



**Certified Local Government Program
Guidance for Preservation Solutions (GPS) Guidelines**

From time to time, municipalities are asked to review complex projects, are working on challenging issues related to a specific property, or have preservation-related planning needs. These issues are often multi-faceted and may require outside expertise as well as comprehensive guidance on a range of preservation issues, some of which may not have even been considered previously. The Guidance for Preservation Solutions (GPS) program is a way for PA SHPO to provide Certified Local Governments (CLGs) with focused comments, suggestions, and direction on cultural resource issues in their communities.

How GPS Works

The GPS program brings together PA SHPO staff from each of the agency's programs to review the CLG's project/issue and provide relevant comments and guidance. Examples include consideration of how a development project may impact National Register eligibility, the appropriateness of certain design or material choices for a historic property, a property's archaeological potential, and/or survey and documentation needs. Formal request for review/assistance are submitted by the CLG along with relevant project plans, documents, and specific questions/issues the community is seeking help with. The Community Preservation Coordinator (CPC) for the region will present the project to the PA SHPO regional team for review and discussion. The team will identify issues and guidance relative to all relevant program areas and the CPC will record and report these issues to the CLG in writing within a specified timeframe, generally 30 days.

Eligible Requests for Assistance

To avoid potential conflicts with other PA SHPO programs or projects, only projects where PA SHPO has no other formal role through environmental review/Section 106, tax credits, grants, other programs, or likelihood that there will be future involvement from PA SHPO will be considered for this program. PA SHPO may choose not to respond to a specific request if:

- there is the likelihood of future PA SHPO involvement in the project, which may be inappropriately influenced by comment during the GPS process; or
- the scale and nature of the request is too complex or is beyond the PA SHPO's areas of expertise; or
- the timeframe for response does not allow sufficient time for meaningful review and comment.

The PA SHPO will notify the CLG whether or not the project qualifies for GPS within 3 working days after receiving the request.

Requesting GPS Assistance

GPS is only available to CLGs and all requests must be made in writing. Requests for assistance may come from HARB, Historical Commission, elected body, planning commission, or staff. No requests from individual citizens or community organizations will be considered for GPS.

There are no deadlines for GPS and requests are accepted on an ongoing basis. While the PA SHPO will make every attempt to provide guidance as quickly as possible, most responses will typically take 30 days.

To request GPS assistance, please email or write to the Community Preservation Coordinator for your region (see attached map) with the following information:

- Project description, including location and detailed project plans
- Drawings, renderings, specifications, and photos, as applicable
- Type of review being performed by the municipality (i.e. SALDO, building permits, Certificate of Appropriateness) and timeline for issuing a decision
- Specific questions or issues that the CLG is seeking PA SHPO guidance on
- Date PA SHPO response requested by

EXAMPLE: A private developer is seeking various local approvals to build a housing development on a property that is National Register listed and locally regulated by the Township's Historical Commission. The project is entirely privately financed and doesn't require any Federal or State permits. The municipal leadership is preservation sensitive, but wants advice on what preservation issues may be at play before commenting on the proposal. There is some preservation language in the zoning ordinance, but it's murky and the Planning Commission has asked for SHPO's advice before it considers the developer's request so it can make an informed decision.

EXAMPLE: A Borough has recently acquired a prominent historic property to prevent likely demolition by a private owner. Borough staff and elected officials want to proceed in a prudent manner and would like advice before engaging a consultant.