



VAN BUREN
CHARTER TOWNSHIP

GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION

This Guide to Development provides a snapshot overview of the development review process in Van Buren Township. It explains the review processes, policies, steps, and other relevant information for applicants. Links to web pages and contact information are provided throughout the document for easy access to the most up-to-date forms, applications, and all other pertinent information.

This guide is general and does not remove the responsibility of an investor to speak with staff or obtain professional guidance. Each case is unique and may require modification the general process. The document is not intended to include all of the requirements of ordinances or codes, nor is it a replacement for the zoning ordinance or other local ordinances. Applicants should review specific ordinances and talk to applicable staff about projects.

CONTACT INFORMATION

It is valuable for developers to know who to contact regarding a project. Below is basic contact information for the Township as well as more specific information about development-related staff. This can be used to identify key contacts. Staff can help guide developers through the approval process, but final approval may have to come from a board or commission.

Van Buren Charter Township	
Address	46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Township, MI 48111
Website	vanburen-mi.org
Phone Number	(734) 699-8900
Hours of Operation	Monday – Friday, 7:30am – 4:00pm

Staff Contact Information					
Department Name	Key Contact	Title	Phone Number	Email Address	Primary Responsibilities
Public Services	Dan Power	Director of Planning and Economic Development	(734) 699-8913	dpower@vanburen-mi.org	Planning reviews/activities, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals
Public Services	Gerald Harder	Building Official	(734) 699-8913	gharder@vanburen-mi.org	Inspections and plan review
Public Services	Larry Lockett	Director of Public Services	(734) 699-8913	llockett@vanburen-mi.org	Environmental, Building & Grounds, Planning
Public Services	Kris Schlutow	Water and Sewer Director	(734) 699-8925	kschlutow@vanburen-mi.org	Water and Sewer
Public Services	Brittney Williams	Account Clerk of Planning and Economic Development	(734) 699-8913	bwilliams@vanburen-mi.org	Planning reviews/activities and Board of Zoning Appeals
Fire Department	Andrew Lenaghan	Fire Marshall	(734) 699-8900 ext. 9416	alenaghan@vanburen-mi.org	Fire safety inspections and reviews
Downtown Development Authority	Susan Ireland	DDA Director	(734) 699-8900 ext. 9201	Sireland-dda@vanburen-mi.org	DDA district development

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Projects may require approval from one or more boards or commissions. The following lists the Township's development-related bodies and their responsibilities.

Boards and Commissions		
Board	Responsibility	Meeting Time and Place
Township Board	Governing body with authority over development incentives; ordinance amendments; development policies, etc.	1 st and 3 rd Tuesdays, 6pm at Township Hall
Planning Commission	Creates and updates the Master Plan and reviews rezoning requests, site plans, subdivisions, special use permits and other land use applications	2 nd and 4 th Wednesdays, 5:30pm at Township Hall

Board of Zoning Appeals	Interprets and grants variances from provisions of the Zoning Ordinance; conducts hearings and resolves disputes regarding decisions of the Zoning Official.	2 nd Tuesday, 7pm at Township Hall
Board of Construction Appeals	Interprets and grants variances from provisions of the building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing codes and conducts hearings and resolves disputes regarding decisions of the Building Official.	As needed
Downtown Development Authority	Develops programs and projects which are aimed at improving the Belleville Road commercial corridor including new business development, business recruitment and retention, downtown beautification and public improvements.	4 th Tuesday, 5:30pm at Township Hall

MASTER PLAN

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 physical, economic and social development as it relates to land use and has a long-range vision providing a coordinated approach to making decisions.

Prospective developers should review the Master Plan to understand if their proposed project fulfills the goals of the Plan. The Master Plan documents are available for download at the following link:

MASTER PLAN DOCUMENTS:

<https://vanburen-mi.org/planning-economic-development/>

ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP

The Ordinance is the most common and often used way of regulating use of land. In general, land use type, building size and location, parking area size and location, screening, landscaping, access, design standards, and signage are described. The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance is to carry out the land use vision of the municipality’s Master Plan. Consulting the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map should be the first step in development/redevelopment of any property, and may be party of the initial contact with municipal staff. The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning District Map can be accessed using the following link:

ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP:

<https://vanburen-mi.org/planning-economic-development/>

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

For those development review processes that require public hearings, the following notification requirements are outlined by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2008, as amended) and any other applicable ordinances and statutes.

Except as otherwise specified by law, the township shall publish in a newspaper of general circulation and mail or hand deliver to all persons owning property and occupants of property within 300 feet of the boundary of the property proposed for which approval is requested at least fifteen (15) days before the hearing.

The notice shall:

- Describe the nature of the request.
- Identify any property that is the subject of the request, including all street addresses contained upon the property, or other means of parcel identification.
- State when and where the request will be considered.
- Indicate when and where written comments will be received concerning this request

LAND USE APPROVAL PROCESSES

This section is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of each type of land use application. It should be recognized that this overview does not preempt or supersede any part of the Van Buren Township Zoning Ordinance.

The table below demonstrates the role of the various review entities regarding the approval of various Planning/Zoning Applications outlined in this document.

	Planning Commission Recommendation	Planning Commission Approval	Township Board Approval	Zoning Board of Appeals	Administrative Approval
Rezoning	X		X		
Planned Residential Development	X		X		
Special Land Use	X		X		
Site Plan		X1			X1
Variance				X	

1. Some smaller residential projects, as well as remodeling or re-occupancy, are approved administratively. All others must go to the planning commission for approval.

