

West Branch Township

1705 S. Fairview Road, West Branch, MI 48661

Phone: (989) 345-5450 Fax: (989) 345-8419

www.westbranchtownship.org

Guide to Development

August 1st 2023

Township of West Branch, West Branch, MI 48661



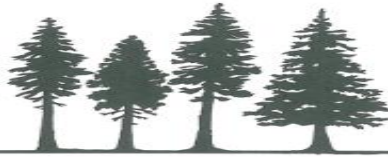
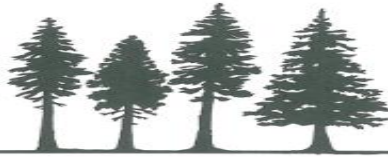


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INTRODUCTION

This Guide to Development is meant to streamline the process of development, working through the processes that include the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, Administrative Approvals, and Development Review for West Branch Township.

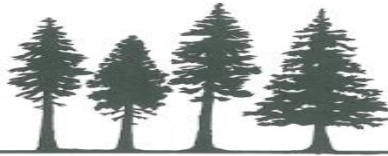
Our goal is to present guidelines for the Zoning Board, Planning Commission Administrative Approvals, & Development Review Committee process for developers, residents, business owners that are easy to follow.

Depending on the nature and complexity of a development there may be several different types of permits and/or review processes that are required. This development guide is designed to explain the different types of permits and reviews, the boards that may be involved, and the processes and timelines that can be expected. We encourage anyone contemplating a project to contact West Branch Township early on to help navigate the process and ensure a positive outcome.

You can also learn more at www.westbranchtownship.org

We look forward to working with you as you complete your project. Welcome to West Branch Township.

-The West Branch Township Staff, Boards, and Commissions



KEY STAFF

Township Hall Phone Number: 989-345-5450
 Township office Hours Depend on Township Official.

Township Supervisor - James Morris
 989-345-5450 Ext. (2) Two
 Email - wbt-supervisor@yahoo.com

Township Clerk – Jeremy R. Hickmott
 989-345-5450 Ext. (3) Three
 Email – Wbtclerk@gmail.com

Township Treasurer – Diane Philbrick
 989-345-5450 Ext. (4) Four
 Email - wbtogemawdp@sbcglobal.net

Mike Killackey – Township Public Works
 989-965-4982
 Email - publicworks@westbranch.com

Jeremy R. Hickmott - Planning and Zoning Administrator
 989-889-1690
 Email – st_hcckk@yahoo.com

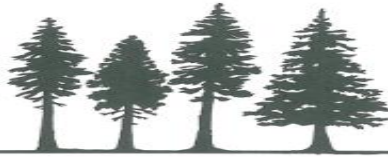
Jeremy R. Hickmott - Downtown Development Authority Administrator
 989-889-1690
 Email – st_hcckk@yahoo.com

Toni Brusck – Assessor
 989-826-6318
 Email - t_brusch@yahoo.com

Diane Philbrick - Utility Billing
 989-345-5450 Ext. (4) Four
 Email - wbtogemawdp@sbcglobal.net

Key Agencies

<u>County Offices</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>Phone Numbers</u>
Building & Mechanical	989-345-3370	Chamber of Commerce	989-345-2821
County Clerk	989-345-0215	Convention Visitors Bureau	800-755-9091
County Equalization	989-345-0328	County Airport	989-345-1453
Health Department	989-345-5020	Ogemaw County Herald	989-345-0044
County Treasurer	989-345-0084	Consumers Energy	800-477-5050
Sherriff's Office	989-345-3111	DTE Energy	800-477-4747
Road Commission	989-345-0234	County EDC	989-345-1090
Transit	989-345-5790	Housing Commission	989-345-5390
Register of Deeds	989-345-0728	EGLE	800-662-9278



WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

West Branch Township Board	
Meets the 2 nd Wed. of every month at 6:00 PM	Staff Liaison: Township Supervisor & Township Clerk
West Branch Township Planning Commission	
Meets 1 st Tue. Of every month as needed at 6:00 PM in the Winter and 7:00 PM through the summer.	Staff Liaison: Township Planning and Zoning Administrator
West Branch Township Downtown Development Authority Board	
Meets 3 rd Thur. of every month as needed at 4:00 PM	Staff Liaison: DDA Administrator
Zoning Board of Appeals	
Meets 1 st Mon. of the month as needed at 7:00 PM	Staff Liaison: Township Planning and Zoning Administrator
Board of Review	
Meets in March, July, and December. See website for more information	Staff Liaison: Township Assessor

WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Current Master Plan can be found at this link. www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

The Master Plan is the primary tool for making decisions that affect the future land use of the community. It is a broad based policy document for the physical, economic and social development as it relates to land use and has a long-range vision providing a coordinated approach to making important decisions.

