

Planning Board Assistance Program



What are the objectives of the Planning Board Assistance (PBA) program?

PVPC's Planning Board Assistance (PBA) program provides municipal planning boards with professional, high quality planning services on a part-time, cost-effective basis.

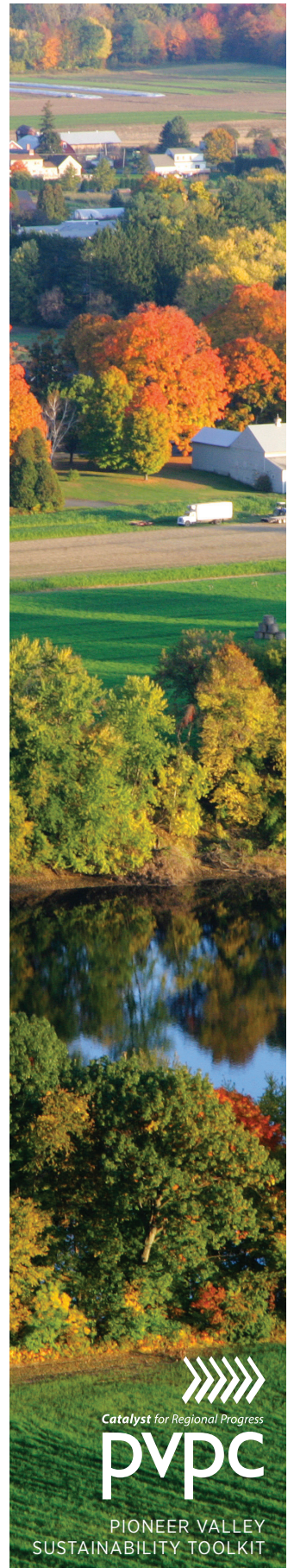
Why do we need the PBA Program?

As new laws are passed and the state of municipal planning becomes more sophisticated the responsibilities of local planning and zoning boards becomes more complicated and time consuming to administer. These citizen boards often find themselves lacking the in-house capacity to sufficiently and expeditiously carry-out these responsibilities and budget constraints limit their ability to hire full-time professional planning staff.

Under the PBA program PVPC will provide a planner on a fee-for-services basis. This planner will provide a higher level of technical assistance and attention beyond the free services available through our Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program. The PBA program is not a substitute for a town planner or community development professional, but is an extremely cost-effective alternative.

How does the PBA Program work?

If your community is interested in formalizing participation under the PBA program, the first step is to establish an agreement for services. This agreement will include a detailed scope of work describing the Planning Board's work priorities and the number of hours of professional planning services available to the community. Typically, the PBA year starts



on July 1st and extends through the following June 30th, but shorter-term agreements for a specific project or task are also possible.

Through the PBA program, the Planning Commission will assign a professional land use planner with expertise in zoning and master planning services as the municipal's key contact. This planner will provide technical assistance to the Planning Board on a part-time basis, and will be available for Planning Board members to contact whenever questions arise. The planner will become familiar with local planning issues and problems.

DID YOU KNOW...

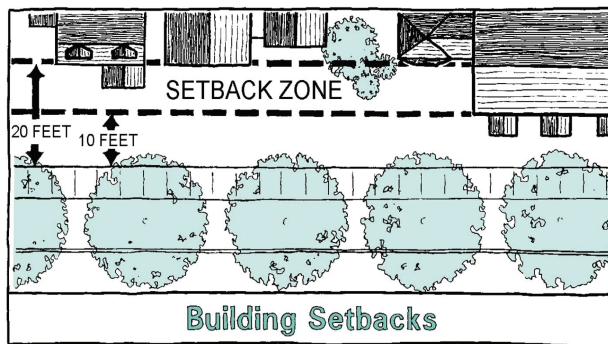
The town of Hadley has been participating in the PBA program continuously for over a decade

The local communities of Cummington, Granby, Longmeadow, Middlefield, Southampton and Westfield have also been recent participants

... The PBA program provides a cost effective alternative for small towns to afford professional planning services, as well as to assist current municipal planning staff.

Levels of Assistance

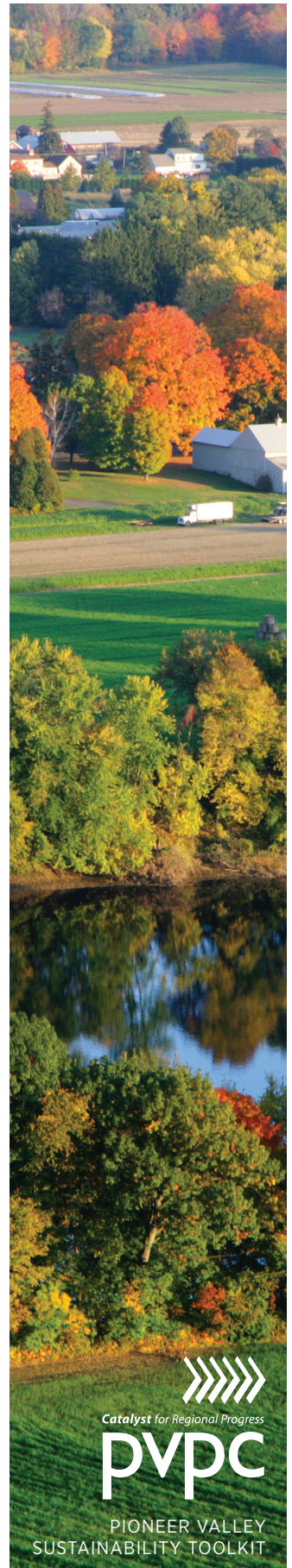
Under the PBA Program, communities can request a level of assistance that fits the community's budget and individual needs. PVPC staff will assist communities in determining the appropriate level of assistance.



Types of Planning Board Assistance

Planning Boards can create their own unique scope of services tailored to local needs through the PBA program. The following is a menu of planning services which could be included:

- » Assistance with the review of development proposals (subdivision and site plan review applications)
- » Review and comment on adequacy of existing zoning ordinances and bylaws or subdivision regulations
- » Review zoning ordinances and bylaws for consistency with state law
- » Creating development review intake and tracking systems



- » Assistance in re-drafting and updating zoning ordinances and bylaws or subdivision regulations
- » Updates on planning board requirements and responsibilities
- » Assistance in implementing smart growth tools and strategies
- » Urban Design
- » Visualization
- » Access to the key contact via telephone, e-mail and scheduled meetings for guidance and advice
- » Attendance at Planning Board meetings
- » Assistance in reviewing meeting agendas and meeting minutes
- » Planning Board training
- » Guidance concerning planning principles and planning law
- » Interpretation of local ordinances, bylaws and regulations
- » General municipal planning functions

A model bylaw or strategy is included in the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Toolkit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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