ZONING COMPLIANCE

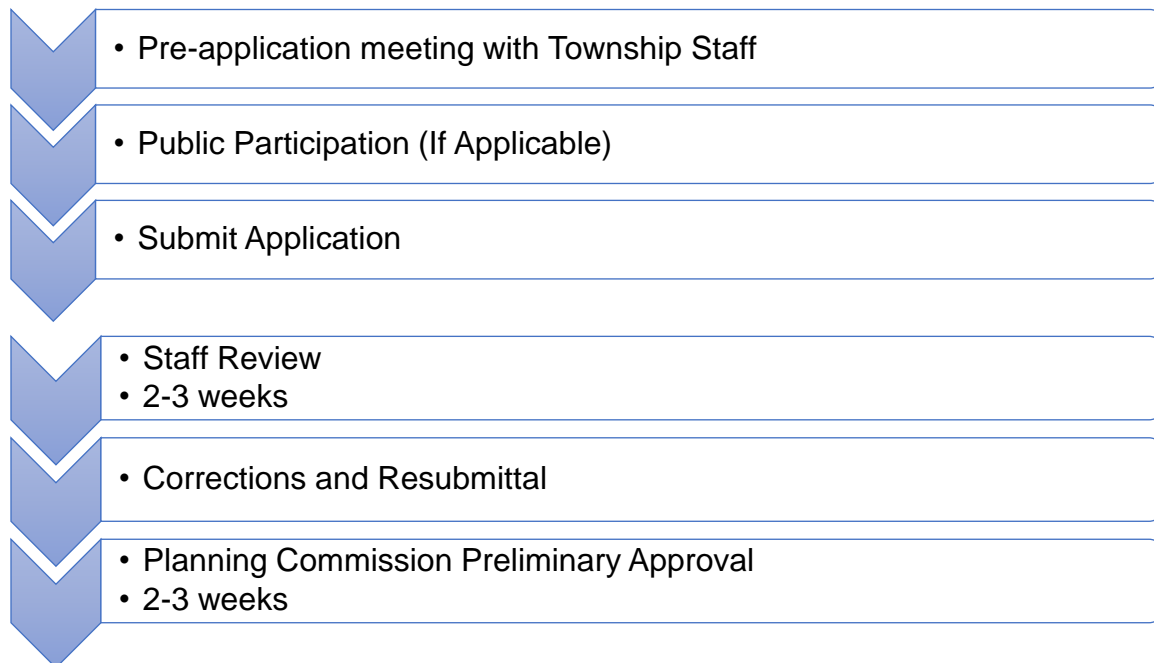
Prior to approval of any alterations to a building, structure, site or use, Zoning Compliance is reviewed as part of the site plan review and permitting processes. The purpose of Zoning Compliance is to ensure the proposed use, building, structure, or lots conform to the requirements outlined in Van Buren Township's Zoning Ordinance.

Final Zoning Compliance is issued as part of the plan review component of the permitting process, approval by the Zoning Administrator, and any necessary Board approvals are verified before any permits are issued.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

There are multiple processes that a development may be required to go through for approval. The following flowcharts and description outline the approval process for four (4) types of projects: Permitted Uses, Special Land Uses, Rezoning, and Variances. Also included is a checklist of the required elements for site plan submittal.

Permitted Use Site Plan Review Permitting Process





Notes:

The entire process usually takes 150-180 days.

This timeline and review of applications may be modified under certain circumstances. If an expedited timeline is needed, it should be discussed with Township staff at a pre-application meeting.

Planning Commission meetings are regularly scheduled on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Staff Review meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month as needed.

Applications for Staff Review and Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval must be submitted 3 Fridays back from the date of the meeting (19 days).

1) Pre-application meeting with Township Staff-

Prospective applicants can request an optional meeting with staff to discuss the application requirements and process.

2) Public Participation (If Applicable)-

Some private development projects may have great impact on the community, leading to questions or concerns from residents. To ensure community members are heard, the Township requires some developers to purposefully engage with the public regarding their potential project.

Developments which are determined to have substantial impact on the community must take the following steps:

- Pre-application meeting with planning staff
- Public informational meeting

- Follow-up meeting with planning staff to address community concerns

More specific information about public participation can be found in the Township's Public Participation Plan.

3) Submit application-

Applicants shall submit a completed and signed Planning and Zoning Application to the Van Buren Township Developmental Services Department along with all applicable fees per the Planning Fee Schedule. Two (2) sets of plans including all details required by the Zoning Ordinance shall also be submitted.

4) Staff Review-

Prior to Planning Commission consideration, the site plan and application shall be distributed to appropriate Township officials, staff, and consultants for review and comment. If deemed necessary, the plans shall also be submitted to applicable outside agencies for review and comment. After written comments are obtained from Township officials, staff, consultants, and outside agencies, a Staff Review meeting may be held with the applicant, Planning Director, Township officials, staff, and consultants to discuss review comments and address concerns raised. After the Staff Review meeting, the Planning Director shall determine if the site plan application is ready to proceed to the Planning Commission for preliminary site plan review or if another Staff Review meeting is necessary.

5) Corrections and Resubmittal-

Applicant shall address all issues raised during the staff review and submit a revised set of plans to the Township.

6) Planning Commission Preliminary Approval-

The Planning Commission shall review the preliminary site plan, together with any reports and recommendations from staff, consultants, and other reviewing agencies and any public comments. The Planning Commission shall then make a determination based on the requirements of this Ordinance and the standards of Section 12.209 (Basis for Approval). The Planning Commission is authorized to postpone, approve, approve subject to conditions or deny the site plan as follows:

- (a) Postponement. Upon determination by the Planning Commission that a site plan is not sufficiently complete for approval or denial or upon a request by the applicant, the Planning Commission may postpone consideration until a later meeting.
- (b) Denial. Upon determination that a site plan does not comply with the standards and regulations set forth in this Ordinance, or would require extensive revisions to comply with the standards and regulations, the site plan shall be denied. If a site plan is denied, a written record shall be provided to the applicant listing the reasons for such denial.
- (c) Approval. Upon determination that a site plan is in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance and other applicable ordinances and laws, the site plan shall be approved.
- (d) Approval Subject to Conditions. The Planning Commission may approve a site plan, subject to one or more conditions necessary to address minor modifications to the site plan, ensure that public services and facilities can accommodate the proposed use, protect significant natural features, ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses, or otherwise meet the intent and purpose of this Ordinance. Such conditions may include the need to obtain variances or approvals from other agencies.