All West Branch Township documents can be found at: www.westbranchtownship.org

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

West Branch Township meets or exceeds the notification requirements of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2008, as amended). The Township publishes notices in the Ogemaw County Herald newspaper and mails notices to all persons owning property and occupants of property within 300 feet of the boundary of the property for which approval is requested at least fifteen (15) days before any pertinent hearing. For applications which require a public hearing, the Township will require a zoning notification sign at the subject property up to fifteen (15) days before the hearing. The Planning and Zoning Administrator will notify applicants of signage requirements at submittal.

FEE SCHEDULE

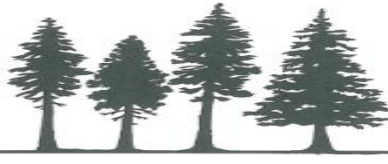
Permit Fee Schedule

The West Branch Township Permit Fee Schedule is available at this link.

For your convenience, many of the Township's zoning permits and application fees can be paid online by clicking this link – www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

Water Fee Schedule

The Water Fee Schedule is available at this link – www.westbranchtownship.org



BUSINESS & LIQUOR LICENSING

Business Licenses

Certain types of Business licenses are required prior to a business operating in West Branch Township. Business license types and applications can be obtained through the Township Clerk. The Clerk can be reached by phone at (989) 345-5450 ext. 2, or by email at wbtclerk@gmail.com

Liquor Licenses

Businesses must be approved for a Liquor License with both the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) and West Branch Township depending on the location of the establishment in order to sell or serve alcoholic beverages.

Michigan Liquor Control Commission 517-284-6250 mlccinfo2@michigan.gov

You may also contact the West Branch Township Planning and Zoning administrator, who can support your efforts. He can be reached at 989-889-1690.

ZONING COMPLIANCE

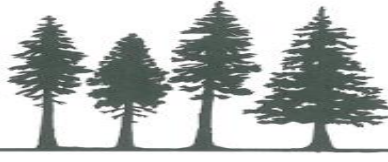
Prior to beginning the construction, addition, alteration, or re-occupancy of any building or structure, a zoning permit must be obtained from the Planning & Zoning administrator. For a zoning permit, an application form may be submitted by the property owner or by a duly authorized agent acting on the owner's behalf. Required information on the application form includes owner contact information, parcel information, including tax identification number and dimensions, proposed use, and contractor contact information. The application form also requires a site plan drawing be submitted with the application that shows parcel lines and dimensions of the lots to be used, location of all existing and proposed structures on the parcel, and any streets bordering the property.

Any structure for which a zoning permit is required shall be compatible in design and appearance with the characteristics of the neighborhood and community. The Planning & Zoning administrator shall review the plans for compatibility in design and use with the existing characteristics of the neighborhood and the community. In determining compatibility with community aesthetic standards, the exterior vertical and horizontal dimensions, building shapes and sizes, roof design, exterior siding materials, texture and finishes, foundation appearance, and window and door appearances may be considered. In the event of disapproval thereof by the Planning Commission or zoning administrator, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Exempted from zoning permit requirements are installation of siding, windows, doors, shingles, and replacements of existing or deteriorated materials and ordinary maintenance repairs made on all dwellings and their related outbuildings, or anything else as stated in the township zoning ordinance. This exemption does not eliminate the necessity for compliance with other county, state, or federal permitting requirements.

When developing a new dwelling or connecting to utilities, an application to connect to the township utilities will be provided with the zoning permit. If construction on an unimproved street is proposed, it is the responsibility of the developer to bring the unimproved street up to the Ogemaw County Road Commission construction standards prior to commencing construction.

For residential uses, access to a parcel shall consist of either a single two-way or a pair of one-way hard surfaced driveways. For commercial uses, access drives and parking areas must be shown on a development plan and be approved by the Planning Commission. Prior to construction of a driveway, a right of way use permit must be obtained from the Ogemaw County Road Commission or MDOT.



What is zoning?

- Euclidean Zoning is the most common type of Zoning and in a hierarchy which puts Use first, Regulations Second, and Form last. Form Based Zoning hierarchy puts Form first, Regulations second, and Use Last.
- Zoning is the process of dividing municipalities into zones or districts in which certain land uses, forms, and regulations are permitted and certain land uses, forms and regulations are prohibited.

