



Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the City of Portage for your new development project. Department staff is ready to help you throughout your project to ensure that necessary approvals, permits and inspections are completed quickly and efficiently. The Development Review Program was created to streamline the completion of construction projects and ensure high quality development.

This Guidebook has been created to provide you with information about the Development Review Program which includes review and approval of;

- *Development Projects Requiring Site Plans*
- *Final Plans in Planned Developments*
- *Subdivisions*
- *Condominiums*
- *Land Divisions that require public improvements*
- *Landscape Plans*
- *Building Plans*

As part of the one-stop review program, all project materials and other communications are coordinated by the Development Officer, who can be contacted in the Department of Community Development, Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002, or by phoning (269) 329-4477. The Development Officer is available to answer any questions you may have about your development project.

Your decision to build a project in Portage is the step in a long and productive relationship with the city. On behalf of the City Administration, we look forward to working with you and wish you success with your project.

Sincerely,

Vicki Georgeau  
Director of Community Development

Christopher T. Forth, AICP  
Development Officer

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## THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROGRAM

Through the Development Review Program, commercial, industrial, office, multifamily residential and subdivision projects are approved by the city. Completion of a development project involves a number of people including the developer, lender, architect, contractors and governmental agencies. With regard to governmental involvement, local, state and federal requirements play an important role in determining the final location and form of a project. These regulations protect public health, safety and welfare and ensure that the community remains a desirable place in which to live and work.

The City of Portage is responsible for many aspects of project development and construction including:

- ◆ Land use planning
- ◆ Zoning
- ◆ Construction code administration
- ◆ Public engineering of municipal utilities and other public improvements

Through the Development Review Program, these elements are encompassed in one comprehensive process with the goal of efficient project completion from the conceptual phases to final occupancy. The Development Review Program includes:

1. ***Preliminary and Final Site Review*** – includes assistance with the preliminary planning stages of a project such as information about code requirements, submittal requirements and preliminary review by city staff. This step also includes submittal of development plans for review by staff and approval by Planning Commission and City Council if required.
2. ***Building Plan and Infrastructure Plan Review*** – includes the submittal and review of building plans and/or plans for public improvements such as streets and utilities. Plans are reviewed by city staff and, if required, approvals granted by City Council. Permits are issued following a preconstruction meeting between city staff and the applicant and contractor.
3. ***Construction Inspection*** – includes the performance and/or monitoring of all inspection during the construction of the project.
4. ***Construction Finalization and Occupancy*** – following a request for a Certificate of Occupancy by the applicant, city staff will perform final inspections to ensure completion of all site and building features. If all conditions are satisfied, a Certificate of Occupancy will be granted and the project completed.

The Development Review Program is coordinated by the City of Portage Department of Community Development. The Department is located at City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. The Development Officer, who will assist you, can be telephoned at (269) 329-4477.

## **WHEN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW IS REQUIRED**

Projects that involve construction of commercial, office, industrial or multifamily residential uses will be coordinated under the Development Review Program. Also, subdivisions, condominium developments and land divisions that include the construction of new public improvements such as water and sanitary sewer will be reviewed through the program. Construction that is not reviewed under the Development Review Program includes new single and two-family homes under separate ownership and each on a separate lot or parcel, accessory buildings in residential areas and minor remodeling projects. The eight specific types of projects that are reviewed include:

1. Site plans pursuant to Section 42, Article 4, Division 5, Subdivision 2 of the Land Development Regulations.
2. Final plans in planned development districts pursuant to Section 42, Article 4, Division 4, Subdivision 11 of the Land Development Regulations.
3. Subdivision of land pursuant to Section 42, Article 5 of the Land Development Regulations.
4. Condominium subdivision pursuant to Article 6 of the Land Development Regulations.
5. Land divisions not otherwise regulated pursuant to Section 42-305 of the Land Development Regulations.
6. Landscape plans pursuant to Section 42, Article 4, Division 6, Subdivision 3 of the Land Development Regulations.
7. Building plans pursuant to the adopted City of Portage Building Code and related construction codes.
8. Other significant projects as determined by the Director of Community Development including, among others, substantial interior remodeling projects on sites with previously approved site plans, commercial/industrial plot plans and parking plans.