7) Wayne County DPS Engineering Review/Approval

Plans must be sent to the Wayne County Department of Public Services to review whether they meet all county engineering requirements. This may include reviews of stormwater, county drains, soil erosion, and county right-of-way. Once all Wayne County permits are granted, applicants may continue the permitting process with Van Buren Township.

8) Township Engineering Review-

Site construction drawings will be reviewed based on the Township Engineering Standards Manual.

9) Planning Commission Final Approval-

The Planning Commission shall review the final site plan, together with any reports and recommendations from staff, consultants, and other reviewing agencies and any public comments. The Planning Commission shall then make a determination based on the requirements of this Ordinance, the standards of Section 12.209 (Basis for Approval), and the following considerations:

(a) The proposed final site plan is consistent with the approved preliminary site plan in terms of building location and architecture, amount and quality of landscaping, and site details including but not limited to lighting, parking, signs, and circulation layout.

(b) All conditions imposed during preliminary plan approval are met.

(c) The engineering requirements applicable at final site plan approval are met.

The Planning Commission is authorized to postpone, approve, approve subject to conditions, or deny a final site plan in the same manner as a preliminary site plan

***Single-Step Site Plan Approval. Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit the Planning Commission from granting final site plan approval without first granting a preliminary site plan approval if the plans are in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance for a final site plan.**

10) Submit Building Plans for Review-

Applicant must completely fill out and sign a building permit application and pay all applicable building fees per the fee schedule. Two complete sets of construction drawings and two complete plot plans (Mortgage Surveys) must also be included. All materials must be turned in to the Developmental Services Department.

11) Complete Pre-Construction Items-

Applicant will be given a checklist of items that must be completed before a building permit is issued. These include all applicable permits and approvals, fees, construction securities, maintenance and guarantee bonds, municipal insurance requirements, acceptance of general construction requirements and municipal insurance requirements, franchise utility transmittals, easements, and construction staking. Once all required items are complete, a pre-construction meeting is scheduled.

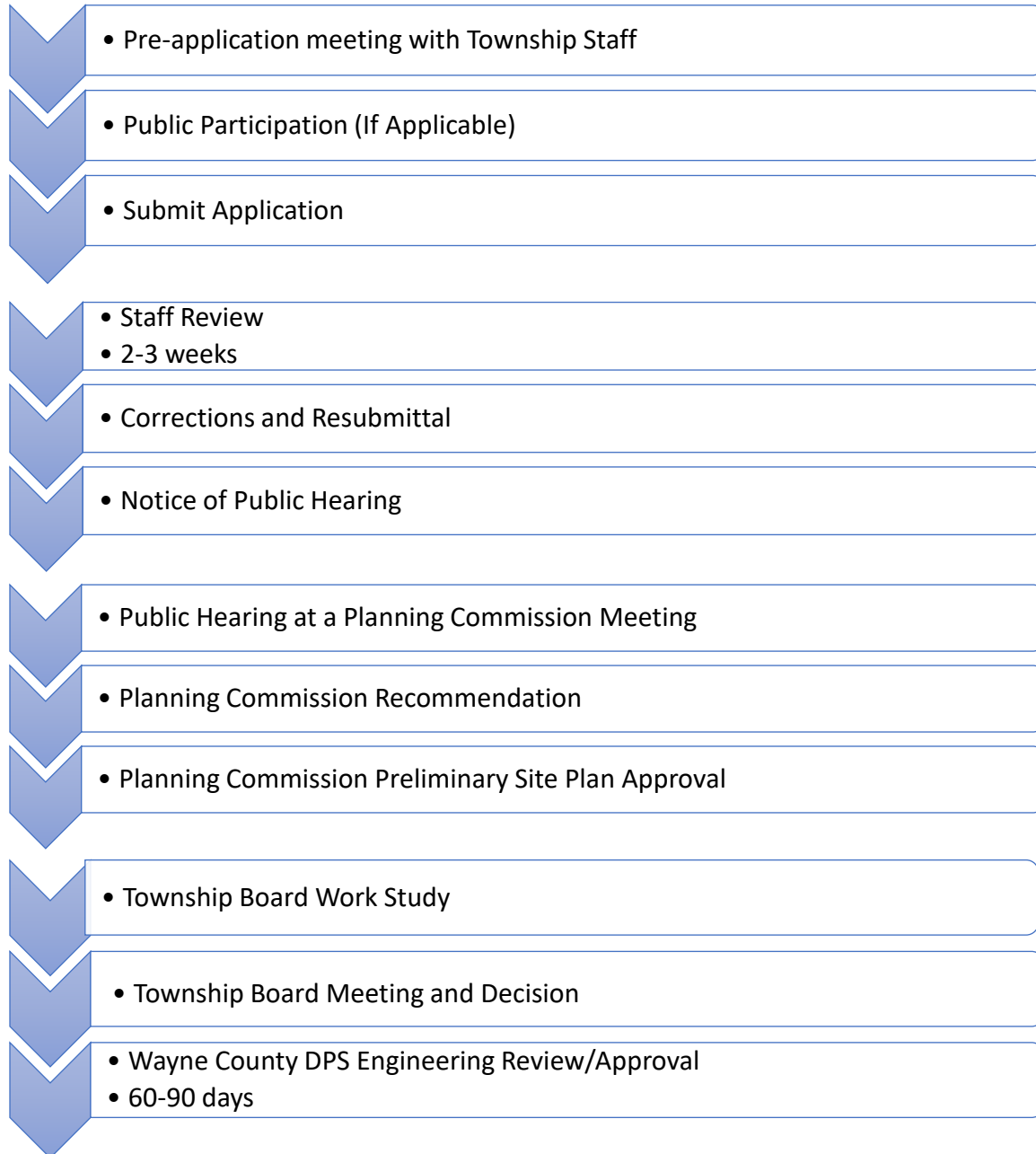
12) Pre-Construction Meeting with Contractors/Engineers-