ZONING ORDINANCE & MAPS

The zoning ordinance regulates the use and development of land within West Branch Township. Standards are in place that apply both township wide and in each specific zoning district. You are encouraged to review the zoning ordinance and consult with staff before initiating any change of use or construction project within the Township.

The complete West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance is available at:

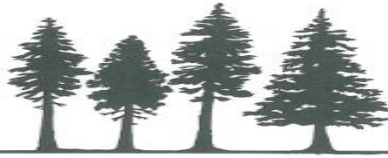
www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

Zoning Maps

- The entire township zoning map can be found at this link www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin
- If you are looking specifically for the "Downtown Development Authority Map", it can be found at the above link.
- If you are looking specifically for the "M-55 Corridor Business District", it can be found at the above link.

APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE

APPROVAL AUTHORITY TABLE	Planning and Zoning Administrator	Planning Commission	Zoning Board of Appeals	West Branch Township Board	Ogemaw County Building Department
Zoning Permit	X				
Site Plan Review	X Recommendation	X Approval			
Special Use Permit		X			
Planned Unit Developments		X			
Rezoning Ordinance Amendment		X Recommendation		X Approval	
Zoning Variance			X		
Appeals			X		
Building, Electrical, mechanical and construction permits					X



PRE-APPLICATION MEETING

A pre-application meeting with Township staff is encouraged prior to submitting any application to the Planning Commission. At this meeting, applicants will meet with the Planning and Zoning administrator. Staff from Public Works, Water, Fire, Economic Development, Public Safety, and other relevant staff or agencies may provide a preliminary review of a Site Plan, explain zoning requirements, and discuss project timelines. Pre-application meetings often address circumstances that would otherwise result in an application being postponed or denied, and allow for discussion of larger-scale matters like infrastructure needs, qualifications for tax abatements, the tax implications of different developments, and local incentives that may be available. Depending on the project scope and timing, multiple pre application meetings may be necessary. Please call 989-889-1690 or email st_hceckk@yahoo.com to schedule an appointment and to discuss what items will be needed for the pre-application meeting. After meeting with the Planning and Zoning Administrator, a Development Review meeting can be scheduled, usually within one to two weeks, to discuss an application prior to submission. To the extent permitted by the Freedom of Information Act, these conversations will remain confidential until the applicant is ready to submit formal documents. To download a conceptual review meeting template click [here](#).

What is the Development Review Committee?

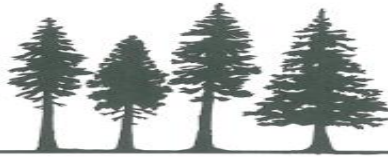
- The Development Review Committee is the opportunity for businesses, investors, builders, and applicants looking to invest in West Branch Township to sit down with multiple departments to review their proposed building plans.

Why a Development Review Committee?

- Time is a valuable thing. The Development Review Committee seeks to help guide you in your venture to build or expand your business in West Branch Township early in the process. The Development Review Committee's goal is to help answer any questions that you may have and make sure you are familiar with the process.

Development Review Committee Process

- Schedule a Development Review Committee Meeting after meeting with the Planning & Zoning Administrator. (See Key Staff for Contact Information)
- Provide the materials provided in the Development Committee Review Check List.
- The staff involved may consist of the Township Supervisor, Water Department Representative, Economic Improvement Director, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and a township engineer. The staff will review the proposal and inform you of anything additional that is needed. Additional departments or agencies pertinent to the proposed application may also be included.



ZONING PERMIT

What is a Zoning Permit?

- A Zoning Permit for West Branch Township is to ensure that the proposed use and improvements of a property meets zoning and other requirements. Zoning permits are not permitting construction. Zoning permits are approvals for Land Development, Design, and uses for a future building being constructed.
- A Zoning Permit allows for administrative approval by the Zoning Administrator to administratively approve plans for construction. After approval the applicant must obtain all building and demolition permits.

Why a Land Use Permit?

- A Zoning Permit allows for review of local and state standards to ensure public safety.

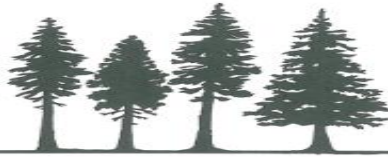
Zoning Permit Process

- File a completed Land Use Permit Application with the Zoning Administrator. For application click [here](#)

LAND USE APPLICATIONS

This section is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of each type of land use application. This overview does not preempt or supersede any regulations contained within the West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance. Most Zoning permit applications are circulated to other reviewers outside of Planning and Zoning for comment. The table below demonstrates the role of the various review entities regarding the approval of the various Planning/Zoning Applications outlined in this document.

	MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS	APPROVES			
	PLANNING COMMISSION	PLANNING COMMISSION	WEST BRANCH TOWNSHIP BOARD	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	ADMINISTRATIVE (STAFF)
SITE PLAN		X			X
SPECIAL USE PERMIT		X			
REZONING / CONDITIONAL REZONING	X		X		
TEXT CHANGES / ORDINANCE	X		X		
ZONING COMPLIANCE					X
VARIANCE				X	
APPEAL				X	



SITE PLAN REVIEW

What is a Site Plan? Why a Site Plan?

A Site Plan is a graphic representation of buildings, parking, drives, landscape, and any structures or land improvements. A Site Plan may have additional information to help make determinations of the site. A Site Plan is designed to allow a basis for research, analysis, and synthesis. It further involves the organization of land use, zoning, access, privacy, security, land drainage and many other factors.

Site Plan Review Process

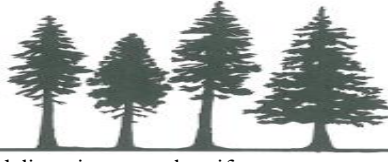
- File a completed Site Plan Application with the Zoning Administrator & Pay Fee. For Application (Click Here)
 - For Site Plan Requirements Reference West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance Chapter 9 (Click Here)
 - Entire Permit processing takes 15 to 45 days depending on the scale of the changes proposed in the site plan.
 - Must have an approved Development Review Plan.
- Zoning Director will review Site Plan
 - Zoning administrator will review Site Plan for completeness.
 - Zoning administrator can administratively approve completed Zoning Permits for Single-Family and their attached accessory structures. All other completed Site Plans must be engineered drawings and go to the Planning Commission for approval.
 - Regular Scheduled Planning Commission Meetings are held on the first Tuesdays of the month, 6 p.m. in winter and 7 p.m. in summer, Special Meetings can be scheduled as needed.
 - Planning Commission will review the Site Plan making sure that the criteria are met.
 - Planning Commission shall vote whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Site Plan.

Development Plan Reviews

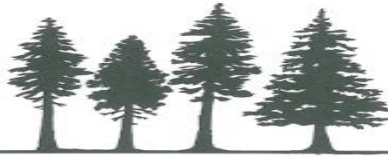
Prior to the erection of any building or structure in any zoning district for any principal use or special land use, other than single-family residences and accessory buildings, a final site plan approved by the Planning Commission is required. Development Plan reviews require a final site plan review which is completed by the Planning Commission or a zoning permit review that is completed by the Planning & Zoning administrator. A zoning permit, rather than a site plan, may be submitted for minor modifications to a legally existing and conforming use for alterations to a building or site that do not result in expansion or substantially affect the character or intensity of the use. Refer to West Township Zoning Ordinance. The complete West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance is available at: www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

Site Plan Check List

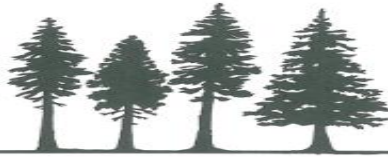
- Scanning of miscellaneous application requirements:
 - Scale, 1"=50' if site is less than three acres; 1"=100' if site is greater than 3 acres.
 - Date North Arrow.
 - Proposed structures; and any other structures within 100' of property.
 - Proposed rights-of-ways, drives, etc.; existing adjacent drives, ingress//egress points within 100' of the property.



