

GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

City of Eaton Rapids

Department of Building, Zoning and Code Enforcement

Produced 2019



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About this Guide

The City of Eaton Rapids presents this Guide to Development to assist residents, developers, and businesses in understanding the City's policies, goals, and timelines to have a clear view of the community's expectations regarding physical growth and development. This guide is to be used as a tool for the planning of activity and physical growth within the city. It is an outline of the review process and expectations when planning new construction or business. It provides a general overview of the development approval processes. The City of Eaton Rapids is here to help you and is looking forward to your development.

This document is not intended for the use in place of City Ordinances and Codes nor is it a replacement for city, county, state, or federal laws and ordinances. Consultation with staff and/or outside professionals is recommended for most projects. The document does not include additional jurisdiction guidelines needed per area, outside the City of Eaton Rapids. Developers and businesses should contact the appropriate staff with additional questions.

For projects that require multiple applications and reviews, it is not uncommon for those things to be in process simultaneously

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Contact Information

City Clerk: 517-663-8118 x 8113

Building Official: 517-663-8118 x 8160

Fax: 517-663-1116



ABOUT THE CITY OF EATON RAPIDS

Known as “The Only Eaton Rapids on Earth,” the city offers unique access to rural and urban landscapes and amenities. The downtown is located on an island between the Grand River and Spring Brook.

The City of Eaton Rapids is well-located in mid-Michigan, only a 30 minute drive via the M-99 corridor to either Jackson or Lansing. It also connects to the county seat, Charlotte, only a 15 minute drive via M-50.

Eaton Rapids is host to a wealth of natural features and public amenities, as well as a walkable, historic downtown. The City has two TIF authorities, a DDA and an LDFA, who are ready to recommend development-ready sites for your next project. Eaton Rapids also enjoys a development-friendly 425 agreement with neighboring Hamlin and Eaton Rapids townships.





NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

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All public notices, meeting announcements, etc. will come from the City Clerk. View the City Clerk's page [here](#).

All meetings of the City Council, and its various boards and commissions, shall be open to the public in accordance with the "Open Meetings Act," PA 267 of 1976 as amended, except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act. Public notices for these meetings are printed in the paper and hung at City Hall as required by the Act. The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property are personally notified:

- Lot Splits
- Rezoning of property
- Site Plan Review
- Special land use
- Variance requests

Statutes require these processes be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the City (The Flashes/Eaton Rapids Community News) as well as mailed to neighbors within 300 feet at least 15 days prior to the meeting. All meetings are held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and The City provides and will provide reasonable accommodations. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the Clerk's Office.

Community Engagement

The City of Eaton Rapids strives to include, consult, and inform residents as appropriate for community initiatives and large projects. Developers are encouraged to do the same. For tips and helpful information regarding community engagement, please view the City's Community Engagement Strategy.



LAND USE APPLICATIONS

	<i>Makes Recommendation</i>		<i>Approves</i>			
	Planning Commission	Planning Commission	City Council	Zoning Board of Appeals	Construction Board of Appeals	Administrative Staff
Building Permits						X
Site Plan		X				X (limited*)
Special Use		X				
Rezoning/Conditional Rezoning	X		X			
Ordinance Changes	X		X			
Zoning Compliance						X
Variance				X		
Zoning Appeal				X		
Construction Appeals					X	

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Notes:

*See the [City Code, Article XVI, Section 16.15](#) for a detailed explanation of plans that qualify for Administrative approval. The Building Official may still require that any uses outlined as eligible for administrative approval will require formal approval by the Planning Commission.