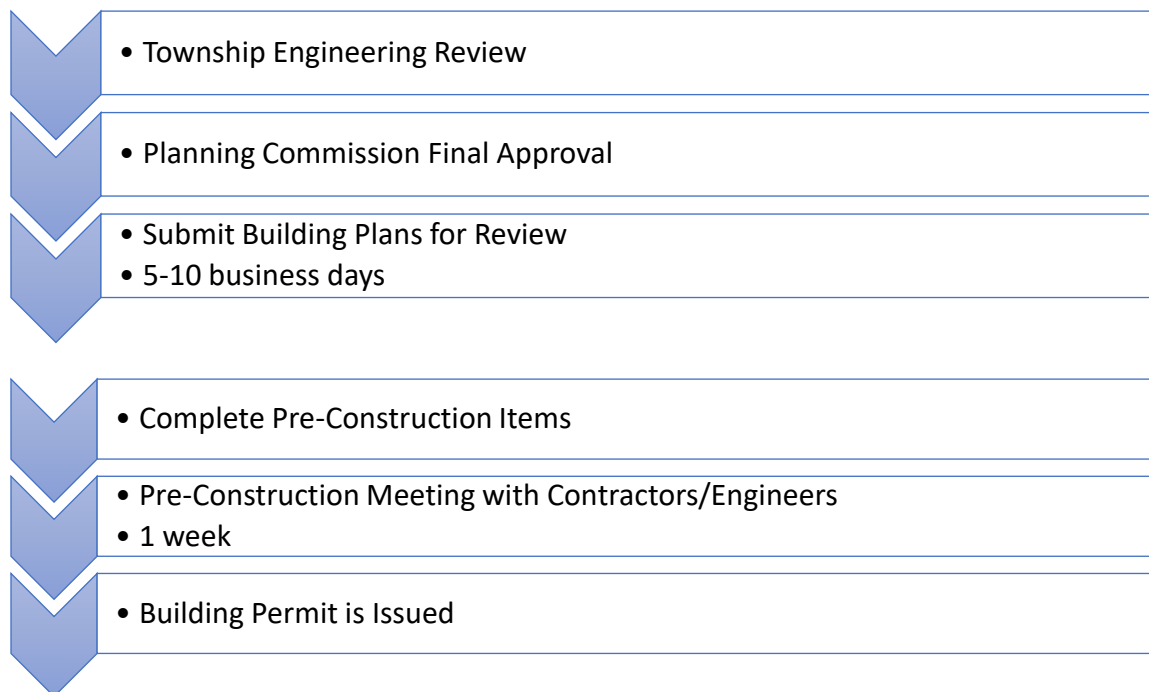
A pre-construction meeting will be held between the Engineer, Contractor, Township, and Owner to site improvements and the completion of pre-construction items.

13) Building permit is issued-

The applicant is issued a building permit and can begin construction. Any other necessary permits (i.e. electrical) must be obtained before that type of work begins

Special Use and Site Plan Review Permitting Process





Notes:

Planning Commission meetings are regularly scheduled on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Staff Review meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month as needed.

Township Board work studies are regularly on the first and third Mondays of the month.

Township Board meetings are regularly scheduled on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Applications for Staff Review and Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval must be submitted 3 Fridays (19 days) back from the date of the meeting to be placed on the agenda.

Applications for a Special Land Use must be submitted 5 Fridays (32 days) back from the date a Planning Commission meeting to be placed on that meeting’s agenda.

1) Pre-application meeting with Township Staff-

Prospective applicants can request an optional meeting with staff to discuss the application requirements and process.

2) Public Participation (If Applicable)-

Some private development projects may have great impact on the community, leading to questions or concerns from residents. To ensure community members are heard, the Township requires some developers to purposefully engage with the public regarding their potential project.

Developments which are determined to have substantial impact on the community must take the following steps:

- Pre-application meeting with planning staff
- Public informational meeting

- Follow-up meeting with planning staff to address community concerns

More specific information about public participation can be found in the Township's Public Participation Plan.

3) Submit application-

Applicants shall submit a completed and signed Planning and Zoning Application to the Van Buren Township Developmental Services Department along with all applicable fees per the Planning Fee Schedule. Two (2) sets of plans including all details required by the Zoning Ordinance shall also be submitted.

4) Staff Review-

Prior to Planning Commission consideration, the site plan and application shall be distributed to appropriate Township officials, staff, and consultants for review and comment. If deemed necessary, the plans shall also be submitted to applicable outside agencies for review and comment. After written comments are obtained from Township officials, staff, consultants, and outside agencies, a Staff Review meeting may be held with the applicant, Planning Director, Township officials, staff, and consultants to discuss review comments and address concerns raised. After the Staff Review meeting, the Planning Director shall determine if the site plan application is ready to proceed to the Planning Commission for preliminary site plan review or if another Staff Review meeting is necessary.

5) Corrections and Resubmittal-

Applicant shall address all issues raised during the staff review and submit a revised set of plans to the Township.

6) Notice of Public Hearing-

Per the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, a public hearing is required when a special land use is being considered. A notice of the hearing must be published in the local newspaper of record, mailed property owners within 300 feet of the subject property, and posted in Township Hall all at least 15 days before the date of the hearing.

7) Public Hearing at a Planning Commission Meeting-

A public hearing will be held during the planning commission meeting which was identified in the notice. Members of the public will have the chance to share their thoughts and opinions. The planning commission will also review the special land use and site plan at this meeting.

8) Planning Commission Recommendation-

At the same meeting as the public hearing, the planning commission will review the special land use based on the zoning ordinance. It will then make a recommendation to the Township Board regarding a decision on the special land use. A recommendation for denial will still move on to the Township Board.

9) Planning Commission Preliminary Approval-

The Planning Commission shall review the preliminary site plan, together with any reports and recommendations from staff, consultants, and other reviewing agencies and any public comments. The Planning Commission shall then make a determination based on the requirements of this Ordinance and the standards of Section 12.209 (Basis for Approval). The Planning Commission is authorized to postpone, approve, approve subject to conditions or deny the site plan as follows:

(a) Postponement. Upon determination by the Planning Commission that a site plan is not sufficiently complete for approval or denial or upon a request by the applicant, the Planning Commission may postpone consideration until a later meeting.

