

GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

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**Please note that this Guide to Development is solely intended to act as a concise guide document, and it should not be substituted for ordinance or policy requirements. If you have questions regarding requirements, please refer to the ordinances listed on page ten of this document or contact staff on page two of this document.*

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Relevant Agencies

[YCUA](#)
[MDOT](#)
[DTE](#)
[Miss Dig](#)

WELCOME

The goal of the Guide to Development is to provide an overview guide to the various development processes administered by the City. A development may require one, two, or more of these processes before construction begins, or before the residence is occupied or the business is opened.

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COUNCIL, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

City Council
Planning Commission
Zoning Board of Appeals
Historic District Commission
Downtown Development Authority
Sustainability Commission
Parks and Recreation Commission

[Council Information](#)
[Commission Information](#)
[Board Information](#)
[Commission Information](#)
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[Commission Information](#)
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LOCATE YOUR SITE

Locate your site using the [Zoning Map](#) and [Historic District Map](#). If your site falls within the Historic District, you will need Historic District Commission approval for your work. Your zoning district will determine if your intended land use is allowed, and what type of dimensional standards you will need to follow.

If you are looking for properties, the City keeps a listing of available commercial properties [here](#).

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT FLOWCHART

See the [Development Flowchart](#) which describes the general development process, from start to finish.

PERMIT CENTER

While many application forms are linked in the below sections, the City's [Permit Center](#) contains all application forms.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMPLIANCE

Work Permit – Certificate of Appropriateness or Notice to Proceed

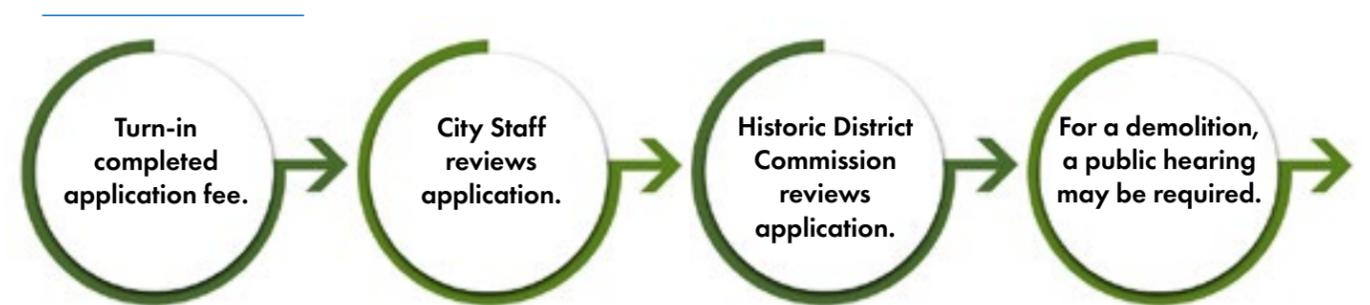
If located in the Historic District, see the Historic District Work Permit Application [here](#).
See the Application for Demolition [here](#).

Reviewer:
Historic District Commission

Review timeframe:
2-3 weeks for construction/alteration, 4-6 weeks for demolition

Example development:
Exterior additions/alterations or replacements to a structure or property located in the Historic District; new construction of a structure in the Historic District; partial or whole demolition of a structure located in the Historic District;

Design documents:
Photos of existing conditions, renderings or graphics of addition/alterations, description of materials, product cut sheets for materials, recommendations from preservation trades professionals. See application checklist for more details.



Administrative Review

Reviewer:
Preservation Planner

Review timeframe:
1-2 weeks

Example development:
Paint, reroofing, in-kind replacement of some non-historic features

Design documents:
Paint color sample, materials sample, photos of the building



ZONING COMPLIANCE

Zoning Review Application

See Zoning Review Application form [here](#).

Reviewer:
City Planner, and occasionally Building Department Manager

Example development:
Fences, sheds, standalone gazebos and decks, canopies/tents, etc.

Review timeframe:
1-5 days

Design documents:
May be a hand-drawn sketch plan. Professional drawings are optional.



Special Use Permit

Reviewer:
Planning Commission

Example development:
Uses defined as Special Land Uses in the Zoning Ordinance. Examples might be day care group homes, adult foster care group homes, marijuana facilities, liquor stores, etc.

Review timeframe:
4-8 weeks

Design documents:
Applicant may be property owner or tenant with property owner's permission. Sketch Plan Review or Site Plan Review is required to be attached with application.



