

## **QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO USING THIS ZONING ORDINANCE**

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The following pages are intended to assist you in using the City of Grand Blanc Zoning Ordinance. However, be sure to review the entire ordinance to insure that you have addressed all the appropriate standards. Contact the Building and Zoning Administrator concerning questions on the use or interpretation of this Zoning Ordinance, procedures, submittal deadlines, information on the Master Plan, etc.

City of Grand Blanc Building and Zoning Administrator  
Grand Blanc City Hall  
203 East Grand Blanc Road  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439  
Phone: (810) 694-1118

- When you receive this Zoning Ordinance, write the date of receipt on the cover of first page. Thereafter, refer to this date when asking the Building and Zoning Administrator about any Zoning Ordinance amendments since that date (particularly to the zoning map).

### **HOW DO I DETERMINE THE CURRENT ZONING AND PLANNED USE OF MY PROPERTY ?**

**Check the Zoning District Map:** Refer to the Adopted Zoning District Map. This map is available from the Building and Zoning Department, for a nominal fee. The published zoning map is periodically updated. The Building and Zoning Department maintains the official current copy. You may want to verify the zoning shown on the map with the Building and Zoning Administrator.

**Check the City's Master Plan:** The City of Grand Blanc has undertaken several studies to provide a foundation for this Zoning Ordinance and to help guide zoning decisions. The Master Plan adopted in 1992, and last updated in 2007, also includes Grand Blanc Charter Township. The Master Plan is periodically updated. The Master Plan presents information on environmental features, utilities, transportation, community goals and a recommended future land use map. Recommendations from these studies may affect your property. Generally, the City requires rezonings to be consistent with the future land use map. Proposed developments should help to achieve the goals of the Master Plan, particularly by designing developments sensitive to the area's natural resources.

## WHAT USES ARE PERMITTED IN EACH ZONING DISTRICT ?

Below is a list of each zoning district as illustrated on the Zoning District Map. Refer to the corresponding article for information on a specific district. You may also refer to Article IV, which provides an overview of the uses permitted by right and those requiring a Special Land Use permit in each district.

- Single Family Residential Districts (R-1 through R-3)
- Two-Family Residential District (R-T)
- Low Density Multiple Family Residential District (up to 6 units per acre)
- High Density Multiple Family Residential District (up to 12 units per acre)
- Manufactured Housing Park District
- Office Service District
- Neighborhood Business District (smaller commercial uses)
- Downtown Business District (overlay zone)
- Community Business District
- General Business District (higher intensity commercial uses)
- Light Industrial District
- General Industrial District
- Research Park District
- Vehicular Parking District (for parking lot expansions)
  - Planned Unit Development District (mixture of uses, flexible design standards)
- Public Recreation District

**Permitted uses** are allowed if you meet the standards described in the district. These standards may include minimum lot size, setbacks, parking and landscaping. In most cases you will be required to submit a site plan for approval by the Planning Commission.

**Special Land Uses** require special review by the Planning Commission and the City Council. Even if your intended use is listed as a Special Land Use in the zoning district, the proposed use will only be approved if it meets the general standards listed in Article XXI to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and ability to be served by existing municipal facilities, plus any special site or operational standards listed in Section 2110. All Special Land Uses require a public hearing before the Planning Commission, and preparation of a site plan and final approval by the City Council.

## **WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS IF MY INTENDED USE IS NOT LISTED AS A PRINCIPAL USE PERMITTED OR SPECIAL LAND USE?**

If your proposed use is not listed as either a permitted use or a Special Land Use on your property, you have several options, including:

- Find an alternative use for your property which is permitted or find a site in the City or surrounding township which is properly zoned for your intended use.
- Request the City rezone the property, which requires appearances before both the Planning Commission and the City Council, with at least one public hearing. The Zoning Ordinance provides criteria which the Planning Commission references in reviewing your rezoning request (Article XXVIII). One criteria is that the rezoning be consistent with the future land use map in the Grand Blanc Community Master Plan. Even if the long range future land use map indicates your intended use, the City must also determine the appropriateness of the timing for the zoning change.
- If your use is not listed anywhere in the Zoning Ordinance, you could request that the Planning Commission consider your intended use based on the "determination of similar uses" as explained in Section 309. Under this process, the Planning Commission determines the appropriate district(s) for the intended use based on similarity to other uses listed. The Board of Zoning Appeals has final authority if you disagree with the Planning Commission's interpretation.
- Request the City add your proposed use, either as a Permitted Use or a Special Land Use to the zoning district. Note: As a policy, the City of Grand Blanc does not consider use variances.
- The City of Grand Blanc has little vacant buildable land. In some instances, the Planning Commission may determine there is no appropriate location in the City for your intended use.

## WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP WHEN THE PROPER ZONING IS IN PLACE ?

Once proper zoning is in place there are several factors to consider during the early stages of project planning. The list below highlights some of the more important features.

- **Natural Features:** The City strives to maximize preservation of existing mature woodlands with quality species, particularly oak, hickory, beech, ash and maples; or to preserve areas in their natural state.
- **Wetlands:** The City does not have a local wetlands ordinance. However, the City tries to promote compliance with the Michigan Wetlands Protection Act and to encourage developers to protect all wetlands, regardless of size. If your site contains possible MDNR regulated wetlands (usually those over 5 acres), select a recognized wetland consultant to help determine the location. Issuance of a Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy may be contingent on submittal of a MDNR wetland permit.
- **Topography:** The City generally requires site development which complements existing topography. The Ordinance requires a plan illustrating topography before and after development at two foot contour intervals, with spot elevations in pavement areas.
- **Driveways:** The City's policy is to minimize the number of driveways. The location of driveways in relation to other driveways and spacing from intersections is considered during site plan review. Your survey should illustrate existing driveways and roads through and within 100 feet of the edge of your property. Sharing of driveways or connecting sites through frontage roads or service drives is encouraged. High traffic generating sites and larger scale projects should consider the relationship of the site to existing and potential traffic signals.
- **Traffic or Environmental Impact Studies:** If your project is expected to generate a significant amount of traffic or is located on a congested or accident prone street section, you may be required to submit a traffic impact study prepared by a qualified engineer or planner. Certain types of projects require an Impact Assessment as part of the site plan review package. The site plan review section includes a point system used by the City to determine the need to prepare an environmental assessment.
- **Utilities:** Information on water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and franchised utilities is required.
- **Residential and PUD Options:** If there are significant natural features on your site or you want to mix land uses, the Zoning Ordinance has several options. Residential projects can use the lot averaging or open space subdivision option. The Planned Unit Development (PUD) option gives you flexibility in designing your site, such as mixing certain uses or clustering buildings on the most buildable part of a site. These standards can help preserve valuable natural features which lower development costs, avoid MDNR permits and increase marketability.

## CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING A SITE PLAN

**Meet with City Staff:** Early, informal meetings to discuss conceptual plans and submittal dates may help to alert you to the need for additional information. You may also request an informal meeting with the Planning Commission to present your preliminary concepts.

