

CITY OF HART, MICHIGAN



SITE PLAN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

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What is a Site Plan?

Most Michigan communities have some form of site plan review. The State of Michigan "*City and Village Zoning Act*" defines the site plan as "*the documents and drawings specified in the zoning ordinance necessary to insure that the proposed land use or activity is in compliance with local ordinance, and state and federal statutes.*"

The Benefits of Site Plan Review (SPR)

The whole point of reviewing a site plan is to make sure the site functions well, is attractive, and safe for the public. Poorly designed sites that are cramped, inconvenient, unsafe, and unattractive can hurt a business, impact neighboring properties, and also make a site more difficult to sell, lease or reuse. When reviewing a site plan planning commission members visualize such things as: how vehicles and people will circulate on the site, how the rainwater will run off or puddle on the site, where utilities will connect, and how the development will impact its neighbors. In addition to making sure the site plan meets ordinance standards, the zoning administrator is available to assist the owner or developer and can often make suggestions that may help the developer utilize the site better, which can reduce costs, keep future development options open, and enhance the resale value of properties.

What Kind of Development Needs Site Plan Review?

The City of Hart has two types of site plan review. The Planning Commission (PC) is required to review any new (or existing use increasing by more than 50%) principal commercial, office, industrial, business or institutional use or a residential use having more than two dwellings. The PC also reviews all special land uses and planned unit developments. The Zoning Administrator (ZA) is able to approve expansion of an existing building or use if less than a 50% expansion. The ZA also can approve an accessory building or structure, a single or two-family dwelling, or a change in use which results in the need for more parking spaces. The ZA reviews every site plan and will forward comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission as appropriate. **Final site plan approval is required before a building permit can be issued.**

The SPR Process

1. The application process starts with the City's Zoning Administrator, who coordinates with county departments and consultants for the review.
2. City staff takes the application and appropriate fee. All SPR applications must be filled out completely and accurately by the applicant in order to be accepted. Site plans needing PC review must be accompanied by a \$1,000.00 escrow fee (which covers consulting fees for review). Unused funds are reimbursed to the applicant. Site plans with ZA review must be accompanied by a \$25.00 fee. Applications must be signed by the owner of the property, or their authorized agent. Applications for Zoning Administrator review must be accompanied by 3 copies of a complete site plan. Applications for Planning Commission review require 12 copies of a complete site plan. Other materials such as a traffic study or environmental impact assessment could also be required by the Planning Commission during review.
3. The site plan is reviewed by relevant county departments, the Michigan Department of Transportation, (as appropriate) and consultants. Comments and recommendations are forwarded to the PC for their review. The approving entity (either the PC or the ZA) will: 1) approve the site plan, 2) deny it, or 3) approve it with conditions. If a conditional approval is given by the PC, they often will allow the Zoning

Administrator to review the revised site plan and give final approval if all of the conditions that the PC placed on the site plan have been met.

4. Once the final site plan has been approved, the Zoning Administrator signs 3 copies of it. One copy becomes part of the City's files, and one copy is forwarded to the Building Inspector so that a building permit can be issued, and one copy is retained by the applicant.
5. Once the site plan gets final approval, construction must start within one year after the date of approval, unless a one-year extension is granted by the PC. An extension will only be granted if reasonable evidence is provided to show that there is a likelihood of construction starting within another year. If the original year goes by with no construction started (and having proceeded meaningfully toward completion) and no extension has been applied for, the site plan will be null and void.
6. Amendments to an approved site plan may be allowed with ZA approval as long as the changes are considered to be minor (as determined by the ZA). An amendment not considered to be minor would need to be submitted to the PC for their review and approval.

What Should the Site Plan Include?



Chapter 1258 of the Zoning Ordinance addresses site plan review, Chapter 1259 addresses signs and Chapter 1260 addresses off-street parking and loading. Copies of these sections or of the full ordinance are available from the City at the address below for \$3.00 plus postage. Zoning maps are \$1.00. To help sift through the technical language more quickly, below is checklist of the City's requirements.

