

PROPOSED REVISIONS – SITE PLAN REVIEW

FROM Sec. 98-7. DEFINITIONS

Development means the construction of a new building or other structure on a zoning lot, or the use of open land for a new use.

Earth change means any human activity which removes ground cover, changes the slope or includes, but is not limited to, any excavating, surface grading, filling, landscaping, creation, removal or relocation of spoil piles, or removal of vegetative roots.

Land use involves the management and modification of natural environment or wilderness into built environment or the specific purpose for which a plot of land, building, or development is designated, utilized, or occupied.

Site means any tract, lot, or parcel of land or combination of tracts, lots, or parcels, which compose an area proposed for development and/or earth change.

Site plan means a graphic, numeric, and written document that depicts and characterizes developments or projects based on the content requirements of Article 6 of this ordinance.

Structure means anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires location on the ground or attachment to something having location on the ground, including buildings.

ARTICLE 6 – DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

DIVISION 1 – SITE PLAN REVIEW

Sec. 98-600. Intent

It is recognized by this ordinance that there is a value to the public in establishing a safe, orderly, and beneficial development pattern; there is value in encouraging a harmonious relationship of buildings and uses both within a site and in relation to adjacent uses; further that there are benefits to the public in conserving natural resources. Toward this end, this Division requires site plan review and approval by the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator, as specified herein, for developments or projects that include certain buildings, structures, and site alterations or improvements that can be expected to have an impact on natural resources, traffic patterns, adjacent land usage, or the character of proposed or future development. It is important that consultation and cooperation between the applicant, the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission (when required) take place in order that applicant may accomplish their objectives in the utilization of their land and the public interest is upheld.

It is also recognized that the extent of a development project may be limited in nature and eligible for administrative review, approval and issuance of a Zoning Permit without approval of the Planning Commission.

It is also recognized that during the development process Preliminary Site Plan review and approval by the Planning Commission, prior to final approval of a Final Site Plan and issuance of a Zoning Permit, for a development project may be warranted in order for the final detailed design development to proceed.

Sec. 98-601. Zoning Permit Required

No development or project, even if exempt from site plan review as provided herein, may proceed without first obtaining a Zoning Permit from the Zoning Administrator pursuant to this Division.

Sec. 98-602. Developments or projects requiring major site plan review, minor site plan review, and those that are exempt from site plan review:

Required Review Process Based on Development Activity

Development Activity	Major Plan Review	Minor Site Plan Review	Exempt (Zoning Permit Only)
New residential building containing three or more dwelling units	•		
More than one multiple-family building on a lot, parcel or tract of land, or a combination of lots under single ownership	•		
Mobile Home Park	•		
Subdivision consisting of four or more dwellings	•		
A change in the building site/property which results in an increase in stormwater discharge volume or rate of discharge	•		
New construction commercial, office, industrial, business, recreational or institutional structures; including additions to buildings of more than 2,000 sf	•		
New non-contiguous or offsite parking	•		
Any earth change greater than 40,000 sf or 3,000 cubic yards	•		
Any earth change less than 40,000 sf, but exceeding 10,000 sf		•	
Filling a parcel of land to an elevation above the established grade of adjacent developed land		•	
Change in use of an existing building or part thereof to another use allowable under the zoning designation of the property		•	
Additions, alterations, non-residential and multi-family accessory structures, and renovations that are more than 10% of the size of the original commercial or multi-family residential building footprint or more than 500 sf but less than 2,000 sf, unless otherwise exempt		•	
Relocation of a building approved via Site Plan Review, with associated utilities		•	
Any expansion or change in an existing land use requiring more parking than already provided		•	
Site improvements of more than 2,000 sf, but less than 10,000 sf, that include landscaping, site access, parking lot grading, layout, or new off-street parking, unless the activity is exempt		•	
Addition of driveway that does not affect parking			•
Single-family dwellings and their accessory facilities on individual parcel			•
Multifamily dwellings that contain less than three (3) dwelling units			•
Additions, alterations, non-residential and multi-family accessory structures, and renovations that are up to 10% of the size of the original industrial, commercial or multi-family residential building footprint or up to 500 square feet, whichever is less			•
Relocation of a building approved via a site or sketch plan, no corresponding utilities			•
Landscaping that is less than 25% of the parcel size or 2,000 square feet			•
Site improvements that are less than 2,000 square feet, and site lighting, unless the activity requires site plan review or minor site plan review			•
Re-paving of an off-street parking lot, provided there are no grading changes and no changes to the configuration of the parking lot layout			•

Sec. 98-603 Site Plan Review Procedures

No Zoning or Special Land Use Permit shall be issued for any uses regulated herein except in accordance with a Major Site Plan approved by the Planning Commission, or a Minor Site Plan approved by the Zoning Administrator, or in the case of Exempt Activities approved by the Zoning Administrator, in accordance with the following procedures:

