Area, Business Improvement District (BID), and to projects in locations that increase the program's geographic diversity

Based on the satisfaction of the above criteria, the PAMC Application Review Committee will send a recommendation to the Community Planning Division Chief that addresses the criteria for project approval, timing, and funding availability. If the division chief concurs that a project should proceed in the budget cycle, then, for consultant projects a scope of work will be prepared, bids obtained, and a consultant will be selected. The PAMC Program Manager will present the PAMC application, along with the bid amount, to the Planning Board to request the release of funds within the PAMC budget to conduct the project.

Projects may also be undertaken in-house or in combination with consultants. The staff time to conduct PAMC projects within the Planning Department is assigned at the discretion of the Planning Director and is based on the project timeframe and staff availability.

Applicants are notified of the decision to approve the PAMC project within two weeks of the Planning Board or the planning director's decision. Upon approval of the requested funding, a notice to proceed is sent to the consultant and a planner in the Community Planning Division is assigned to manage the project.

Staff may continue to work with applicants whose projects are not recommended for funding, refining their projects and applications, the goal being a successful application submitted in a future funding cycle.

Successful applicants do not directly receive or manage PAMC funds for consultant services. Approved projects are administered and managed by planners in the Community Planning Division.