

Are you involved with municipal land use and transportation planning activities? Could your municipality use assistance to help shape a future project or learn how to move community planning and transportation-related goals forward through an improved understanding of the PENNDOT Connects initiative? Act now to take advantage of technical assistance.

PennDOT Connects offers free technical assistance to municipalities to better integrate local land use, development, and transportation goals into the state transportation planning process.

What is a tech assist and how do I request one?

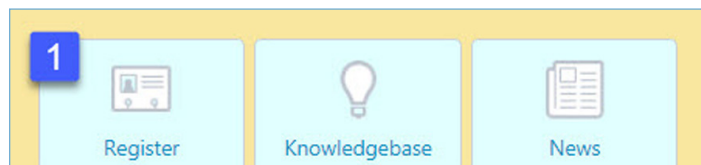
Any municipal staff member, government official, or planning partner is eligible to request free technical assistance. A tech assist — short for technical assistance — is provided by technical experts via phone or email in response to a question or request for information from a PennDOT Connects registered user. On-site assistance options are also available for more in-depth help during any stage of the land use and transportation planning or project development process.

To request assistance, municipalities should register with the PennDOT Connects Support Hub, a web-based, interactive helpdesk with an easy-to-use ticket system for accessing expert guidance. The Hub can be found at <https://paconnects.org>. If you do not have internet access, a request for a tech assist can also be made by phone at 717-710-2090.

The Hub technology allows for easy communication of needs, collaboration among planning partners, and follow-up support. To request a tech assist, follow these steps:

Step 1 - REGISTER FOR A USER ACCOUNT

Register for an account at <https://paconnects.org> by clicking the **Register** icon, completing the short form, and selecting the green **Register** button at the bottom of the form. You will receive two automated email

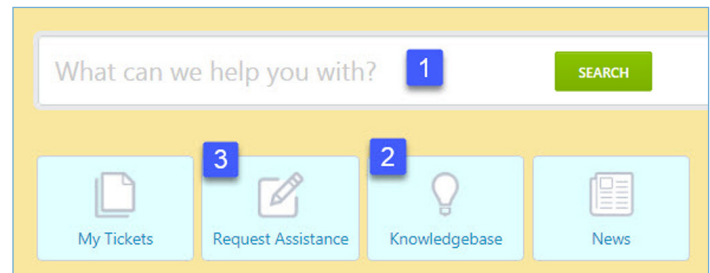


messages: the first a welcome message and the second to verify your account. Verify and activate your account in the second message by clicking the link as noted in the email message.

Step 2 - GET SUPPORT

After validating your account, log in to the Support Hub using your email address and password. (Note: Users do not need to have an account to use the **Knowledgebase** resources.)

Both self-serve resources and consulting technical assistance options are available:



1. You can use the **SEARCH** box at the top of the page to ask a question or search a topic. If there are related resources in the Hub's **Knowledgebase**, a list of resources will appear.
2. To see a complete listing of resources by category, select **Knowledgebase** from the main menu bar or click the **Knowledgebase** button on the dashboard. To see resource details and download information, select the resource title by double-clicking it.
3. To make a tech assist request, you must be a registered user. To get started, select the **Request Assistance** button or **Request Assistance** from the main menu bar. Then, complete the short series of prompts to specify the nature of your request and desired level of assistance (phone, email, or site visit/training support).



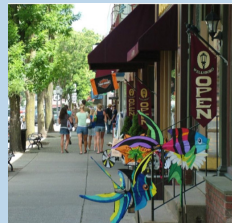
Mobility & Efficiency



Multimodal Transportation



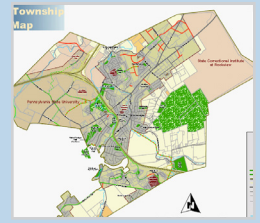
Safety



Community Character



Project Funding



Accommodating Growth

Be sure to include some details related to your request in the space provided and identify any e-mail addresses of persons whom you would like to keep informed of this tech assist.

If you have supporting documentation that helps to describe your issue, you can include attachments with the request ticket. After submitting your request, you will receive an e-mail acknowledgment. Requests are reviewed and assigned to technical experts to provide timely feedback for meaningful support and recommendations.

Each ticketed request should be limited to one or two related topics. If you have multiple issues to address, please open a second ticket.

