
City Council Website Contact Form

From City of Portsmouth <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

Date Tue 9/22/2026 10:34 AM

To Webform Submission <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

Cc City Council Clerk - Shr <ccclerk@portsmouthnh.gov>; City Council - Shr <ccemail@portsmouthnh.gov>; Carl E. Weber <ceweber@portsmouthnh.gov>; Karen S. Conard <kconard@portsmouthnh.gov>; Nathan D. Lunney <ndlunney@portsmouthnh.gov>; Susan G. Morrell <sgmorrell@portsmouthnh.gov>

Submitted on Tue, 09/22/2026 - 10:33

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Kate

Last Name

Leith

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

Work Force Parking

Address

[REDACTED]

Portsmouth, New Hampshire. 03801

Message

Dear Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to request clarification regarding the recent update to Portsmouth's Downtown Workforce Parking Program, particularly the change in eligibility criteria effective October 1.

The City's September update states that the program is available to downtown employees and business owners in the restaurant, retail, hospitality, and personal-service industries. My concern is that this appears to exclude hourly employees working for other downtown businesses, including professional-service firms, even though those employees may face the same parking challenges and, in some cases, may earn less than employees working in the specifically listed industries.

For example, we have an hourly administrative employee where I work in downtown Portsmouth and

who has relied on the workforce parking program. Under the earlier descriptions of the program, eligibility was based on being an hourly employee of a downtown business. Under the updated criteria, she appears to be excluded solely because she she works as an administrative assistant rather than a restaurant, retail, hospitality, or personal-service business. We also have interns who work for us and as college students this would have a substantial financial impact on them.

I understand that the City Council discussed and voted on changes to the program on September 14, including language intended to "clarify" who qualifies. I would appreciate clarification on the following:

Was it the Council's intent to make hourly employees of professional-service and other downtown businesses ineligible for the Downtown Workforce Parking Program?

What was the rationale for selecting restaurant, retail, hospitality, and personal-service businesses while excluding hourly employees in other industries?

Was compensation level or demonstrated financial need considered when establishing the new eligibility criteria?

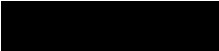
Will current participants who qualified under the previous hourly-worker criteria be allowed to remain in the program?

Is the Council considering any process through which other hourly downtown employees could qualify based on income, employment status, or demonstrated need rather than the industry of their employer?

I fully understand the need to manage limited downtown parking and to support businesses that rely heavily on hourly workers. My concern is that the current eligibility criteria may create unintended inequities among downtown employees. An hourly administrative employee working in a professional office can face the same affordability and transportation challenges as an hourly employee working in retail, hospitality, or a restaurant.

I would appreciate any clarification the Council can provide regarding the intent behind the change and whether eligibility for other hourly downtown workers will be reconsidered.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Best regards,
Kate Leith 

Please indicate if you would like your comment to be part of the public record for the upcoming City Council meeting.

Yes

{Empty}

*subject - Subject

City Council Website Contact Form

From City of Portsmouth <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

Date Tue 9/22/2026 10:45 PM

To Webform Submission <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

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Submitted on Tue, 09/22/2026 - 22:45

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Marcio

Last Name

Von Muhlen

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

Support for the Housing Action Plan

Address

[REDACTED]

Portsmouth, New Hampshire. 03801

Message

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

I'm writing to urge the Council to pursue bold, meaningful action to increase housing supply in Portsmouth.

Portsmouth has become increasingly difficult to afford for many of the people who work here, grew up here, raise families here, and contribute to this community every day. We will not solve that problem at the margins. The scale of our housing shortage calls for action of a similar scale.

That means making it substantially easier to build more homes: allowing more multifamily housing, reducing unnecessary lot-size and setback restrictions, enabling smaller homes and cottage developments, supporting commercial-to-residential conversions, permitting greater density and

height where appropriate, and opening more of the city to housing.

I also hope the Council will resist a dynamic in which every individual project effectively requires the consent of nearby property owners. Existing residents deserve to be heard, but they should not have a de facto veto over whether future residents are allowed to live here. People who work in our schools, restaurants, hospitals, shops, public services, and local businesses should have a realistic opportunity to live in the community they serve.

Portsmouth is not a museum. It is not a retirement community, and it is not an HOA. It is a living city, and healthy cities change, grow, and make room for new people.

There will always be objections to individual developments—traffic, height, neighborhood character, parking, or simply the discomfort that comes with change. Those concerns deserve consideration, but the Council also has to weigh the much larger cost of saying no repeatedly: escalating housing prices, fewer young families, longer commutes, greater economic segregation, and a community that becomes accessible only to people who bought homes years ago or can afford today's prices.

I encourage the Council to set ambitious housing-production goals, measure progress against them, and make zoning and permitting decisions based on the scale of Portsmouth's unmet housing demand—not simply on the intensity of opposition to individual projects.

The Housing Action Plan is an opportunity to make a real difference. I hope the Council chooses reforms that materially increase the number and variety of homes that can actually be built, and also pursues creative use of city owned land for nonprofit development.

Thank you for your service and for taking this issue seriously.