Basic Information:

Every site plan should have "the basics" so anyone reviewing it can understand where the site is and what is being proposed. The sooner the PC and ZA get oriented, the quicker the review will be. The basics include such things as:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> North Arrow and scale | <input type="checkbox"/> Location map of streets and land uses within ¼ mile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date of preparation/revision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking lots and driveway access points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Names of streets the property fronts on | <input type="checkbox"/> Existing/proposed streets & curb cuts within 100 feet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name, address, phone # of the applicant | <input type="checkbox"/> Name, address, phone # of the site plan preparer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All lot lines with dimensions | <input type="checkbox"/> Building setbacks from property lines and the road Right of Way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Existing/proposed utilities for the property | <input type="checkbox"/> Dwelling unit densities by type, if applicable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Existing and proposed buildings and man-made features, including existing buildings or uses within 100 feet of the property. | |

District Requirements:

Each zoning district has basic dimensional requirements to check. Requirements for each zoning district are listed in the district's regulations.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum lot size:_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum lot width:_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front Yard Setback:_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Maximum building height:_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Side Yard Setback:_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of lot coverage:_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rear Yard Setback:_____ | |

Development Data:

SPR regulations enable the City to ask for a variety of information to facilitate review. Each item is required unless specifically waived by the Planning Commission. It's best to talk to the City ahead of time in order to help streamline the process. Items that are necessary include (ordinance section numbers are included for reference where applicable):

Preliminary SPR Requirements	Final SPR Requirements
Engineering and Utility Information	
<input type="checkbox"/> General topographical features including existing contours at intervals no greater than 2 feet. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-viii] <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed method of providing storm drainage . [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-xii] <input type="checkbox"/> Prop. method of providing sewer/water service, and other public/private utilities . [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-xi] <input type="checkbox"/> Specific utility requirements are mentioned in the ordinance for manufactured home developments. [Section 8.5-H]	<input type="checkbox"/> Existing/proposed topography of the site at min. 2' contour intervals and its relationship to adjoining land; proposed grading, showing 2' contour intervals. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-iii and vii] <input type="checkbox"/> Location, sizes, type of drainage , sanitary sewers, water services, storm sewers, detention/retention, fire hydrants. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-viii] <input type="checkbox"/> Easements , if any. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-xii]
Parking, Access and Circulation (to be sure site circulation is efficient and safe)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acreage allocated to each prop. use and gross area in building, structures, parking, public/private streets/drives, and open space. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-ix] <input type="checkbox"/> Written description of the computation for required parking. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-xiii] <input type="checkbox"/> In all zoning districts, sidewalks are required on all sides of the property which abut a public street. [Sections 4.4, 5.4, 6.4, 7.4, 9.4, 10.4, 11.4, 12.4 and 13.4] Sidewalks are also specifically required for manufactured home and site condominium developments. [Section 8.5-G-11 and Section 2.26-D] <input type="checkbox"/> For non-residential districts or uses, except in the B-1 district, parking areas need to be either on the same lot or within 300 feet of the building or use they are intended to serve. In the B-1 district, parking needs to be on the same lot as the use, unless the property adjoins or has access to a community or common parking lot. [Section 16.3-A-1] <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate numbers of parking spaces must be provided. Provide number of employees and usable floor space for parking calculations. [Section 16.3-C] Each lot in a manufactured home community needs to provide a minimum of 2 off-street, paved parking spaces. [Section 8.5-G-12] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking requirements vary according to the proposed use, see Section 16.3-C for details. • For Special Uses, check for specific parking requirements for each use in Section 17.6. <input type="checkbox"/> The minimum width for all parking spaces is 9 feet. The minimum length is 20 feet for a 76-90 degree angle parking pattern, 21 feet for a 30-75 degree angle parking pattern and 25 feet for a parallel parking pattern. [Section 16.3-B-1] <input type="checkbox"/> Drives, streets and other circulation routes need to be designed to promote safe and efficient traffic operations within the site and at ingress/egress points. [Section 16.1-D-1-b]	<input type="checkbox"/> Street ROWs , indicating proposed access routes, internal circulation, relationship to existing ROWs, and curb cuts within 100' of the property. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-vi] <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed parking areas/drives . Parking areas to be designated by lines showing individual spaces, conforming with ordinance provisions. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-xi]

- Maneuvering lanes** are required to be a minimum of 18 to 24 feet in width for two-way traffic and 12 to 15 feet in width for one-way (angled parking) traffic, depending on the parking pattern. [Section 16.3-B-1]
- Parking areas must be **paved with a durable and dustless surface**. A site plan note acknowledging the requirement helps. Parking areas should also be defined by curbing or curb stops. Curbing extends the life of pavement, can help direct stormwater, and prevents damage to landscaped areas and fences. [Section 16.3-B-3 & 4]
- Any use involving the receipt or distribution of vehicles, materials or merchandise must have a designated **loading area** for delivery trucks. Loading areas are required to be paved with either asphalt or a portland cement binder to provide a permanent, and durable surface. [Section 16.3-D]
 - B-1/B-2 Districts: at least 10 sq. feet per front linear foot of building, located in the rear yard.
 - OS-1 District: at least 5 square feet per front linear foot of building, located in the rear yard.
 - I-1 District: 10 feet x 50 feet or at least 500 square feet, in size, minimum 14 feet high, at least 1 loading space located off the street and in rear or interior side yard.
- Stacking spaces** for drive-thru facilities need to be provided - see specific requirements in Special Use standards in Section 17.6.