Sketch Plan Review

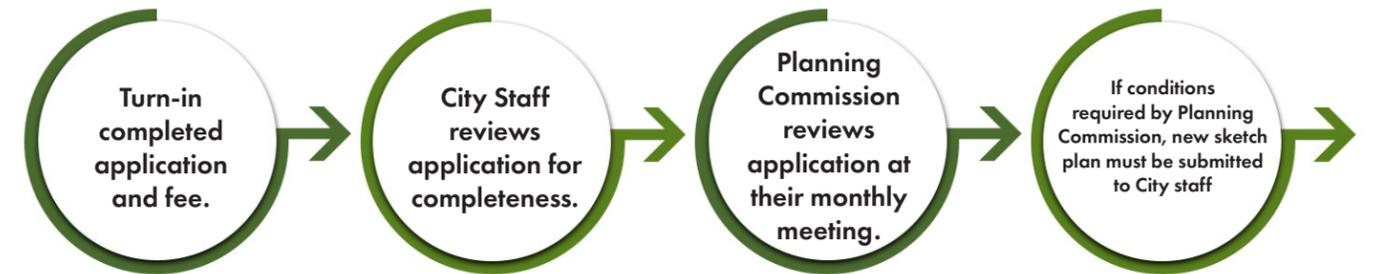
See Sketch Plan Review application form [here](#).

Reviewer:
City Planner or Planning Commission

Example development:
Re-occupying an existing building and site with an equal or more intense use as determined by City Planner, but not proposing any physical building or substantial site changes.

Review timeframe:
City Planner: 1-14 days; Planning Commission: 4-8 weeks

Design documents:
May be a hand-drawn sketch plan meeting the requirements of application. Professional drawings are optional, but recommended.



Site Plan Review

See the Site Plan Review application form [here](#).
See the City's Engineering Standards [here](#).

Reviewer:
Planning Commission

Example development:
Proposing physical changes to the building and/or substantial site changes. Substantial site changes include but are not limited to: addition of impervious surface such as parking surfacing or driveways, addition or changes to utilities (including drainage or stormwater management), grading changes, substantial changes to landscaping, etc.

Review timeframe:
4-8 weeks, plus 2-3 months for detailed engineering review.

Design documents:
Site plans must be professional drawings, signed/sealed by a design professional.



Variance

See Variance application [here](#).

Reviewer:
Zoning Board of Appeals

Example development:
Any request for relief from the zoning ordinance. The City does not allow for use variances.

Review timeframe:
1-3 Months

Design documents:
Applicant may be property owner or tenant with property owner's permission. Plan may be in the form of sketch plan or site plan. Professional drawings are optional, but recommended.



Additional Zoning Applications

1. Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning): Involves changing the zoning map so that a parcel of land is designated as a different zoning district. See the application form [here](#).
2. Zoning Text Amendment: Involves changing the text of the zoning ordinance. See the application form [here](#).

BUILDING DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Building Permit/Plan Review for One- or Two-Family Residential Uses

See the Building Permit/Plan Review application [here](#).

Reviewer:
City Planner and Building Official

Example development:
New construction of one- or two- family dwelling, addition to existing structure, garages or accessory structures (200 square feet or greater), etc.

Review timeframe:
2-4 weeks

Design documents:
Construction documents (may be hand-drawn or drawn by a design professional) required for all reviews. Site plan (may be a hand-drawn sketch plan)

Building Permit/Plan Review for Multi-Family Residential and Commercial Projects

Process handled by Building Department. Level of zoning review takes place in the form of Sketch Plan Review or Site Plan Review mentioned earlier. See the Building Permit/Plan Review application [here](#).

Reviewer:
Building Official

Example development:
New construction of commercial buildings and new construction of structures with three or more dwelling units. Also includes adding a dwelling unit or any alterations to such dwelling unit.

Review timeframe:
4-8 weeks (revisions may increase the review timeframe)

Design documents:
Sealed construction documents required for new construction, as well as moving/adding walls and/or any structural changes.

Business & Occupancy Certificate

See the Business & Occupancy Certificate application form [here](#).

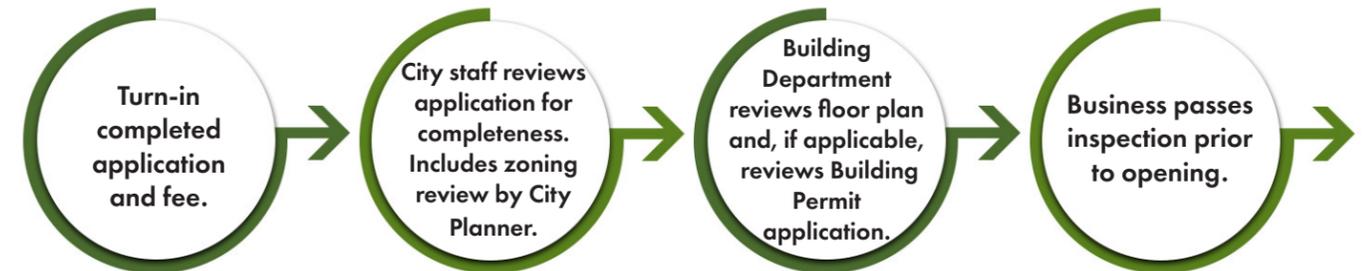
Reviewer:
City Planner and Building Official

Example development:
Occupying an existing building or suite within a building for business purposes, including but not limited to professional offices, personal services, retail stores, restaurants, etc. If a change of use by the Building Code, Building Permits (above) are required.