1. **Exempt Activities.** The Zoning Administrator may approve or conditionally approve a Zoning Permit for activities exempt from site plan review upon review of a completed application, accompanied by a sketch plan in sufficient detail, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, to demonstrate compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.
2. **Minor Site Plan Review.** The Zoning Administrator may approve or conditionally approve Minor Site Plans, accompanied by a sketch plan, as described in Sec. 98-602; however, Minor Site Plans may also be subject to review by the Department of Public Works or Fire Department, or any other City department deemed necessary by the Zoning Administrator. If in the determination of the Zoning Administrator a Minor Site Plan is of sufficient effect on the community, neighboring properties, or warrants review by the Planning Commission said Minor Site Plan will be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission. After approval of a Minor Site Plan, the applicant may receive a Zoning Permit. The Zoning Administrator shall report approval of Minor Site Plans to the Planning Commission at the regular Planning Commission meeting following the date of approval.
3. **Major Site Plan Review.**
 - a. **Deadline to Submit Full Site Plan Application.** Applications for final site plan approval shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator at least (20) business days prior to the meeting at which the review is to take place.
 - b. **Staff Review of Site Plan Materials.** The Zoning Administrator, Department of Public Works, Fire Department, and other City departments, if required by the Zoning Administrator to determine compliance with this Ordinance, will review application materials to determine if they are in proper form, all the required information is present, and the site plan complies with this Ordinance. Each department that reviews an application may provide a report or relevant comments to the Zoning Administrator. If the site plan is determined to not be complete or in compliance with the Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator shall return the reports to the applicant. The Planning Commission shall not review a site plan that is not complete unless the incomplete items are deemed to be minor.
 - c. **Additional Information.** The Planning Commission, prior to granting approval of a site plan, may request from the applicant any additional graphics or written materials, prepared by a qualified person(s), to assist in determining the appropriateness of the site plan. Such material may include, but is not limited to, photographs, estimated impact on public schools and utilities, and traffic impacts.
 - d. **Planning Commission and/or Administrative Action.** Except as noted in directly above, and as stated in Section 98-603.4 for Preliminary Site Plan Review, the Planning Commission, or City Staff, shall approve, approve with conditions, or deny the site plan based on the compliance of the plan with City Ordinances and the review standards of this Ordinance. If conditional approval is granted, the conditions shall be stated specifically so that the Zoning Administrator or other reviewing departments can determine compliance with the conditions following submission of revised plans; said

review not to exceed (15) business days unless additional time is required by the Zoning Administrator or other reviewing departments to determine compliance with the conditions of site plan approval. A site plan shall be approved if it contains all of the information required by this Division and is in compliance with the standards of this Division, other City planning documents, City ordinances, and state and federal statutes.

e. **Signed Copies of Final Approved Plans.** The Planning Commission Chair, Zoning Administrator and the applicant shall sign two copies of the approved site plan, one of which is retained by the Zoning Administrator, the other by the applicant. If the site plan is approved with conditions that require revisions to the site plan, the applicant must make the required revisions and submit the revised plans to the City to be signed.

f. **Certificate of Zoning Compliance.** A Zoning Permit shall not be issued until the Planning Commission has approved the plan. The Zoning Permit shall be reviewed and issued in accordance with this Division.

4. **Preliminary Site Plan Review.** At the option of the applicant, preliminary sketches of proposed site plans may be submitted for review to the Planning Commission prior to submission for full site plan review. Submission of preliminary plans shall be made to the Zoning Administrator no later than (14) days prior to the meeting at which the review is to take place. The Zoning Administrator shall advise the applicant as to the general acceptability of the proposed plan but shall not be bound by any statements or indications of final acceptance of the plan. The Zoning Administrator shall determine the number of plans to be submitted. Sketch plans must include at a minimum the required information for preliminary site plans in Sec. 98-604.
5. **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 Division for a final site plan.
6. **Exempt Activities Approval.** The Zoning Administrator shall review an application for Zoning Permit for proposed exempt activities and determine whether those activities are compliant. If found to be exempt activities and compliant, the Zoning Administrator will issue a Zoning Permit.

Sec. 98-604. Application procedure for site plans

A Zoning Permit application for site plan review shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator along with the payment of a fee, if any, as required by Appendix A – Fee Schedule of the City of Houghton Code of Ordinances.

The Zoning Administrator, upon receipt of the Zoning Permit application and related materials, drawings, other necessary data, and payment of required fee, shall determine the level of review required per 98-603 after consultation with the applicant.

For Exempt Activities and Minor Site Plans the Zoning Administrator shall, within (10) business days of receipt, review a complete application and notify the applicant of approval, denial, or referral to the Planning Commission to review the application. If Planning Commission review is recommended the Zoning Administrator shall transmit copies to the Planning Commission.