PERMITTED USE PROCESS

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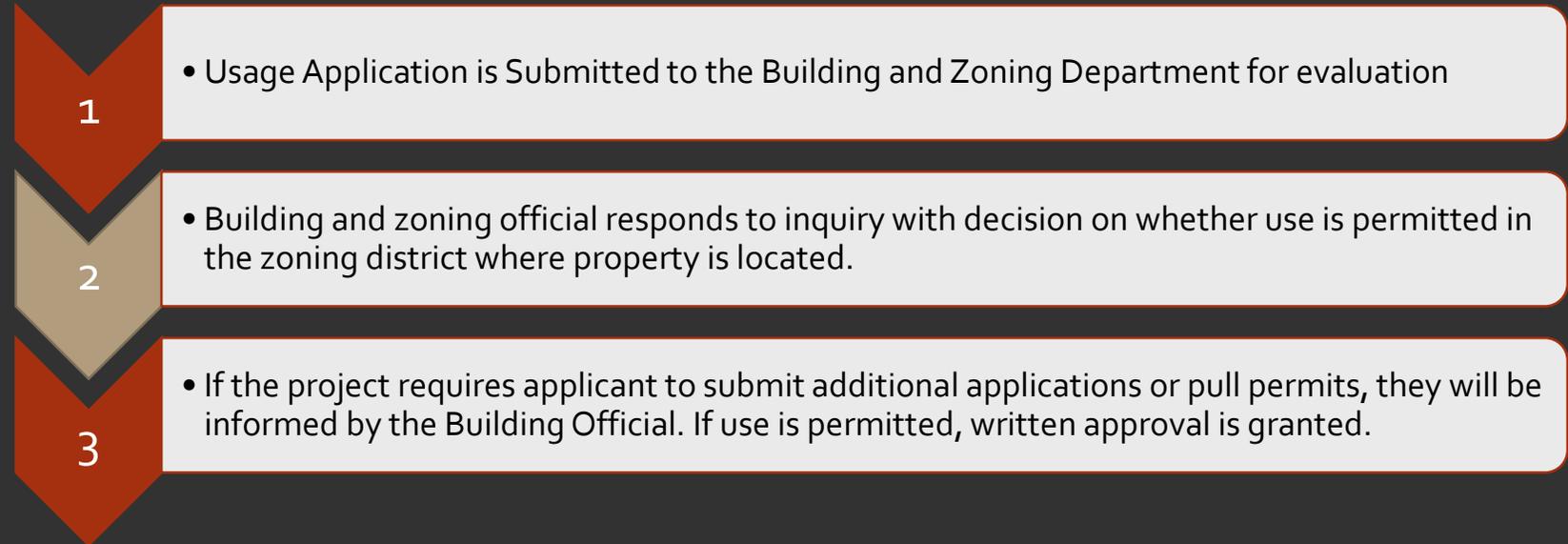
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Fees: [You can view the full schedule of fees here.](#)



Notes:

- If the Building and Zoning official determines use is a special land use (SLU), then applicant will be advised of the SLU process.
- If there is a "change of use" between the previous building/unit use and proposed building /unit use, the building/unit may not meet all applicable State Building Codes as determined by the Building Inspector. In that case, the building must be modified to bring it into compliance with State Building and City Code.
- To appeal staff decision, a person must file an appeal with the Zoning Board of Appeals through the Building and Zoning Official



BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

1

• After Building and Zoning Department approves use (as necessary), building permit applications are submitted to City Hall requesting approval to proceed with renovations to interior/exterior structure.

2

• Building Official reviews application and either forwards the applicant and plan to an outside consultant, or will complete a project plan review. Any requested revisions/comments are sent to permit applicant.

3

• Building Official reviews revised plans; when in compliance with Building and City Code, inspector approves, initials and dates plans and/or application.

4

• Upon payment of required fee, permit is issued by the Building & Zoning Department.

5

• Contractor contacts Building & Planning Department to schedule required inspections; foundation, rough in and final electrical, mechanical, plumbing and building inspections are required.

6

• Required inspections are conducted by all relevant Inspectors. When the project passes all final inspections, a Certificate of Occupancy is issued.

Fees: [you can view the full schedule of fees here.](#)

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Notes:

Typical permit application process is completed within 2 weeks. Timeframe varies based on Inspector's schedule and applicant response.

• Separate permit applications are required for plumbing, mechanical, electrical and building.

• Inspections are typically completed within 3 days of inspection request (varies based on inspector's schedule).

• When feasible, inspectors will conduct inspections simultaneously.

• Drawings MUST be prepared by a registered design professional.