- Wetlands or flood plain delineations on plan, if necessary.
- Name, address, etc. of designer, architect or other preparer of plan.
- Site & Dimensional requirements:
 - Lot size.
 - Setbacks (including wetlands, flood plains, & railroads).
 - Lot coverage (impervious surface).
 - Building size & height (arch, elevation).
 - Pedestrian and bicycle pathways.
- Site access points:
 - Distance between the driveway and adjacent intersections or other driveways meets standards.
 - Driveway design is sufficient for the type of traffic expected and site conditions. This includes reviewing the need for a by-pass lane, center turn lane, deceleration lane, deceleration taper, and width of ingress and egress lanes.
 - Driveways radii for both in-bound and out-bound are sufficient to accommodate
 - Driveway is aligned with driveways across the street or off-set at least 150-250 feet.
 - Pedestrian crossings addressed.
 - If a boulevard design is used, carefully review island design including width (minimum 10 feet), length and radii.
 - Is sight distance at the proposed driveway location sufficient?
 - Is this a location where a shared driveway, frontage road, perpendicular service drive, rear service drive or connecting parking lots would be appropriate?
- Parking Requirements:
 - Number required.
 - Size, angle, aisles, curbing.
 - Landscaping-sufficient, number of islands within lots, screening. Runoff control.
- Interior Site Circulation:
 - Minimize conflict near entrances, through the use of landscaped islands. Islands should also be used to control and slow traffic maneuvering through a large parking lot.
 - Where school bus or semi-truck traffic is expected, insure that the site designer has provided adequate internal radii to accommodate the vehicles.
 - Insure that traffic backing out of parking spaces does not conflict with through traffic.
 - Use islands at the ends of parking rows, to discourage vehicles from backing out into major traffic aisles.
 - Parking Island Design – the radii of parking islands should be shown to insure vehicles can easily move through the parking lot. The depth of parking islands should be about two feet less than the depth of the adjacent parking space.
 - Generally, intersections within the parking lot should be no more than three-way intersections and at most four-way. Avoid intersections with five or more lanes. If one-way angled parking is used, insure that it is the most efficient. Ninety degree parking with two-way aisles is preferred and more convenient.
 - Identify need for pedestrian pathways. Sidewalks not needed at the present time, but may be required in the future require a bond for future sidewalk construction.
 - Pedestrian circulation should generally be down the aisle or provided separately.
 - Minimize conflicts for pedestrians near building entrances. Traffic lanes should not abut the building; a protected area for pedestrians should be provided.
 - Insure that there is sufficient room to maneuver to pick up dumpsters. For drive-through facilities insure that the drive-through lane does not conflict with maneuvering from parking spaces.



- Drainage and Grading:
 - Catch basins.
 - Detention/retention ponds.
 - Curbing.
 - Transmittal to other agencies for review.
 - Engineering
 - ICDC
 - Riprapped runoff areas.
 - Sodded or fabric on steep slopes to prevent erosion.
 - Requirement of erosion control devices.
- Utilities
 - Public utilities;
 - Sewer & water
 - Private;
 - Telephone
 - Television - Cable, Satellite Dishes or Antennas,
 - Permitted, setbacks, screening
 - Electric
 - Gas
 - Transmittal to other agencies; Engineering
- Signage:
 - Size
 - Placement
 - Number
 - Height
 - General appearance
 - Required handicapped signage
- Lighting
 - Location and focus (onto site & building only). “Dark Sky”.
- Landscaping:
 - Number and placement of street trees & Shrubs required.
 - Insure that there is adequate landscaping between the site and any adjacent uses which are less intensive. The landscaping may be in the form of a berm, wall, new plantings or preservation of existing vegetation.
 - Require landscaping where headlights need to be shielded. The landscaping should include shrubs a minimum of 24 inches high spaced no more than five or six feet apart and ideally include some evergreen species five or six feet tall at planting.
 - Berms – Berms should be designed with a maximum slope of three foot horizontal to one foot vertical to prevent erosion and allow grass to survive. If landscaping is to be provided within the berm, a horizontal crest of six to ten feet minimum should be provided.
 - Minimum caliper of two and one-half (2-1/2”) inches for deciduous trees and two inches for ornamental trees caliper of nursery stock is measured 1” above root ball. Evergreen trees should be six to eight feet high. Shrubs 18 to 24 inches high.
 - One tree per 1,000 square feet of usable space up to 10,000 square feet than one additional tree per 10,000 square feet.



SPECIAL LAND USE

Within each zoning district it is recognized that there are uses, because of their unique characteristics, which cannot be properly classified in any particular district or districts without consideration in each case of the impact of such uses upon neighboring land. Accordingly, special land uses are permitted with conditions which would address their unique characteristics.

Approval of a Special Land Use permit may be granted by the Planning Commission after a public hearing is held. Any application for special land uses shall be filed simultaneously with an application for development plan review. Refer to the West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance Chapter 8 for complete special land use application requirements and review processes. The complete West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance is available at: www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin.

What is a Special Land Use?

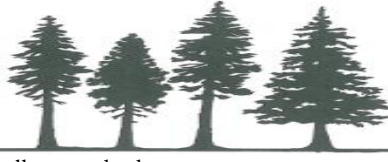
- A Special Land Use is a use that is not a principal or permitted use which may have further impacts on the zone or district.