(b) Denial. Upon determination that a site plan does not comply with the standards and regulations set forth in this Ordinance, or would require extensive revisions to comply with the standards and regulations, the site plan shall be denied. If a site plan is denied, a written record shall be provided to the applicant listing the reasons for such denial.

(c) Approval. Upon determination that a site plan is in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance and other applicable ordinances and laws, the site plan shall be approved.

(d) Approval Subject to Conditions. The Planning Commission may approve a site plan, subject to one or more conditions necessary to address minor modifications to the site plan, ensure that public services and facilities can accommodate the proposed use, protect significant natural features, ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses, or otherwise meet the intent and purpose of this Ordinance. Such conditions may include the need to obtain variances or approvals from other agencies.

10) Township Board Work Study-

The Township Board will discuss the application for a special land use permit at one of their regularly scheduled work studies.

11) Township Board Meeting and Decision-

The day after the work study, the Township Board will decide on whether to grant the special land use permit at one of their regularly scheduled board meetings.

12) Wayne County DPS Engineering Review/Approval-

Plans must be sent to the Wayne County Department of Public Services to review whether they meet all county engineering requirements. This may include reviews of stormwater, county drains, soil erosion, and county right-of-way. Once all Wayne County permits are granted, applicants may continue the permitting process with Van Buren Township.

13) Township Engineering Review-

Site construction drawings will be reviewed based on the Township Engineering Standards Manual.

14) Planning Commission Final Approval-

Planning Commission Final Approval- The Planning Commission shall review the final site plan, together with any reports and recommendations from staff, consultants, and other reviewing agencies and any public comments. The Planning Commission shall then make a determination based on the requirements of this Ordinance, the standards of Section 12.209 (Basis for Approval), and the following considerations:

(a) The proposed final site plan is consistent with the approved preliminary site plan in terms of building location and architecture, amount and quality of landscaping, and site details including but not limited to lighting, parking, signs, and circulation layout.

(b) All conditions imposed during preliminary plan approval are met.

(c) The engineering requirements applicable at final site plan approval are met.

The Planning Commission is authorized to postpone, approve, approve subject to conditions, or deny a final site plan in the same manner as a preliminary site plan

***Single-Step Site Plan Approval. Nothing in this Ordinance shall prohibit the Planning Commission from granting final site plan approval without first granting a preliminary site plan approval if the plans are in compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance for a final site plan.**

15) Submit Building Plans for Review-

Applicant must completely fill out and sign a building permit application and pay all applicable building fees per the fee schedule. Two complete sets of construction drawings and two complete plot plans (Mortgage Surveys) must also be included. All materials must be turned in to the Developmental Services Department.

16) Complete Pre-Construction Items-

Applicant will be given a checklist of items that must be completed before a building permit is issued. These include all applicable permits and approvals, fees, construction securities, maintenance and guarantee bonds, municipal insurance requirements, acceptance of general construction requirements and municipal insurance requirements, franchise utility transmittals, easements, and construction staking. Once all required items are complete, a pre-construction meeting is scheduled.

17) Pre-Construction Meeting with Contractors/Engineers-

A pre-construction meeting will be held between the Engineer, Contractor, Township, and Owner to site improvements and the completion of pre-construction items.

18) Building permit is issued-

The applicant is issued a building permit and can begin construction. Any other necessary permits (i.e. electrical) must be obtained before that type of work begins.

Requirements for Zoning Application Submittal:

Two (2) Copies of Site Plans must be included. The following checklist can be used to make sure a site plan includes all required elements.

Site Plan Required Information	Preliminary Site Plan	Final Site Plan	Administrative Review
Title and date of plan, including the date and nature of all subsequent revisions.	•	•	•

North arrow and scale. The scale shall be not less than 1-inch equals 50 feet for property under 3 acres and at least 1-inch equals 100 feet for those 3 acres or more.	•	•	•
Location map showing the site in relation to existing roads and developments within the Township.	•	•	
The dimensions of all lot and property lines, showing the relationship of the subject property to abutting properties.	•	•	•
Boundary of the tract shown by a heavy line: a legal description or the parcel and the acreage.	•	•	•
Zoning classification of the petitioner's parcel and all abutting parcels.	•	•	
The location and height of all existing and proposed structures on and within 100 feet of the subject property.	•	•	
The location and the pavement and right of way width of all abutting roads and streets and driveway locations on abutting public streets.	•	•	
The name, address and telephone number of the property owner or petitioner.	•	•	
The name, firm, address and telephone number of the professional civil engineering or architectural firms responsible for the preparation of the site plan (including imprint of professional seal).	•	•	•
Notation of Township, County or State license, permits required and/or secured.	•	•	
A note to pick up debris within property limits weekly or as needed.	•	•	
A statement on intended phases of the project.	•	•	
A description of the proposed use including the nature of the proposed use and other general information describing the use.	•	•	•
Existing and proposed topography with contours at 2-foot intervals (based on USGS datum), extending a minimum of 200 feet beyond site boundaries.	•	•	
Description of soil erosion and sedimentation control measures.	•	•	
Location of clusters of trees on site and all existing trees five (5) inches or greater in diameter.	•	•	
Location of existing wetlands.	•	•	
Location of flood plains drainage courses, lakes, ponds, drains, rivers and streams including their water surface elevation, flood plain elevation and normal high-water elevation.	•	•	
Soil characteristics of the parcel to at least the detail provided by the U.S. Soil and Conservation Service "Soil Survey of Wayne County."	•	•	
On parcels more than 1 acre, a grading plan showing finished contours at a maximum interval of 2 feet, correlated with existing contours so as to indicate required cutting, filling and grading.	•	•	
A schedule of parking needs. Separate drawings may be submitted to indicate usable floor areas, etc. for computation of parking needs. Each individual parking space shall be indicated including typical parking space dimensions for regular and handicapped spaces and type of lot surfacing.	•	•	•