For additional information, please contact the Development Officer in the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4477.

## **INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

During the design of your development project and preparation of plans, you will find it essential to be familiar with City of Portage ordinances, codes and other requirements. The documents listed below include information that you may need. All of these documents are available for review in the Department of Community Development and those marked with an asterisk are available for sale or available online at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov).

- ✓ City of Portage Comprehensive Plan\*
- ✓ City of Portage Zoning Map\*
- ✓ City of Portage Land Development Regulations (includes information concerning land uses, subdivision/condominium projects, setbacks, height, area requirements, parking, signs and landscaping)\*
- ✓ City of Portage Contract Conditions and Specifications (for public utility improvements)\*
- ✓ City of Portage Storm Water Design Criteria Manual\*
- ✓ Adopted area plans including the Woodbridge Hills Tentative Plan and City Centre Area Plan
- ✓ City of Portage construction codes including the City of Portage Building Code, Fire Code, State of Michigan Barrier Free Code, and the Plumbing, Mechanical and Electrical Codes.

By carefully reviewing the information that is applicable to your project and incorporating these requirements into project design and construction, you can save valuable time during the review and approval process, and during construction and finalization.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

Each of the eight types of projects coordinated under the Development Review Program involves specific approval requirements. The information on the following pages will describe each of the project types and outline the steps necessary for project approval. If you have questions about these materials, please contact the Development Officer in the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4477.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Development Projects Requiring Site Plans**

A site plan is necessary for the erection or externally altered, added to or enlarged building other than single or two family residences or related accessory structure. A site plan may also be required when an occupancy permit is required for a change in use of a structure or land. Further information about site plans can be found in Section 42, Article 4, Division 5, Subdivision 2 of the Land Development Regulations.

Site plans are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission unless the development project meets at least one of the following criteria, then the Director of Community Development is authorized to approve, deny or approve with conditions site plans submitted for review:

1. New nonresidential development on a zoning lot of two acres or less with developments comprised of 20,000 square feet or less of building area;
2. Existing nonresidential development on a zoning lot of two acres or less which involves a building addition to a previously approved site plan when, combined with the existing building, will not exceed of 20,000 square feet;
3. Nonresidential building additions to previously approved site plans that involve a gross floor area increase of 30% or less and will not exceed 20,000 square feet;
4. Multi-family residential developments involving eight or fewer total dwelling units;

Should the Director determine that a site plan presents issues which have a greater potential impact on adjacent land uses and/or the community, the Director may refer the site plan to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

### **The review and approval process for Site Plans include:**

**STEP 1. *Preliminary discussion between applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer of any site for which a plan is required is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements for site plan approval and to generally discuss the plan. Site plans to be considered by the Planning Commission must be received by the Development Officer not less than two weeks prior to the desired Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled.

**STEP 2. *Project submittal and administrative review.*** Before a site plan is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposed plan submitted by the applicant meets the general requirements and specifications for site plans specified in the Zoning Code. If the site plan is complete and accurate, the plans will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the site plan meets all of the requirements of

the city, the plan will be placed on the next Planning Commission agenda or approved by the Director.

STEP 3. ***Planning Commission review and approval.*** A written staff recommendation concerning the site plan will be presented to the Planning Commission. The applicant or representative should be present at the Planning Commission meeting to respond to questions about the proposed plan. Site plans must be approved by a majority vote of the Commission.

STEP 4. ***Notice of approval; Submittal of revised plans.*** The applicant will be advised in writing of the Planning Commission or Director decision and any conditions of approval. The Planning Commission or Director may require as a condition of approval, a change or modification to the plan in order to ensure that the plan conforms to city requirements. Prior to obtaining any building permits, amended site plans indicating the conditions required by the Planning Commission or Director must be submitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. The Development Officer will determine if the required modifications have been shown on the site plan. If so, the site plans will be stamped approved by the Development Officer and distributed to the administrative review departments and the applicant.