Why a Special Land Use?

- A Special Land Use permit allows for flexibility within a zone or district.
- A Special Land Use is designed to allow a basis for research, analysis, and synthesis.
- A Special Land Use involves the organization of land use, zoning, access, privacy, security, land drainage and many other factors to effectively see how the Special Land Use may affect the zone or district.

Special Land Use Permit Process

- File a completed Special Land Use Permit Application with the Zoning Director & Pay Fee. For Application (Click Here).
- For Special Land Use requirements Permit process takes 15-60 days
- Zoning Administrator will review the Special Land Use Permit Zoning Director will review the Special Land Use Permit Application to check for completeness.
- The Zoning Administrator must send out a public notice and notices to any land owners within 300ft of the subject property.
- Regularly Scheduled Planning Commission Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m. in the winter and 7 p.m. in the summer. Special Meetings can be scheduled as needed.
 - Planning Commission will review the Special Land Use Permit making sure that the criteria are met.



- Planning Commission shall vote whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Special Land Use Permit.

ZONING AMENDMENTS & REZONING

The regulations and provisions stated in the West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance for boundaries of zoning districts shown on the zoning map may be amended and supplemented by the Planning Commission. Proposals for changes may be initiated by the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Commission, or by a property owner.

After a public hearing is held, the Planning Commission reviews proposals in terms of compatibility with the West Branch Township Master Plan and the possible effects of the proposal on the community's physical development. Following review, the Planning Commission will act upon the request by granting approval, disapproval, or chose to table the matter for additional study. Refer to West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance Chapter 12 for complete Rezoning application requirements and review processes. The complete West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance is available at:

www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

Zoning Variances and Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) may authorize a variance from the strict application of provisions of the West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance Chapter 11 where all of the following must be met:

1. Strict application of the letter of the regulation would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted use, or would render conformity but be unnecessarily burdensome.
2. A lesser relaxation of the regulation than requested could not be reasonably achieved that would give substantial relief to the property owner and be more consistent with justice to other property owners.
3. The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances peculiar to the property and not due to general conditions in the neighborhood or the zoning district.
4. The problem is not self-created.
5. Granting the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjoining property or the general welfare.
6. Granting the variance will not impair the intent or purpose of this Ordinance.

The complete West Branch Township Zoning Ordinance is available at:

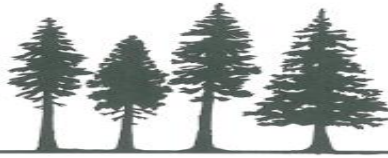
www.westbranchtownship.org/zoningadmin

Rezoning

- Rezoning occurs when the corresponding use or form does not fit zoning district requirements.
- Rezoning allows for a change in zoning in a zone or district with land use, zoning, access, privacy, security, land drainage, and many other factors being analyzed ensuring a harmonious use or form within the corresponding zone or district.

The Rezoning Process

- File a completed Rezoning Application with the Zoning Administrator & Pay Fee. For Application (Click Here)
 - Rezoning requirements are listed on application.
 - For Site Plan Requirements Reference Zoning Ordinance Chapter 9 (Click Here)
 - Entire Permit processing takes 30 to 120 days. Zoning Administrator will review Rezoning Application.



- Zoning Administrator will review Rezoning Application for completeness.
 - Zoning Administrator must send out a public notice and notices to any land owners within 300ft of the subject property.

- Regularly Scheduled Zoning Board of Appeals Meetings are held the 1st Monday of the month as needed, 7:00 p.m.
 - Zoning Board of Appeals will review the Rezoning & Site Plan making sure that the criteria are met.
 - Zoning Board of Appeals shall vote whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the Rezoning

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

What is a planned unit development (PUD)?

Planned unit developments are optionally created districts that allow for more flexibility and variety in regulation of land development, foster innovation in land use, ownership, and variety of design, and offer uniqueness in layout. While PUDs are more flexible in their regulations, they also seek to preserve historical, natural, and architectural features that other zoning districts may not prioritize, and seek to protect green space while providing amenities, public services, and utilities. PUDs should be developed in accordance with the goals of the Master Plan and promote a higher standard of quality than can be achieved through traditional zoning districts.

What are the requirements for a planned unit development?