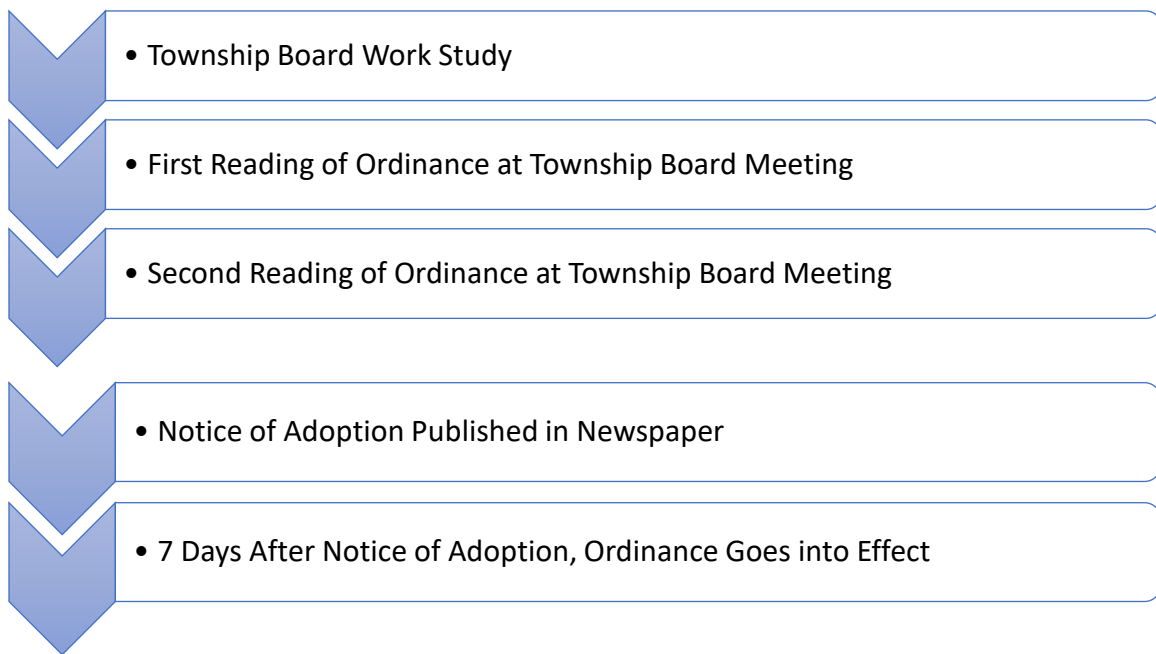
A note specifying maintenance of paved surfaces and other improvements as follows: "Paved surfaces, walkways, signs, lighting and other structures and surfaces shall be maintained in a safe, attractive condition as originally designed and constructed. Parking lot striping and markings shall be maintained in a clearly visible condition."	•	•	
The location of all rubbish receptacles and the location, height and type of fences and walls to screen receptacles.	•	•	
Location of existing and proposed fire hydrants, water mains, pump houses, stand pipes, building services and sizes including proposed connections to public sewer or water supply systems and/or considerations for extensions to loop other public water mains in adjacent public rights of way.	•	•	
Location and dimension of required easements for public right-of way, utilities, access and shared access.	•	•	
The proposed finish grade of buildings, driveways, walkways, parking lots and lawned areas.	•	•	
Proposed sanitary sewer facilities and location of all existing utilities, easements, vacations and the general placement of line, tie ins to buildings, pump stations and lift stations.	•	•	
Description of a feasible storm drainage system and proposed storm sewer facilities (sewers and appurtenances) including catch basins, outlets, enclosed or open ditches and proposed swales for the retention of off-site drainage.	•	•	
Storm water calculations permit review of any proposed retention of drainage off site.	•	•	
Front, rear and side elevations of proposed buildings and proposed type of building materials, roof design, projections, canopies and overhangs, screen walls and accessory buildings, and any other outdoor mechanical equipment, i.e., air conditions, heating units, etc.	•	•	
Traffic and pedestrian circulation patterns both within the site and on the public streets adjacent to the site and the proposed location and dimensions of any pedestrian sidewalks, malls and open areas for parks and recreation either required or otherwise deemed necessary by the Planning Commission. A concrete sidewalk 5 feet in width shall be provided within the public right of way 1 foot from the subject site's property line where the subject site borders a public right of way.	•	•	•
Entrance details including sign locations and size.	•	•	•
Plans and specifications (height, cross sections materials) for greenbelts, berms, fences, walls or other protective barriers required by this Ordinance.	•	•	
Designation of fire lanes.	•	•	
Detailed landscape plan (including topography and utilities above and below ground) sealed by a registered landscape architect in conformance with the requirements of <i>Article 10</i> of this Ordinance, indicating the location, type and size of trees, plants, berms etc.	•	•	•
A note specifying annual landscape maintenance procedures such as the following: "Owner agrees to seasonal maintenance program and will replace all diseased, dead or damaged plants, replenish mulch, control weeds, fertilize and prune beginning upon completion of construction of landscaping."	•	•	•