Site plan approval is valid for a period of six months. If development does not commence within that period, reapproval is necessary.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Projects in Planned Developments**

A final plan is a site plan for land identified in an approved conceptual or tentative plan within a planned development zoning district. There are three planned developmental zoning districts in the zoning code; PD, planned development, OTR, office technology and research; and CPD, commercial planned development. A specific phase or section of a planned development will include a site plan, specifications, covenants, easements, conditions and bonds as determined by City Council at the time of conceptual or tentative plan approval: This plan may not differ substantially from the approved conceptual tentative plan. Similar in content to a site plan, this more detailed plan establishes individual setback requirements for a given project, building height, parking, utilities, site engineering and other requirements. Pursuant to the Zoning Code, conceptual or tentative plans are reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by City Council. Site plans and final plans are approved by the Planning Commission, except final plans in the PD, planned development district, where the more detailed plan is approved by City Council.

### **The review and approval process for Site or Final Plans:**

- STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer of any site for which a final plan is required is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements for final plan approval and to generally discuss the plan. A final plan to be considered by the Planning Commission must be received by the Development Officer not less than two weeks prior to the desired Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled.
- STEP 2. ***Project submittal and administrative review.*** Before a site or final plan is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposed plan submitted by the applicant meets the general requirements and specifications specified in the Zoning Code. If the plan is complete and accurate, the plan will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the final plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of the requirements of the city, the plan will be placed on the next Planning Commission agenda.
- STEP 3. ***Planning Commission review and recommendation.*** A written staff recommendation concerning the final plan will be presented to the Planning Commission. The applicant or representative should be present at the Planning Commission meeting to respond to questions about the proposed plan. The Planning Commission may require as a condition of approval, a change or modification to the plan located in the OTR or CPD district in order to ensure that the plan conforms to city requirements. The Planning Commission will forward a recommendation to approve or disapprove the proposed final plan located in the PD district to City Council, together with any recommended conditions of approval.

STEP 4. ***City Council review and approval.*** City Council will consider the proposed final plan within the PD, planned development zoning district and may approve, disapprove or approve the plan with conditions. The applicant will be advised in writing of the decision and any conditions of approval established by City Council. City Council may require as a condition of approval a change or modification to the final plan in permits, amended plans indicating the conditions required by City Council will be submitted to the Development Officer. The Development Officer will determine if the required modifications have been shown on the final plan. If so, the final plan will be stamped approved by the Development Officer and distributed to the administrative review departments and the applicant. If development of the final plan does not commence within 120 days, reapproval of the plan is required.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Subdivisions**

As established in the Land Division Act of 1998 (LDA), subdividing land consistent with the LDA is required when a tract of land is proposed to be divided into parcels less than ten acres in size. The number of splits per parcel before subdividing pursuant to the LDA is dependent on the size of the parent parcel. For example, a 30-acre parcel can be split six times (eight times if certain open space requirements are fulfilled) before complying with the requirements of the LDA. Although residential subdivisions are most common, office, commercial and industrial subdivisions may also be created. The review of subdivisions by the city involves the consideration of the layout of public streets, public utilities, natural features such as topography and vegetation and proper ingress and egress to the site.

The city also coordinates review of the subdivision by other agencies as required by state law. Other public and private agencies which may be involved include the State of Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services, Michigan Department of Public Health, Portage Public Schools, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Kalamazoo County Drain Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Kalamazoo County Road Commission, Kalamazoo County Plat Board, Consumers Energy Company, SBC (telephone) and Charter Communications of Michigan.