Because planned unit developments are able to permit greater flexibility in design, structure, and capacity than traditional zoning districts, successfully applying the overlay to PUD requires greater commitment and action from the applicant to uphold the community vision. This could entail many things, including preserving natural features, creating open spaces and green way corridors, mixing land uses and housing types, renovating or removing blight, and more. Further, PUDs must be at least a half-acre in size to receive PUD approval. The Planning Commission may approve applicants with sites smaller than the minimum, but the applicant must prove the PUD still adheres to the specific requirements of the overlay. To view the full list of features or actions for a PUD application, please view the relevant zoning ordinance.

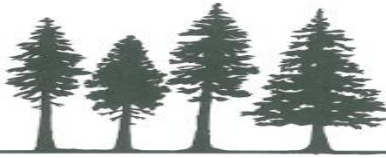
[Click here to view Chapter 5 Section 5.16 – Planned Unit Development \(PUD\).](#)

What are the benefits of a planned unit development?

Because planned unit developments undergo rezoning to become their own district, regulations regarding the use of the sites are more varied than in traditional, established zoning districts. Further, as long as the PUD meets the requirements listed in the zoning ordinance (specifically compatibility with surrounding uses/character and the minimum size requirement), PUD overlays can be created in any districts of the township. PUDs can be formed from multiple parcels and sites, as long as they have a unified owner. There is also the capacity to allow greater unit and residential density within the PUD than in other districts, provided extra requirements and commitments are met during the application process.

How do I apply for a PUD?

Before applying for a planned unit development, applicants must have a pre-application meeting with the Planning and Zoning administrator. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the site(s) qualify for a planned unit development, if the prospective uses and design of the sites can be accomplished under traditional zoning districts, and to review the



items that will need to be submitted in the PUD application. Due to the size and resources required for PUDs, applications will require more information to be submitted than site applications in traditional zoning districts. While the pre-application meeting will cover what is required, one can typically expect to submit information such as topographic maps, flood plain maps, property surveys, inventories on existing utilities, proposed uses, interior street locations, conceptual layouts, indication of architectural style, and more. Application packages typically consist of a completed PUD application form, the necessary fees, a parallel plan, a preliminary development plan, and a summary of intent. For a complete list of items one will be required to submit, please view the relevant zoning ordinance below.

[Click here to view Chapter 5.16.9 – Development Plan Review and Approval](#)

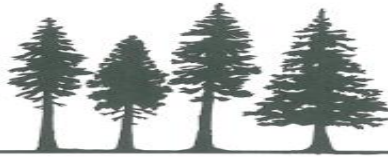
What is the approval process?

Upon submission of a fully completed PUD application, the Planning Commission will schedule a work session with the applicant to review the development concept and communicate the need for any additional information. When the initial review is completed, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the PUD request. Upon considering the application materials, comments, and evidence presented during the public hearing, the Planning Commission can approve the PUD, deny the PUD, or approve the PUD with conditions.

The standards for which the Planning Commission will base its decision upon will include the PUD's adherence to the zoning ordinance and Master Plan, the PUD's compatibility with adjacent land uses, natural environment, and public services, and its natural benefit to usage or planned character that could not otherwise be achieved in a traditional zoning district.

After approval and before construction, the applicant will enter into a development agreement with West Branch Township that determines obligations regarding the PUD, including a final development plan, an optional phasing plan, and remedies that will occur should the applicant default on the PUD. The Planning Commission will vote, which will ultimately be approved by the Township Board.

What steps occur after approval? Within six (6) months of the Planning Commission's approval of the PUD rezoning, the applicant shall submit either a final development plan for the PUD as a whole, or for a phase of development. Development of PUDs in phases must have a Planning Commission-approved schedule of completion. Final development plans are subject to the process and review standards of Site Plans. Should a final development plan not be submitted during the 6 month period or within an approved extension, the preliminary development plan and PUD rezoning will be null and void.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The community development block grant is a federal program managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. CDBG funds for West Branch Township are administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on behalf of the Michigan Strategic Fund. The Township may choose to directly use the funding to address services and infrastructure for low-moderate income individuals in the Township, or sub-contract the funds to organizations that will improve services for those in this demographic. Possible uses of CDBG funds include, but are not limited to:

- Façade grants
- Blight elimination
- Minor home repair programs
- Critical infrastructure maintenance
- Business assistance loans/grants
- Rental rehabilitation
- Small business working capital loans
- Job creation
- Public facilities

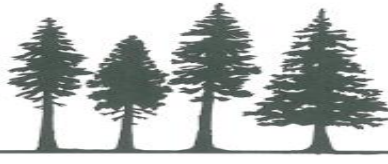
For more information on past, current, or potential CDBG uses by West Branch Township, please contact the Township Planning and Zoning Department at (989)889-1690.