The location and type of outdoor lighting, proposed illumination patterns (including a photometric plan), and method of screening to prevent glare onto adjacent properties.	•	•	•
The location, height and area of all signs.	•	•	•
The location of any outdoor storage of material(s) and the manner in which it shall be screened or covered.	•	•	
Information and plans for the storage, loading, disposal and transfer of any hazardous/toxic waste (gas, oil, transmission fluid, lubricants, solvents, etc.). If any underground tank is used, the location, size, construction and use of the tank shall be specified on the site plan.	•	•	•
Information and special data which may be critical to the adequate review of the proposed use and its impact on the site or Township. Such data requirements may include traffic studies (<i>Section 9.106(H)</i>), market analysis, site investigation report, environmental assessments (including inventory and impact data on flora, fauna, natural resources, hazardous materials, erosion control and pollution), demands on public facilities and services and estimates of potential costs to the Township due to failures as a basis for performance guarantees.	•	•	
Recreation and open space areas for residential development projects shall be provided where deemed necessary by the Planning Commission.	•	•	
Other data which the Township may reasonably deem necessary for adequate review.	•	•	
With residential proposals a site summary indicating the number and location of 1 bedroom units, 2 bedroom units, etc. typical floor plans with the square feet of floor areas; density computation; recreation facilities; open spaces; street names; and lot coverage. A statement as to whether the project is to be a condominium, cooperative or rental shall also be provided.	•	•	
With nonresidential proposals, the number of offices, number of employees, the number of floors, typical floor plans and the gross and usable floor area shall be provided.	•	•	•
With residential proposals, details of a community building, swimming pool and fencing and carport locations, if proposed shall be provided.	•	•	
Information regarding the number of times separate plans have been submitted to the Township for review of additions or alterations to the existing building or site in the past.	•	•	•
Clear documentation for all proposed changes to the existing site, building or land use.	•	•	•
The Declaration of Protective Covenants, Conditions and Restricts, (CC&Rs), or some other document with similar provisions, if proposed or anticipated by the property owner.	•	•	
For sites with regular truck traffic, a truck circulation diagram indicating the type and volume of truck traffic anticipated at the site and defining all truck access and circulation lanes and truck loading/unloading areas on the site plan. The diagram must include the dimensions of trucks anticipated at the site and must show all existing and proposed truck circulation patterns, including the direction and flow of truck traffic on the site, turning radii, and sufficient maneuvering space and pavement design to accommodate trucks in accordance with	•	•	

the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials or another standard specified by the Township Engineer.			
Any other information as required by the Planning Commission or Director of Planning which will assist in evaluation of the proposed use.	•	•	•

Rezoning Process





Notes:

Planning Commission meetings are regularly scheduled on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Township Board work studies are regularly scheduled on the first and third Mondays of the month.

Township Board meetings are regularly scheduled on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Applications for rezoning must be submitted 5 Fridays (32 days) back from the date of a Planning Commission meeting to be placed on that meeting's agenda.

1) Pre-Application Meeting with Township Staff-

Prospective applicants can request an optional meeting with staff to discuss the application requirements and process.

2) Submit Application-

Applicants shall submit a completed and signed Planning and Zoning Application to the Van Buren Township Developmental Services Department along with all applicable fees per the Planning Fee Schedule.

3) Staff Review-

Staff will review the application and compile their findings into a written report with a recommendation to the Planning Commission. The review will be based on how the request relates to the following standards:

- 1) Consistency with the goals, policies and objectives of the Master Plan and any sub-area plans.** If conditions have changed since the Master Plan was adopted, consistency with recent development trends in the area shall be considered.
- 2) Consistency with the basic intent and purpose of this Zoning Ordinance.**

- 3) The capability of the street system to safely and efficiently accommodate the expected traffic generated by uses permitted in the requested zoning district.
- 4) The capacity of the Township's utilities and services sufficient to accommodate the uses permitted in the requested district without compromising the health, safety, and welfare of the Township.
- 5) That conditions have changed since the Zoning Ordinance was adopted or there was an error in the Zoning Ordinance that justifies the amendment.
- 6) That the amendment will not be expected to result in exclusionary zoning.
- 7) If a rezoning is requested, compatibility of the site's physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features with the uses permitted in the proposed zoning district.
- 8) If a rezoning is requested, compatibility of all the potential uses allowed in the proposed zoning district with surrounding uses and zoning in terms of land suitability, impacts on the environment, density, nature of use, traffic impacts, aesthetics, infrastructure and potential influence on property values.
- 9) If a rezoning is requested, the boundaries of the requested rezoning district will be reasonable in relationship to surrounding zoning districts, and construction on the site will be able to meet the dimensional regulations for the requested zoning district.
- 10) If a rezoning is requested, the requested zoning district is considered to be more appropriate from the Township's perspective than another zoning district.
- 11) If a rezoning is requested to allow for a specific use, rezoning the land is considered to be more appropriate than amending the list of permitted or special land uses in the current zoning district to allow the use.
- 12) If a rezoning is requested, the requested rezoning will not create an isolated or incompatible zone in the neighborhood.

4) Notice of Public Hearing-

Per the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, a public hearing is required when a rezoning is being considered. A notice of the hearing must be published in the local newspaper of record, mailed property owners within 300 feet of the subject property, and posted in Township Hall all at least 15 days before the date of the hearing.

5) Public Hearing at a Planning Commission Meeting-

A public hearing will be held during the planning commission meeting which was identified in the notice. Members of the public will have the chance to share their thoughts and opinions. The planning commission will also review the rezoning request at this meeting.

6) Planning Commission Recommendation-

At the same meeting as the public hearing, the planning commission will review the rezoning request based on the zoning ordinance. It will then make a recommendation to the Township Board on whether to approve the rezoning.

7) Township Board Work Study-

The Township Board will discuss the application for rezoning at one of their regularly scheduled work studies. A recommendation from the planning commission will factor into their discussion.

8) First Reading of Ordinance at Township Board Meeting-

The day after the work study, the Township Board will vote whether to approve the rezoning at one of their regularly scheduled board meetings.

9) Second Reading of Ordinance at Township Board Meeting-

The Township Board will vote again whether to approve the rezoning at their next regularly scheduled board meetings. If the Board votes to approve the rezoning at both readings, it will be adopted by the Township.

10) Notice of Adoption Published in Newspaper-

Once an ordinance establishing the rezoning is passed, a notice of adoption will be published in the local newspaper of record.

11) 7 Days after Newspaper Notice, Ordinance Goes into Effect-

The ordinance establishing the rezoning will go into effect in the Township seven (7) days after the notice of adoption is published in the local newspaper of record.

Variance Request Process



Notes:

Board of Zoning Appeals meetings are regularly scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month.

Planning Commission meetings are regularly scheduled on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Applications must be submitted 5 Fridays (32 days) back from a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting to be placed on that meeting's agenda.