Natural features, Landscaping, Screening, Lighting and Signs

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed buffer strips or screening. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-iv] <input type="checkbox"/> Location of any signs not attached to the building. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-vi] <input type="checkbox"/> Significant natural features/other natural characteristics on the property, such as open space, stands of trees, wetlands, brooks, ponds, floodplains, hills, and similar natural assets. Also any wetland, brook, pond or similar water feature within 250 feet of the property boundary. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-v and Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-xiv] <input type="checkbox"/> Existing vegetation must be marked as either to be preserved or to be removed. Proposed landscaping and vegetation needs to be shown on the site plan as well. Vegetation may only be removed or altered if deemed reasonably necessary to develop the site in accordance with ordinance requirements. [Section 16.1-C-2-a-(2)-(b)-v, Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-xiv & Section 16.1-D-1-d] <input type="checkbox"/> Any proposed use needs to be adequately buffered from other uses and from surrounding public and private property. The PC may require that landscaping, buffers or greenbelts be preserved or provided to ensure this. [Section 16.1-D-1-d and Section 16.2-C & I] <input type="checkbox"/> Trash dumpsters, designated outdoor storage areas in the I-1 district, and loading/unloading areas or hospital emergency rooms are all required to be screened with a solid, sight-obscuring fence or wall 6 feet high. [Section 16.2-E & F] <input type="checkbox"/> Greenbelts are required within the front setback area in the OS-1, B-1, B-2, P-1 and I-1 districts and also around any nonresidential parking lot abutting or within 100 feet of a residential district, and within any parking lot which has at least 50 spaces. [Section 16.2-G] Greenbelts need to meet the standards in Section 16.2-H & I. <input type="checkbox"/> All parking lots need to have adequate lighting, which needs to be shielded so as to prevent light from spilling onto adjacent properties. (Section 16.3-B-5) <input type="checkbox"/> All proposed signage needs to meet the requirements of Section 16.4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Location, sizes, and types of fences, landscaping, buffer strips, and screening. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-ix] <input type="checkbox"/> Location, sizes, and type of signs and on-site lighting. [Section 16.1-C-2-b-(1)-(b)-x] |
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Helpful Hints

1. Of course, if all the information and details necessary are provided on the site plan as originally submitted, and if the plan meets all requirements, approval can be received very quickly. The City likes to be able to say “yes!” on the first go-around with a site plan.

2. Remember, the site plan is a contract with the community and should not leave out information. Site plan notes assuring the City that you know what your responsibilities are help a speedy approval. For example, less tree removal on your site saves you time, money and may reduce additional landscaping requirements. It also makes the site more attractive and helps stormwater runoff. If you have noted the trees on site, also note which ones are going "to be protected".
3. City staff is here to help facilitate the development process - ask for help if you need it!

Performance Guarantees

As a condition of approval of a site plan review or special use, the Planning Commission can require a financial guarantee to assure the installation of features such as roadways, curbing, landscaping, fencing, walls, screening, lighting, drainage facilities, sidewalks, driveways, utilities, and similar items. Any performance guarantee will need to be 100% of the cost of materials and installation for the required improvements, plus engineering and contingency costs. A performance guarantee can be in the form of a cash deposit, certified check, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or surety bond acceptable to the City. The process and requirements for performance guarantees are explained in Section 19.3-B.

Other Approvals

Sometimes developments are in a floodplain or may involve altering a wetland. These activities fall under state and/or federal law and often need state level permits. Site Plan approval is often conditioned upon getting these other approvals. Copies of such approvals must be provided to the City for the project file.

Contact Information

Zoning Administrator, Stan Rickard, City of Hart, 407 State Street, Hart, MI 49420
Zoning Consultant, Brenda Moore LSL Planning 15 Ionia S.W. Suite 450 Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Zoning Assistant, Gale Goldberg, City of Hart, 407 State Street, Hart, MI 49420

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Website: www.ci.hart.mi.us