• To appeal the Inspector's decision, applicant may file an appeal with the City's Construction Board of Appeals (through the Building & Planning Department), the State Plumbing Board of Appeals or the State of Michigan Barrier Free Board of Appeals.



CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF APPEALS

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1

- Applicant meets with Building Inspector to discuss reason for appeal.

2

- Applicant submits application for appeal and pays fee.

3

- Building Inspector schedules meeting between applicant and Construction Board of Appeals.

4

- Applicant meets with Construction Board of Appeals to appeal Building Inspector interpretation; Board arrives at a decision.

Notes:

- Construction Board of Appeals meets on an as-needed basis and generally schedules a meeting within 2 weeks (15 business days) from date of application.
- Only appeals of the Electrical, Mechanical, Building, Property Maintenance and Fire Codes are heard by the City's Construction Board of Appeals.
- Appeals regarding Plumbing and Barrier-Free issues are heard by the appropriate State review boards.
- An application for appeal shall be based on:
 - A claim that the true intent of the code or the rules legally adopted thereunder have been incorrectly interpreted.
 - The provisions of the code do not fully apply or an equally good or better form of construction is proposed.
- The board shall have no authority to waive requirements of the code, but will provide review of Building Inspector's ruling.
- City Manager is available as a resource for conflict resolution between any applicant and Building Inspector.



SITE PLAN REVIEW

Pre-Application Meeting/Conceptual Site Plan Review

It is strongly recommended that before submitting an application for a variance, land use permit, or any other permit, that you meet with the Building and Zoning Official so they can guide you in the right direction and save time on both ends.

Prior to beginning any land use, construction project, or similar project in the City of Eaton Rapids, developers must apply for and receive proper permits and zoning approvals. The purpose of a conceptual site plan review is to allow for an informal consultation and coordination between the developer and the City of Eaton Rapids on the proposal prior to a substantial commitment of time and expense on the part of the applicant in preparing a site plan. Applicants are welcome to reach out to the City with any questions during the application process.

Developments Requiring Administrative Approval

All other projects not specified as a major project are either minor projects subject to review and approval by the Building and Zoning Department or amendments to existing site plans. The Building and Zoning Department may review and approve minor site plans without their submission to the Planning Commission. The Building and Zoning Department shall apply all applicable standards and procedures of the Zoning Ordinance in approving, conditionally approving, or denying site plans.

Developments Requiring Planning Commission Approval

All developments not covered under [sec. 16.15](#) of the City Code as eligible for administrative review, and all Planned Unit Development's (PUD's) are major projects which require preliminary site plan review by the Planning Commission.