Within (45) days of receipt of all required information, a meeting of the Planning Commission shall take place in which the site plan or preliminary site plan is approved, denied or approved with conditions. The site plan or preliminary site plan shall be presented to the Planning Commission by the applicant or a plan representative.

Sec. 98-604 Site Plan Review Content

Site Plan Information Required	Preliminary Site Plan	Final Site Plan
Identification of Project		
The applicant's name.	•	•
Name of the development.	•	•
Property identification number.	•	•
The preparer's name and professional seal of architect, engineer, or landscape architect indicating license in the State of Michigan.		•
Vicinity map depicting location of site within the City.		•
Current legal description based on most recent survey by Michigan Licensed Surveyor.		•
Date of preparation and any revisions.	•	•
North arrow.	•	•
Existing Features		
Property lines and dimensions drawn to scale. Include area of property in square feet or acres.	•	•
Zoning and current land use of applicant's property and all abutting properties and of properties across any public or private street from the site.	•	•
Lot lines and all structures on the property and within 100 feet outside the site's property lines.	•	•
Locations of all significant natural features such as streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes (>12%), and woodlands.	•	•
Existing private or public easements.		•
Location of any access points on both sides of the street within 100 feet of the site along streets where access to the site is proposed.	•	•
Existing topography at a maximum of two foot contour intervals.		•
Proposed Construction		
Building footprints, setbacks, and elevations showing height for all proposed structures with the acreage/area allotted to each use.	•	•
Schematic stormwater management plan, including elements stated below for Final Site Plan requirements, as needed to show intended compliance with the requirements of Division 6.	•	
Site Plan Information Required	Preliminary Site Plan	Final Site Plan
Locations of all existing and proposed utilities on the site; overhead and underground	•	•
Schematic site topography showing general slopes and grades	•	
Proposed topography with a site grading plan with topography at a minimum of two (2) foot contour intervals.		•

	Preliminary Site Plan	Final Site Plan
Location and method of screening for all waste dumpsters.		•
Overall location and dimensions of automobile parking area(s)	•	
Location and dimensions of automobile parking spaces and bicycle racks including calculations confirming compliance with parking requirements of Article 3, Division 1 - Parking.		•
General landscaping design concept acceptable to the Zoning Administrator.	•	
Landscaping plan indicating proposed plant locations with common plant name, number, and size at installation. Berms, retaining walls or fences shall be shown with elevations from the surrounding average grade.		•
Details of exterior lighting including fixture and pole locations, height, and method of shielding.		•
The location of all freestanding permanent or temporary signs, existing or proposed.	•	•
Locations and sizes of all utility services and storm water management elements, including, storm drainage, retention or detention ponds and/or swales, rain gardens, riparian buffer vegetative strips, and any proposed public or private easements to comply with the requirements of Division 6; including supporting calculations.		•
Fire hydrant(s) and location(s) or other water supply, and standpipe connection type; Fire dept. connection location; Fire dept. access details.		•
If the application is related to property scheduled for phased development, the proposed layout for the total projected development shall be indicated, and the projected scope and time period shall be estimated for each additional phase. The phasing plan must be acceptable to the City staff to ensure that each phase can function independently and is not reliant on future phases if they are not constructed. Tree clearing and grading is limited to the areas that are proposed and approved for a phased timeline	•	•

Site Circulation Details and Access Design		
General site circulation and access including indication of street right-of-way and pavement widths; access points; and location of pedestrian paths.	•	•
Proposed street horizontal and vertical dimensions, including curve radii.		•
Dimensions of access points including distance from adjacent driveways or intersecting streets, including those across a street..		•
Schematic location and names of abutting public streets and other rights-of-way, and schematic location of proposed streets/roads, driveways, parking areas, pedestrian and bicycle paths.	•	
Locations, dimensions, and names of abutting public streets and other rights-of-way, and of proposed streets/roads, driveways, parking areas, pedestrian and bicycle paths or trails.		•
Pavement widths and pavement types for all streets/roads, pedestrian and bicycle paths.		•
Written verification of access easements or agreements, if applicable.		•

Voluntary Information/Considerations – include callouts/notes and narrative
Infrastructure for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations (wiring, conduit, etc.)
Incorporation of green infrastructure elements such as a bioswale/rain garden, pervious pavers, vegetative/green roof, living retaining wall, French drains
Public art elements such as sculpture, murals, interactive installations
Use of native plants in landscape plan
Use of colorful cladding materials (black, white, grey materials should be limited to less than 50% of total exterior cladding and trim colors)
Conformance with architectural guidelines stated in zoning district, if any.