Review timeframe:
1-2 weeks

Design documents:
Floor plan (providing racks, counters restrooms, aisles, exits, etc.) with dimensions.

Additional Documents:
(If applicable) Health Department, LARA, or other agencies



Rental Certificate

A rental certificate is required if for the renting of a dwelling unit to a tenant(s). The unit will need to pass inspections by the Building Department every two years, at a minimum.

See the Rental Property Registration Form [here](#).

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

Detailed Engineering Review

Detailed Engineering Review is the review of the site plans for engineering compliance by the City Engineers. The City has a set of Engineering Standards that are required to be followed. Once the site plans are approved through detailed engineering review, the developer will be required to submit pre-construction items such as a construction oversight escrow, insurance, and performance bond, then the construction process may take place.

See the Engineering Standards [here](#).

Right-of-Way Permit

Rights-of-Way are the public spaces in front of your property (or behind, in the case of an alley) which consist of the street, the sidewalk, and the landscaped margin in between. Construction or altering the right-of-way requires a Right-of-Way permit through the Department of Public Services. This includes, but is not limited to, constructing or altering your driveway approach, constructing or altering a sidewalk, or planting or removing a street tree.

See the Right-of-Way Permit application form [here](#).

Sign Permit

Sign type, size, and placement regulations are defined in the zoning ordinance (Article VI, Division 5). New signs, and some temporary signs, require a sign permit to ensure the sign is installed properly and to ensure compliance with the above-mentioned regulations. Sign Permits are reviewed by the Building Department and/or City Planner.

See the Sign Permit application form [here](#).

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS REVIEWS

Temporary Use Permit

Depending on the zoning district and the use involved, temporary uses may be permitted on a property. These temporary uses are bound by certain timeframes, often up to 90 days maximum, or up to 200 days maximum for mobile food concessions. Temporary Use Permits are reviewed by the Building Department and/or City Planner, and may be approved of by Planning Commission in certain instances.

See the Temporary Use Permit application form [here](#).

See the Temporary Mobile Food Concessions application form [here](#).

Lot Combination/Division

A lot may be able to be combined with another lot (assuming like ownership) or divided to create a second lot. The resulting lot(s) must conform to the zoning ordinance and the combination or division must conform to the relevant State acts, including the Michigan Land Division Act.

See the Lot Combination/Division application form [here](#).

Alley/Street Vacation

An alley or street vacation is where the public alley or street is dissolved into abutting private property or properties. Alley or street vacations are reviewed by Planning Commission and may be adopted by resolution by City Council.

See the Alley/Street Vacation application form [here](#).

Sidewalk Café

Sidewalk Cafes, as extensions of existing restaurants or cafes may be permitted assuming furniture and fencing is installed properly and a clear span width is maintained in the sidewalk to ensure accessibility. Sidewalk Café applications are reviewed by the Building Department.

See the Sidewalk Café application form [here](#).

Special Nonconforming Status

When the zoning ordinance is amended over time, certain uses become legally “nonconforming.” Legal nonconforming uses may continue, but are bounded by strict zoning ordinance regulations. To offer a layer of protection for legal nonconforming uses to continue in the event of catastrophe or abandonment, a property may be granted such status. Special Nonconforming Status applications are reviewed by the Planning Commission.

See the Special Nonconforming Status application form [here](#).

Planned Unit Development

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) may be the preferred development process for large-scale developments. They can offer extra flexibility and innovation in terms of the development, so long as such development is consistent with the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Technically, PUDs are an amendment to the Zoning Map, so they require a public hearing and review from the Planning Commission, and adoption by City Council.

See the Planned Unit Development application form [here](#).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Noticing Procedures

Certain applications, including but not limited to Special Use Permits, Variances, Alley/Street Vacations, Planned Unit Developments, etc. are required by law to have a public hearing attached to their review. Details on the public hearing and participation for it are required to be posted in the local newspaper ([Washtenaw Legal News](#)), posted in an inconspicuous place on the City's webpage ([City Newsflash](#)), and mailed to all addresses (property owners and occupants) within 300 feet of the request.

Public Participation Plan

The City of Ypsilanti adopted a Public Participation Plan in 2020. See the Plan [here](#).

Social Media

The City of Ypsilanti is active on [Facebook](#) and [Nextdoor](#).

FEE SCHEDULE

Find the Fee Schedule [here](#).

NOTABLE CODES/ORDINANCES IN EFFECT

- Zoning Regulations
 - Chapter 122 of City Code
 - Zoning Map (June 2018 version)
- Historic Preservation
 - Chapter 54 of City Code
 - Historic District Map (October 2017 version)
 - Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Building Regulations
 - Chapter 18 of City Code
 - Michigan Building Code 2015
 - Michigan Residential Code 2015
 - International Property Maintenance Code 2018
 - State Construction Code Act
- Streets, Sidewalks, and Certain Other Public Places
 - Chapter 94 of City Code
- Business Licenses
 - Chapter 22 of City Code