### **The review and approval process for Subdivisions includes:**

- STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer of any subdivision is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements for subdivision approval and to generally discuss the proposal. Subdivision plans to be considered by the Planning Commission must be received by the Development Officer not less than three weeks prior to the desired Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled.
- STEP 2. ***Project submittal and administrative review.*** Before a subdivision is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposal submitted by the applicant meets the general requirements and specifications in the Land Division Ordinance. If the plans are complete and accurate, the subdivision plans will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plans to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of the requirements of the city, the proposed subdivision plan will be placed on the next Planning Commission agenda.

STEP 3. ***Planning Commission review and recommendation: Preliminary plat.*** A written staff recommendation will be presented to the Planning Commission. The applicant or representative should be present at the Planning Commission meeting to respond to questions about the proposed plan. The Planning Commission will recommend that City Council approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the preliminary plat.

STEP 4. ***City Council review and tentative approval: Preliminary plat.*** Following receipt of a written recommendation from the Planning Commission and staff, City Council will consider the preliminary plat and either approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the subdivision. Preliminary plat approval is valid for a period of 12 months.

City Council may require as a condition of approval a change or modification to the subdivision plan in order to ensure that the plan conforms to city standards and ordinances. The applicant will be advised in writing of the decision and any conditions of approval established by City Council.

STEP 5. ***Approval of detailed engineering plans: Final preliminary plat.*** Before engineering plans are accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposal incorporates any preliminary plat conditions required by City Council and meets the general requirements and specifications for engineering plans specified in the Land Division Ordinance. If the materials are complete and accurate, the engineering plans will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of the requirements of the City, the plan will be placed on the next City Council agenda for approval and forwarded to the State of Michigan for issuance of the required water and sanitary sewer permits.

If the engineering plans are approved by City Council and the necessary permits obtained from the State of Michigan, a preconstruction meeting can be scheduled to initiate construction of the subdivision. A professional engineering firm retained by the developer must provide full-time inspection services while the public infrastructure is being installed. Approval of the detailed engineering plans by City Council is valid for a period of two years.

STEP 6. ***Acceptance of improvements by City Council: Final plat.*** Upon completion of all improvements and submittal of all required information by the applicant (easements, deeds, title insurance and bonds), a written report will then be forwarded to City Council to recommend acceptance of all public improvements. When approved by City Council, subsequent approvals by other agencies will follow the procedure set forth in the Land Division Act.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Condominiums**

In addition to the requirements of the Condominium Act of 1978, the City of Portage has adopted specific regulations for single family-detached condominium projects. These developments consist of single-family dwellings situated on undivided tracts of land, which are held in common ownership, typically through a condominium association. Condominium project review entails the consideration of the layout of streets, public and private improvements, natural features such as topography and vegetation and proper ingress and egress.

The city also coordinates review of the condominium subdivision by other agencies as required by state law. Other public and private agencies which may be involved include the Portage Public Schools, Michigan Department of Public Health, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Kalamazoo County Drain Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Kalamazoo County Road Commission, Consumers Energy, SBC (telephone) and Charter Communications of Michigan.

### **The review and approval process for Condominium Subdivisions includes:**

- STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between the applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer of any condominium subdivision is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements for condominium approval and to generally discuss the plan. Condominium subdivision plans to be considered by the Planning Commission must be received by the Development Officer not less than three weeks prior to the desired Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled.
- STEP 2. ***Project submittal and administrative review.*** Before a condominium subdivision plan is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposal meets the general requirements and specifications for a condominium subdivision specified in the Condominium Ordinance. If the plans are complete and accurate, the proposal will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the condominium subdivision plans meet all of the requirements of the city, the plan will be placed on the next Planning Commission agenda.
- STEP 3. ***Planning Commission review and recommendation.*** A written staff recommendation will be presented to the Planning Commission. The applicant or representative should be present at the Planning Commission meeting to respond to questions about the proposal. Condominium subdivision plans must be approved by a majority vote of the Commission. The Planning Commission will recommend that the City Council approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the proposal.

STEP 4. ***City Council review and tentative approval.*** Following receipt of a written recommendation from the Planning Commission and staff, City Council will consider the condominium subdivision plan and either approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the project. Tentative approval is valid for a period of 12 months.