Sec. 98-605. Site plan presentation material requirements

- 1) All plan review requests shall be accompanied by a Zoning Permit application and:
 - a) Exempt activities and Minor Site Plans: additional 8.5”x11” plans as appropriate.

- b) Preliminary Plans and Major Site Plan: (1) 24"x36" plan set, (10) 11"x17" plan sets, plus an electronic copy of the documents.
- 2) All plans shall be drawn at an appropriate scale to clearly convey the required information in sufficient detail for review.

Sec. 98-606. Site Plan standards

The Zoning Administrator and/or Planning Commission shall review each site plan according to the standards for site plan review and any other applicable regulations of this ordinance. In addition, the Planning Commission is empowered to seek the review and recommendations of appropriate county, state or federal agencies, city departments, other professionals, consultants, or agencies, as the Planning Commission deems necessary to assist it in its review in establishing a safe, orderly and beneficial development pattern. The Planning Commission shall review the site plan for compliance with the requirements of this ordinance and conformance with the following general standards:

1. All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to topography, the size and type of the lot, the character of adjoining property, and the type and size of buildings. The site shall be developed to not impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this ordinance.
2. Electric, telephone and cable television lines on site shall be underground where practicable. Any utility installations remaining aboveground shall be located so as to have a harmonious relationship to neighboring properties and the site.
3. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications that result in greatest harmony with adjacent areas. Landscape must also comply with Article 3, Division 2.
4. Site drainage must comply with Article 3, Division 6.
5. All buildings or groups of buildings shall be so arranged as to permit emergency vehicle access.
6. All site plans should provide information on where snow that is removed from parking areas and walkways will be stored and/or how it will be removed from the site.
7. All loading and unloading areas and outside storage areas including areas for the storage of trash shall be screened by a vertical buffer consisting of structural and/or plant materials no less than (6) feet in height.
8. Exterior lighting shall comply with Article 3, Division 5.
9. All streets shall be constructed in accordance with the requirements and specifications of the Houghton County Road Commission.
10. Site plans shall conform to all applicable requirements of state and federal statutes and approval may be conditioned on the applicant receiving necessary State and Federal permits before final approval is granted.
11. Site plans shall conform to the city master plan.

Sec. 98-607. Expiration of site plan

- 1) If applicant does not obtain a building permit or initiate construction within one year of site plan approval; that approval shall be considered expired.
- 2) The applicant may request, in writing, a one-year extension of site plan approval. Request must be made no later than 30 days after expiration. Only one extension may be granted.

Sec. 98-608. Revocation of site plan approval

- 1) The Planning Commission may, upon notice and hearing, revoke approval of a site plan if it determines that any information on the approved site plan is erroneous. Upon revocation, work on the affected part of the development, or on the entire development, as determined by the Planning Commission, shall cease upon delivery of a stop work order delivered by the Zoning Administrator.
- 2) The Zoning Administrator may, upon determination that a development is not in compliance with an approved site plan or approved zoning permit, revoke approval of a site plan and notify the appropriate permitting authorities of such for the purposes of stopping work until the applicant either amends the site plan to be reflective of the work or corrects the work such that it is in compliance with the approved site plan or zoning permit.

Sec. 98-609. Penalty

If it has been determined that a development has not been completed in accordance with an approved site plan, the Zoning Administrator may issue a civil infraction against the owner of the property until the original site plan approval is amended or until the owner complies with the original site plan as approved.

If it has been determined that a development has been, or is being, developed without an approved site plan, the Zoning Administrator may issue a civil infraction against the owner of the property until the owner applies for and receives an approved site plan.

Sec. 98-610. Amendment of an approved site plan

Amendments to an approved site plan shall be permitted only under the following circumstances:

1. The owner of property for which a site plan has been approved shall notify the Zoning Administrator of any desired change to the approved site plan. Minor changes may be approved by the Zoning Administrator upon determining that the proposed revision(s) will not alter the basic design and character of the site plan, nor any specified conditions imposed as part of the original approval. Minor changes shall include the following:
 - A. Reduction of the size of any building and/or sign.
 - B. Movement of buildings and/or signs by no more than 10 feet.
 - C. Landscaping approved in the site plan that is replaced by similar landscaping to an equal or greater extent.
 - D. Changes in floor plans that do not exceed five percent of the total floor area and which do not alter the character of the use or increase the amount of any required parking.
 - E. Internal rearrangement of a parking lot which does not affect the number of parking spaces or alter access locations or design.
2. All amendments to a site plan approved by the Zoning Administrator shall be in writing. After approval by the Zoning Administrator, the applicant shall prepare a revised site plan showing the approved amendment. The revised site plan shall contain a list of all approved amendments and a place for the Zoning Administrator to sign and date all approved amendments.

Secs. 98-613 – 98-629 Reserved.