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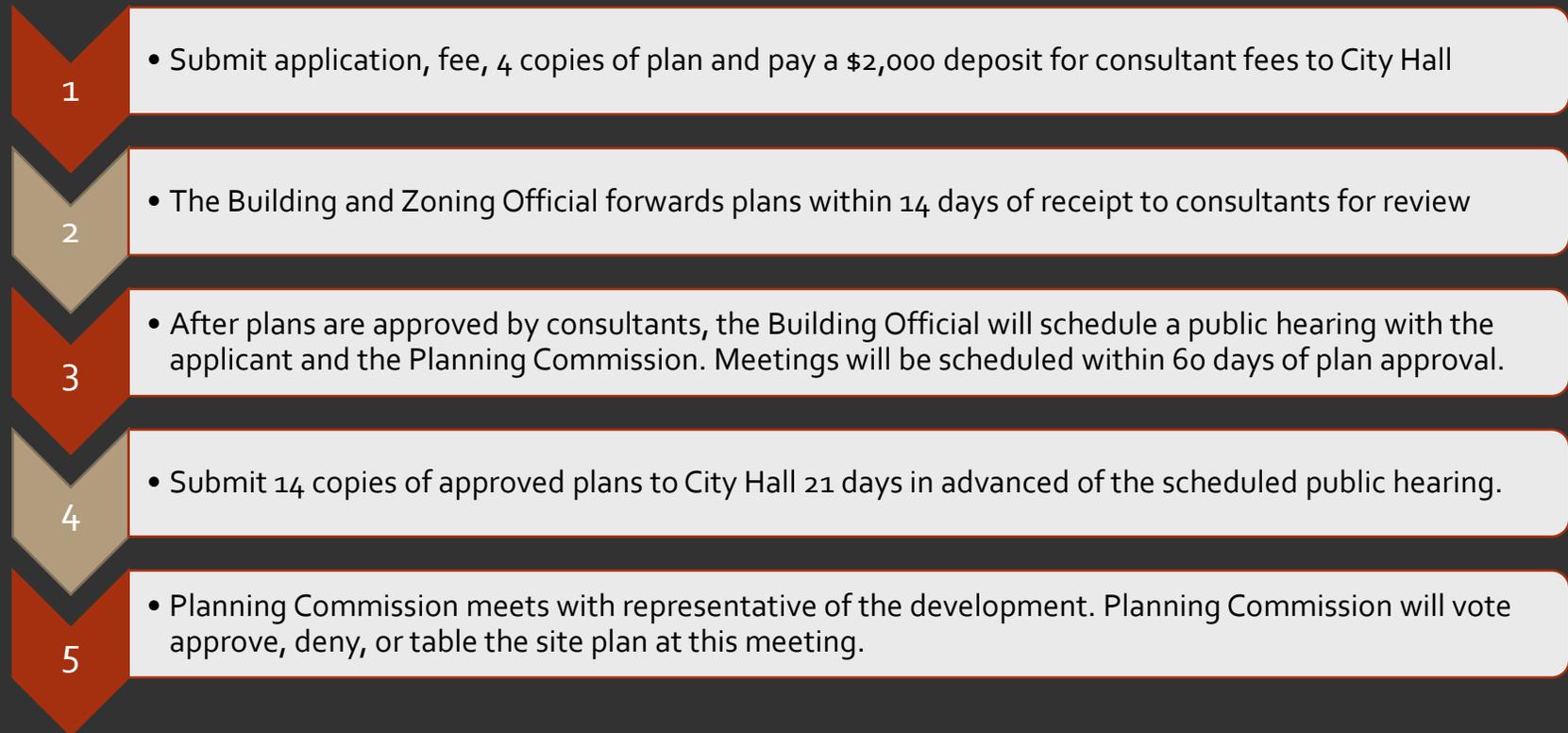
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Notes:

The full list of application requirements can be found in [Article XVI, Section 16.30 of the City Code](#).



Fees: [you can view the full schedule of fees here.](#)



SPECIAL LAND USE PERMITS

1

- Meet with City Building and Zoning Official to discuss project.

2

- Applicant submits Special Land Use application/plan.

3

- Staff reviews application/plan for completeness.

4

- If needed, staff contacts applicant and informs them of needed revisions/additional information.

5

- Applicant submits revised plan/additional information (as needed).

6

- Staff sets public hearing and prepares staff report, sends out required neighborhood notices and places ad in paper.

8

- Public Hearing is held by the Planning Commission; decision to approve, deny or table by the Planning Commission normally occurs after the public hearing.

Fees: [you can view the full schedule of fees here.](#)

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Notes:

- Application must be complete and received at least 26 days before the Planning Commission meeting to be placed on the next available agenda for review and setting of a public hearing date.
- Planning Commission meets 1st Monday of every month.