Public Spaces, Community Places

Public Spaces, Community Places is a matching grant program administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) with the purpose of creating amenities that foster a sense of ownership among residents. These projects include a wide variety of purposes and usage; projects often include public art, memorials, adaptive reuses, trails, park enhancements, farmer's markets, pop-up retail and events, recreation facilities, and downtown gathering spots. The program requires 50% of the funds to be raised through community crowd-funding, which works to display public support while also marketing the project being funded. Local units of government, low profit limited liability corporations, and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for funding. If you have an idea that may be eligible for Public Spaces, Community Places funding, please contact the Township Planning and Zoning Department at 989-889-1690.

Brownfield Tax Increment Financing

Brownfield Tax Increment Financing, through P.A. 381 of 1996, allows developers to receive reimbursement on environmental and non-environmental redevelopment activities. Brownfields are properties and/or sites that are contaminated, blighted, and functionally obsolete or hold historic value. Reimbursement for costs associated with redeveloping Brownfields occurs through the collection of incremental state and local taxes as the taxable value of the property increases through the revitalization process. To benefit from the Brownfield TIFs, developers will need to work with their local Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to produce a work plan for state review (Michigan Strategic Fund for non-environmental activities, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for environmental activities. West Branch Township's Planning Commission may also serve as the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. To learn more about the Brownfield Program, initial evaluations, and work plan development, please contact the Township Planning and Zoning Department.



West Branch Township Tax Abatement Programs

West Branch Township recently adopted two tax abatement programs, Industrial Tax Abatement and Commercial Tax Abatement, to encourage capital investment and job creation within the township. For more information on how these programs work, please contact the West Branch Township Clerk at 989-345-5450 Ext.3 regarding this abatement programs.

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Residential Construction Projects

Most minor home improvement projects do not require a building permit or Site Plan. However, per Michigan Building Code, a building permit is required if creating additions to the building, or improvements that include:

- Removing or cutting away any wall, partition, or portion thereof.
- Removing or cutting any structural beam or bearing support.
- Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the exit requirements.
- Changing, adding, or removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring, or mechanical elements.

For more information on Building Permits or other Permits for improvements, please view the relevant section of this guide, or contact the Planning and Zoning administrator at 989-889-1690.

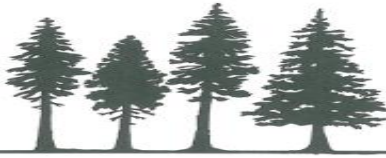
[Click here to view the Zoning Permit for West Branch Township.](#)

Multi-family Dwellings

Standard multi-family repairs do not require a Building Permit or Site Plan application. However, structures containing three (3) or more units are subject to Site Plan Review processes in addition to the Building Permits criteria listed in the Michigan Building Code when making additions or the following renovations:

- Removing or cutting away any wall, partition, or portion thereof
- Removing or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support
- Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the exit requirements.
- Changing, adding, or removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring, or mechanical elements.

For more information on Building Permits or other Permits for improvements, please view the relevant section of this guide, or [click here to view current Ordinances in West Branch Township](#). Further, you may contact the Planning and Zoning administrator at 989-889-1690.



BUILDING PERMITS

Who approves construction permits such as building, electrical, and plumbing?

Building Code for West Branch Township is administered and enforced by the Ogemaw County Building Department. Any owner or owner's authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the code, or to cause any such work to be performed, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit. (MRC R105.1). If a zoning permit is required, the zoning permit must be obtained prior to applying for building permit.

What is required to apply?

Certain documents and information will be required to be submitted with the Building Permit application. Information required for all Building Permits includes the address of the job site, a Zoning Permit, a completed (with signature) application by the proper applicant, a set of construction plans, and permits including electrical, plumbing, and mechanical/heating. There may be further information needed, including additional permits and/or certifications, depending on the architecture and materials of the structure, its geographic location, or environmental factors that may be impacted by the construction. Fees accompany each permit.

Where can I learn more about inspections?

Inspections will be required at multiple points throughout the project, for each permit issued. Inspection scheduling is a responsibility of the developer or applicant, and should occur when the work is ready for each respective inspection. Ogemaw County inspectors will perform the mandatory inspections a reasonable amount of time after the request for inspection has been made. For more information about inspections, including points of contact for each permit, please [click here](#) to visit the Ogemaw County Building Department's web page.