1) Pre-Application Meeting with Township Staff-

Prospective applicants can request an optional meeting with staff to discuss the application requirements and process.

2) Submit Application-

Applicants shall submit a completed and signed Board of Zonings Appeals Application to the Van Buren Township Developmental Services Department along with all applicable fees per the Planning Fee Schedule. It must include photos of the buildings or structures on site and a sketch or plot plan showing the dimensions of the lot and existing and proposed setbacks.

3) Notice of Public Hearing-

Per the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, a public hearing is required when a variance is being considered. A notice of the hearing must be published in the local newspaper of record, mailed property owners within 300 feet of the subject property, and posted in Township Hall all at least 15 days before the date of the hearing.

4) Staff Review for Variances-

Staff will review the application and compile their findings into a written report with a recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The review will be based on how the request relates to the following standards:

The applicant must show "practical difficulty" by demonstrating:

- 1) That strict compliance with area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk or density would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose and would thereby render the conformity unnecessarily burdensome for other than financial reasons;
- 2) That a variance would do substantial justice to the applicant, as well as to other property owners in the district, (the BZA, however, may determine that a reduced relaxation would give substantial relief and be more consistent with just to others);
- 3) That plight of the owner is due to the unique circumstances of the property; and
- 4) That the problem is not self-created.

The request must also satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) That the proposed appeal or variance is related to the valid exercise of the police power and purposes which are affected by the proposed use or activity;
- 2) The proposed appeal or variance will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or increase the congestion in public streets;
- 3) Will not increase the hazard of fire or flood or endanger the public safety;
- 4) Will not unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area;
- 5) Will not in any other respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the Township;
- 6) Will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood; and

7) Is necessary to meet the intent and purpose of the zoning regulations; is related to the standards established in the Ordinance for the land use or activity under consideration, and is necessary to ensure compliance with those standards.

5) Planning Commission Meeting-

The Planning Commission will review the variance request at one of their regularly scheduled meetings. It will provide comments to the BZA on the variance request. The Planning Commission also has the ability to provide preliminary site plan approval contingent on the approval of the variance.

6) Public Hearing at a Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting-

A public hearing will be held during the Board of Zonings Appeals meeting which was identified in the notice. Members of the public will have the chance to share their thoughts and opinions. The Board will also review the variance application at this meeting.

7) Board of Zoning Appeals Decision-

At the same meeting as the public hearing, the Board of Zoning Appeals will review the variance request based on the criteria outlined in the zoning ordinance and the staff report. It will also hear from the applicant. The Board will then make a decision on whether to grant or deny the variance.

8) Begin Permit Process if Applicable-

If a variance is granted, applicant may begin the process to get permits for their project.

APPLICATIONS AND FEE SCHEDULE

The above development review processes require various applications. Applications for Planning and Zoning (Site Plan, Special Land Use, Rezoning), Variances, and the Fee Schedule are available on the Township website at this link: <https://vanburen-mi.org/planning-economic-development/>

PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

Single-family residential projects: A homeowner or contractor must apply for a building, electrical, mechanical, and/or plumbing permits for new homes, additions, demolitions, home remodeling/alterations, basement refinishes, roofs, windows that require structural changes, decks, accessory structures, pools, etc. A property owner may obtain permits in the owner's name; however, the person's name on the application is responsible for the completion of the work. If a contractor performs the work, the contractor must obtain the permit, have the appropriate license, and be registered in the municipality.

Multiple-family and commercial projects: Commercial projects, including multiple-family residential housing, require the appropriate permits. A contractor must apply for a building permit for any of the following activities: new construction, additions, demolitions, interior/exterior alterations, or signs. The Developmental Services Department can assist with the process.

Applications for permits and the fee schedule can be found here:

Step 1. Application Submittal

Applicants are required to submit an application denoting the type of improvement along with the required sets of building plans indicated on the application and the required fee to the Developmental Services Department.

Building plans must include all work to be performed and meet the minimum requirements indicated on the application. All dimensions must be shown. A list of requirements for residential building plans is provided at the end of this section. Larger and commercial projects may require other height and area computations, automatic fire sprinklers, number of means of egress, capacity of egress calculations and travel distances, fire rated assembly details and fire resistive requirements, structural design calculations, and soil, footing, foundation, masonry, and concrete minimum bearing capacities and design standards. Additional information may be required based on complexity of size of building project.

Step 2. Plan Review:

The Developmental Services Department will review the information for compliance with zoning ordinance, building code, electrical code, mechanical code, plumbing code, and fire code. Safety of the intended inhabitants is essential. Approvals from the governing body, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Zoning Administrator (if applicable) must be received first prior to permit issuance. The review of a complete plan submission is generally completed within 10 business days. Depending on the project, the applicant might need to apply for and receive a soil erosion permit from Wayne County before a building permit is issued.

If application is incomplete, the reviewer will ask the applicant for additional information. A plan review letter will be issued citing approval, conditions imposed on approval, or necessary corrections. Requested plan corrections require applicant to submit new or revised plans for review.

Step 3. Permit Issuance:

The applicant will be contacted to come pick up the building permit and pay the permit fee at the Developmental Services Department. The building permit is issued when all required approvals have been obtained and applicable fees have been paid. The applicant must post a copy of the permit on the job site until final approval is issued.

Electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits are generally not issued until the building permit is approved. Compliance may be determined at the time of inspection for less complex projects. More complex projects may require review by the applicable trade inspector. An approved Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Compliance is required prior to occupancy or use of such project.

The Township is able to offer financial assistance developers through PA 198 and PA 328. For other development incentives, contact the Detroit Region Aerotropolis, of which Van Buren Township is a member.

Detroit Region Aerotropolis

11895 South Wayne Road, Suite 101A

Romulus, MI 48174

(734) 992-2286

Email through their website: www.detroitaero.org

DESIGN GUIDELINES

There are design guidelines for properties in the Township's commercial corridor, called the Belleville Road Overlay District. They can be found in the Zoning Ordinance, which is available at this link: <https://vanburen-mi.org/planning-economic-development/>