Please indicate if you would like your comment to be part of the public record for the upcoming City Council meeting.

Yes

{Empty}

*subject - Subject

City Council Website Contact Form

From City of Portsmouth <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

Date Mon 9/28/2026 8:37 AM

To Webform Submission <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

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Submitted on Mon, 09/28/2026 - 08:37

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Ethan

Last Name

Underhill

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

Tonight's agenda

Address

[REDACTED]

Portsmouth, New Hampshire. 03801-6075

Message

To the Portsmouth City Council,

I'm traveling during tonight's meeting and unable to join for public forum, but I had hoped to comment on several items that I believe revolve around the challenge of making Portsmouth a place where more people can afford to live and work, as we manage tax dollars responsibly.

First, I support the Housing Action Plan. I appreciate the impressive amount of work that has gone into getting the city to this point. Portsmouth has spent years diagnosing the housing problem, and this plan gives us a concrete path toward doing something about it.

I also hope adoption of the plan is considered the beginning of the work. As individual recommendations come back for implementation, I trust that the Council will keep asking clear-eyed

questions, such as:

- How many additional homes will a change tangibly help produce?
- At what price points? For which households?
- How quickly can we reasonably expect those homes to be built?
- What public costs come with the change? How should those costs be allocated?
- Are we designing the rules and affordability requirements so that projects can actually be financed and built?

I believe these questions (and many others like it) can help the city distinguish the changes that sound good from the ones that produce the rich, diverse housing Portsmouth needs — especially as we seek to recruit and retain teachers, firefighters, police officers and other public employees that needs to live closer to where they work.

Relatedly, I remain a strong supporter of the Sherburne project. I support sending the proposed infrastructure agreement through Legal, Finance, and Public Works for careful review, and I hope that process can move promptly so these 90 units can get built.

Finally, I support Councilor Cook's proposed expansion of the Downtown Workforce Parking Program. For people earning hourly wages in town, the cost of just getting to work and parking for a shift has to be part of the math. A targeted temporary expansion while the City studies long-term options strikes me as a practical move that will benefit our workers and local economy.

These items, to me, reflect the right balance for our city. We should remain ambitious about making Portsmouth a more affordable place. We should remove the barriers where we can. We should keep asking the hard questions about whether the results are helping our neighbors and whether the financial footing is stable and sustainable.

Thank you for your work on this.

Best,
Ethan Underhill

Please indicate if you would like your comment to be part of the public record for the upcoming City Council meeting.

Yes

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*subject - Subject

City Council Website Contact Form

From City of Portsmouth <webformsubmission@portsmouthnh.gov>

Date Mon 9/28/2026 11:33 AM

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Submitted on Mon, 09/28/2026 - 11:33

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

First Name

Paul

Last Name

Schmidt

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

Changes to parking affecting employees of downtown businesses

Address

[REDACTED]

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, New Hampshire. 03801

Message

Dear Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, and Members of the City Council,

I am the President of CMA Engineers, with an office at [REDACTED] and am writing with concerns about recent limitations on parking in the City. Unfortunately, I am travelling and unable to attend tonight's meeting, so I am submitting CMA Engineers' concerns in writing for the Council's consideration and respectfully request that they be included in tonight's public record.

CMA Engineers has been a proud downtown Portsmouth business owner since 1990. Parking has always been a challenge, but there have always been reasonable options available through on-street parking and City lots. Unfortunately, those options have become increasingly limited and expensive. Approximately 12 of our employees currently rely on the DWPP. As we understand it, recent changes will eliminate our employees' eligibility based on our business type. If they lose eligibility on October

1, their only practical downtown parking option will be a \$300/month garage pass.

For 12 employees, that equates to approximately \$43,200 per year. Whether borne by our employees or absorbed by the company, that is a significant new cost.

Our concern is both the impact of the change and the short notice. Earlier City materials described the program broadly in terms of downtown workers and employees of downtown businesses. It was not until the September 14 meeting that the Council amended the policy to limit eligibility to restaurant, hospitality, retail, and personal-service businesses.

Had we understood that employees of professional-service businesses were being considered for exclusion, CMA Engineers would have participated in the Council process and raised these concerns before the eligibility requirements were changed.

We also have difficulty understanding the rationale for distinguishing among downtown employees solely based on the industry of their employer. CMA Engineers employees face the same downtown parking constraints as employees of restaurants, hotels, retail stores, and personal-service businesses. A \$300 monthly parking expense is no less significant simply because someone works for an engineering firm, or other professional business, or a non-profit, or a governmental agency, or any other excluded industry.

We appreciate that tonight's proposed amendment attempts to provide a transition for some existing participants. However, many current CMA Engineers participants would remain excluded.

We respectfully ask the Council to provide the same reasonable transition to all existing DWPP participants, regardless of industry or job classification, while the City evaluates the longer-term eligibility criteria. Or that the City complete a more comprehensive review of the impact of parking on City businesses, with a wider range of options.

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul Schmidt

Please indicate if you would like your comment to be part of the public record for the upcoming City Council meeting.

Yes

{Empty}

*subject - Subject