Types of tech assists

Depending on the nature of a request, municipalities will receive assistance via email or phone to supply technical resources or know-how. In selected cases, an on-site visit may be necessary to facilitate face-to-face discussion and collaboration.

Phone/Email Assistance: Phone and email assistance offers Hub users prompt replies to questions about guidance documents; planning tools; best practices; success stories; funding opportunities; PennDOT forms, policies, processes, and standards; and planning partner contacts. Generally, these requests are handled within a week of opening a tech assist ticket.

On-Site Assistance: With an on-site tech assist, municipalities have the opportunity to work with a PennDOT Connects expert on a more detailed request specific to their community and transportation project planning and programming issues. The technical expert will visit on-site and meet with the municipal officials, associated stakeholders, and planning partners at a half-day workshop-style meeting. Relevant PennDOT District planners and planning partners from the local Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organization are invited to participate in the site visit.

Support for on-site technical assistance could include guidance and facilitation on addressing planning and safety issues, presentation of research on best planning practices, assistance with specific planning and design-related issues, and/or support in following planning regulations to help begin or move a project forward.

After the meeting, the PennDOT Connects technical support expert will prepare a report to document the resources and assistance provided.

On-site personalized training is also available. You provide the meeting room, and PennDOT Connects will provide the technical expert. The brochure [Transportation and Land Use Training](#) explains available topics and how to request on-site training to meet your community's needs.

PennDOT and its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) planning partners have a long-standing relationship jointly preparing transportation studies, plans, and programs to make the best transportation project investments possible with available resources.

This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for PennDOT Connects implementation. Together, the MPO/RPO planning partners and PennDOT can effectively collaborate and communicate with municipalities — and other community stakeholders (e.g., transit operators, economic development agencies, etc.) — to improve transportation system performance and achieve more livable communities.

The collaborative effort of municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT is key to ensuring that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized.

MPO/RPO contacts can be found at <http://www.pennndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/MPO-and-RPO-Contact-List.aspx>.

What type of assistance is available?

Any question or tech assist request about land use, the environment, and transportation planning is fair game.

To help organize tech assists, PennDOT Connects provides the following key categories (sample questions are provided for each category):

1. PennDOT Connects General Information

- What is the project initiation form?
- What state road projects are planned for neighboring municipalities?
- What projects in my surrounding region are on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?

2. Community Character

- What plans do we need to have in place to prepare for future road projects that might impact our community's sense of place?
- What type of data do we need to collect to support a local priority of walkability?

3. Multimodal Transportation

- How can we better plan for sidewalk and bike path expansions? How do we get started with this process?
- What is the best way to control access to nonconforming uses/businesses and improve safety in our downtown business district when sidewalks are added?

4. Improving Mobility and Efficiency

- What can be done to better manage access for locally generated traffic along key highway corridors?
- How do we reclaim our Main Street when our current roadway system emphasizes mobility (for cars) over accessibility?

5. Improving Safety

- How can we incorporate safer pedestrian crossings as the main state road undergoes repaving? Is there funding available to pay for safety enhancements?
- How do we moderate driving behavior and address safe walking to schools to improve safety on state routes within our community?

6. Funding

- We need help in developing a funding strategy to upgrade our curb and sidewalks. How do we ensure early coordination of maintenance projects scheduled by PennDOT to address ADA design at the intersections of local and state routes?
- What funding resources are available to improve bike accessibility?

7. Protecting Natural Resources

- What can be done to preserve key areas eventually needed for public purposes, such as parks, wellhead protection, or new roadways?
- We want to expand our urban forestry program, but our current ordinances impede tree planting along streets. How can we remove these barriers? Are there issues with planting trees along state roads through our community?

8. Accommodating Growth and Redevelopment

- What techniques can be used to manage growth around a planned highway interchange?
- How can our municipality use the PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) process to plan for growth and implement access management practices?

9. Economic Development

- What is the best way to coordinate with PennDOT on a Main Street Program?
- Is there funding available to get us started with planning and implementing a Main Street Program?

10. Stormwater Management

- We are a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) community and value our stormwater as a natural resource. What is the best way to introduce green infrastructure into our policy and regulations?

For more information:

717-710-2090 or paconnects@pa.gov