REZONING PROCESS

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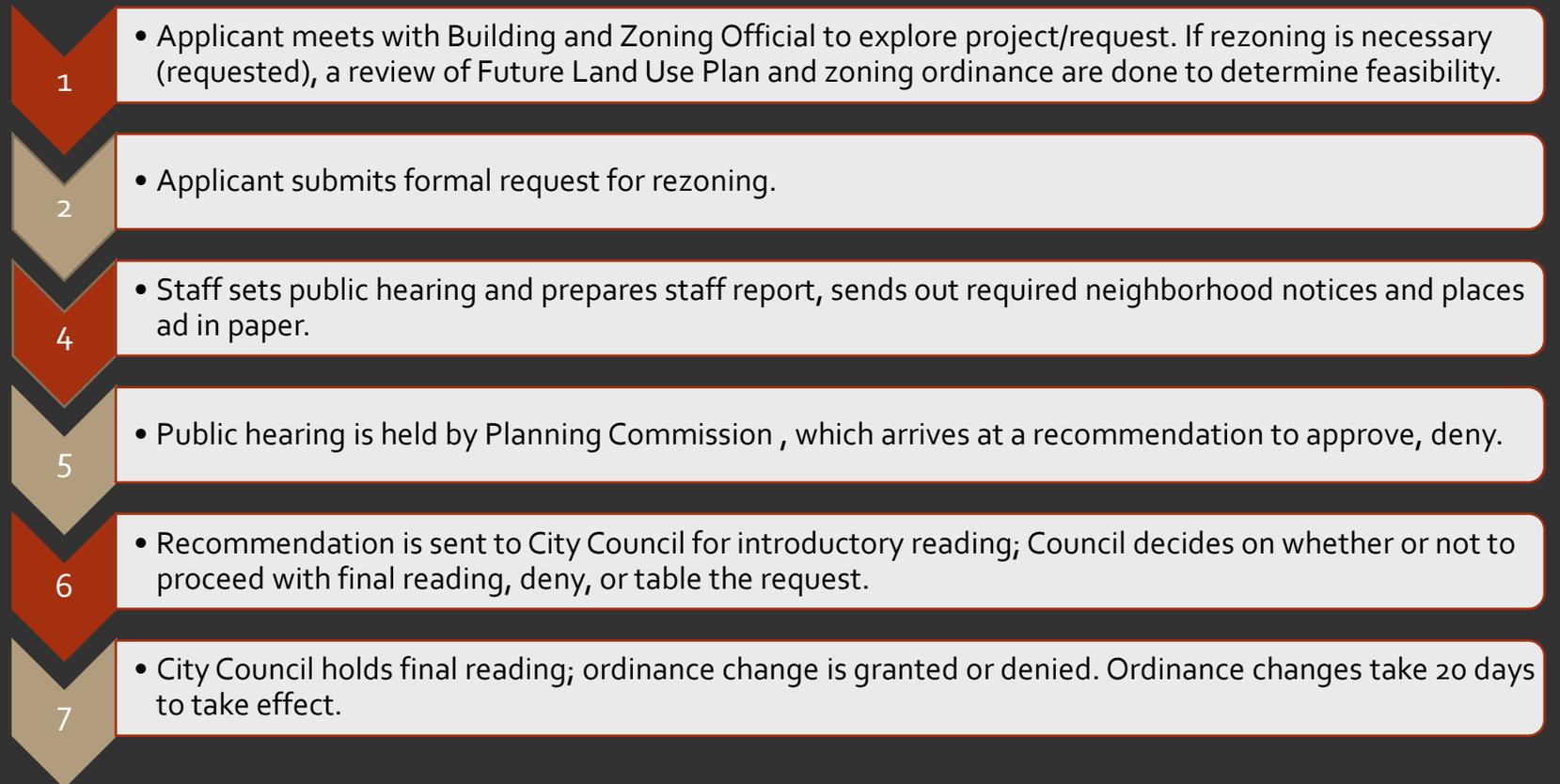
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Notes:

- Staff will accept requests to rezone up to 26 days prior to Planning Commission meeting provided agenda space is available and application is complete.
- Public hearing notices are sent by staff 15 days before Planning Commission meeting.



Fees: [you can view the full schedule of fees here.](#)



ZONING VARIANCES AND APPEALS

1

- Meet with Building and Zoning Official to discuss project.

2

- Applicant submits Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) application.

3

- Staff reviews application/plan for completeness.

4

- Staff sets ZBA Public Hearing, sends out required neighborhood notices and places ad in paper.

5

- Applicant attends ZBA Public Hearing; decision to approve, deny, or table by the ZBA normally occurs after the public hearing.

Notes:

- Application must meet requirements of Section 26.30 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Per the State of Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, requested variances must demonstrate a practical difficulty.
- No adverse affect upon adjacent properties.
- Need for the variance was not self-created.
- Variance is minimum necessary.
- Request is not of a general or recurrent nature.
- To appeal a decision by the ZBA, an applicant may file suit with the County Circuit court per the process outlined in [MCL 125.3606\(1\)](#)

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