- ✓ **Check the Site Plan Review Standards (Article XXIV):** Most projects in the City, except single family homes, require development of a site plan. The site plan review section outlines the process, requirements and items to be illustrated on the site plan.
- ✓ **Definitions (Article II):** This chapter is a listing of all definitions used throughout the Zoning Ordinance. This may be helpful in clarifying the use of a term.
- ✓ **General Provisions (Article III):** often overlooked standards on items such as:
  - ✓ Standards for exterior lighting (height of fixtures, wattage, etc.)
  - ✓ Requirements for dumpster location and screening
  - ✓ Standards on accessory buildings
  - ✓ Standards for fences and walls
  - ✓ Standards for corner clearance and driveways
- ✓ **Schedule of Regulations (Article XX):** information on minimum lot size; frontage and width; maximum building coverage; minimum setbacks for buildings and parking lots. All of these requirements must be met and indicated on the site plan. Check the specific zoning district to determine if a floor plan and building elevation is required.
- ✓ **Parking Standards (Article XXII):** standards for parking and loading/unloading - how many spaces, dimensions (9'x18' w/ 24' wide aisles), curbing requirements, drainage, location of loading docks, required area for truck turning radii, etc.
- ✓ **Landscaping Standards (Article XXIII):**
  - ✓ **Frontage landscaping** using either a landscaped berm, a 10 foot wide buffer with evergreen or a 10 foot wide greenbelt with 1 tree and 4 shrubs per 30 feet (the third option is recommended in most cases).
  - ✓ **Standards for size, spacing and species.** Deciduous trees must be 2.5 inch caliper, ornamental trees of 2 inch caliper, evergreens of 5 feet high, most shrubs must be 18-24 inches high. Use of native Michigan species is encouraged.
  - ✓ **Buffering** (wall, berm, trees) may be required between certain uses such as residential and commercial.
  - ✓ **Interior landscaping** must cover at least 5% of the site, with 1 tree per 400 square feet and one shrub per each 250 square feet of required interior landscaping.
  - ✓ **Parking lot landscaping** must cover at least 3% of the parking area. A mixture of trees and shrubs is encouraged. Some parking lot islands should be provided in larger parking lots to direct traffic near entrances and break up the expanse of pavement.
  - ✓ **Preservation of existing trees** is encouraged - credit is given for trees that are saved.
  - ✓ **Irrigation** may be required in some cases.
- ✓ **Driveways:** One of the criteria for site plan approval is that the number of driveways be minimal and spacing from intersections and other driveways (on both sides of the street) be as far apart as practical. The City may require a traffic impact study to justify more than one driveway. Shared access is encouraged.
- ✓ **Sidewalks:** Locations, dimensions and profile grades of sidewalks and paths should be illustrated.

- ✓ **Signs:** The location of signs should be indicated on the site plan. The number, type, locations and size of signs must meet the standards of the **Sign Ordinance** (a separate Ordinance from the Zoning Ordinance).
- ✓ **Other codes and ordinances:** In addition to the Zoning Ordinance, your project may need to meet the standards of other codes and ordinances such as the Building Code, the Fire Prevention Code, the Floodplain Ordinance (Ordinance 220) and others - check with the Building and Zoning Administrator.
- ✓ **Non-conforming Uses and Structures:** If your use, structure or site is non-conforming refer to Article XXVI for the limits on what you can do.

If you cannot meet a requirement, you may request a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. You must be able to prove your situation is unique and not self-created.

## WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR MY PROJECT ?

**Determine which approvals are needed:** This may include land division/combination, rezoning, site plan, Special Land Use, variance, subdivision, etc.

**Application forms:** Obtain copies of the application forms at City Hall.

**Key submission dates:** Check with City staff to determine key cut-off dates for being placed on an upcoming meeting agenda.

**Submittal:** Submit all required material, application form and fee to the Building and Zoning Department. Most submittals are required to be submitted several days before the meeting at which they will be discussed. This time period is used by the Planning Commission, City Council, Zoning Board of Appeals and staff to review your proposal. In some cases, such as Special Land Uses and rezonings, a longer time is needed to set a public hearing and meet notification requirements.

### Approval process:

- Site plans for permitted uses - Planning Commission
- Site plans for Special Land Uses - Planning Commission provides a recommendation to City Council.
- Site plans for certain minor expansions, etc. - may be approved by the Building and Zoning Administrator
- Rezonings and Ordinance Amendments - Planning Commission provides a recommendation to the City Council. You should plan on attending the meeting where your proposal will be discussed, or have someone represent you to respond to questions.
- Variances, Interpretations - Board of Zoning Appeals

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