City Council may require as a condition of approval a change or modification in order to ensure that the proposal conforms to city standards and ordinances. The applicant will be advised in writing of the decision and any conditions of approval established by City Council.

STEP 5. ***Approval of detailed engineering plans.*** Before engineering plans are accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposal incorporates any preliminary condominium conditions required by City Council and meets the general requirements and specifications for engineering plans specified in the Condominium Ordinance. If the materials are complete and accurate, the plans will be routed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of the requirements of the city, the plan will be scheduled for the next City Council meeting and forwarded to the State of Michigan for issuance of the required water and sanitary sewer permits.

If the engineering plans are approved by City Council and the necessary permits obtained from the State of Michigan, a preconstruction meeting can be scheduled to initiate construction of the condominium. A professional engineering firm retained by the developer must provide full-time inspection services while the public infrastructure is being installed. Approval of the detailed engineering plans is valid for a period of two years.

STEP 6. ***Acceptance of improvements by City Council.*** Upon completion of all improvements and submittal of all required information by the applicant (easements, deeds, title insurance and bonds), a written report will then be forwarded to City Council to recommend acceptance of all public improvements. When approved by City Council, subsequent approvals by other agencies will follow the procedure set forth in the Condominium Act.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Land Divisions**

Development projects involving land divisions and the construction of public improvements such as streets or utilities which are not regulated by the Michigan Land Division Act, Section 42-305 of the City of Portage Zoning Code provides specific guidance for review and approval.

**The review and approval process for Land Divisions involving public improvements include:**

- STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between the applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer proposing the land division is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements for approval and to generally discuss the project. The preliminary plans to be considered by the Planning Commission must be received by the Development Officer not less than two weeks prior to the desired Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled.
- STEP 2. ***Project submittal and administrative review.*** Before a land division project is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposal meets the general requirements and specifications for land subdivisions specified in the Zoning Code. If the land division plan is complete and accurate, the plans will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of requirements of the city, the plan will be placed on the next Planning Commission agenda.
- STEP 3. ***Planning Commission review and recommendation.*** A written staff recommendation will be presented to the Planning Commission. The applicant or representative should be present at the Planning Commission meeting to respond to questions about the proposal. The Planning Commission will recommend that City Council approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the land division.
- STEP 4. ***City Council review and tentative approval.*** Following receipt of a written recommendation from the Planning Commission and staff, City Council will consider the proposed land division and vote to approve, approve with conditions or disapprove the proposal.

City Council may require as a condition of approval a change or modification to the proposal in order to ensure that the proposed project conforms to city standards and ordinances. The applicant will be advised in writing of the decision and any conditions of approval established by City Council.

STEP 5. ***Approval of detailed engineering plans.*** Before engineering plans are accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposed land division and engineering drawings incorporate any conditions required by City Council and meet the general requirements and specifications for public improvements. If the submittal is complete and accurate, the proposal will be distributed to the Community Development, Fire and Transportation and Utilities Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plan to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the land division meets all of the requirements of the city, the plan will be scheduled for the next City Council meeting and forwarded to the State of Michigan for issuance of the required water and sanitary sewer permits. The land division will be approved, approved with conditions or disapproved by City Council.

If the engineering plans are approved by City Council and the necessary permits obtained from the State of Michigan, a preconstruction meeting can be scheduled to initiate construction of the subdivision. A professional engineering firm retained by the developer must provide full-time inspection services while the public infrastructure is being installed.

STEP 6 ***Acceptance of improvements by City Council.*** Upon completion of all improvements and submittal of all required information by the applicant (easements, deeds, title insurance and bonds), a written report will then be forwarded to City Council to recommend acceptance of all public improvements.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Landscape Plans**

A landscape plan may be required in conjunction with a new development project or expansion of an existing use or structure. In general, landscaping and screening is required under Section 42-630 of the City of Portage Zoning Code if the project meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. Whenever a building permit is required for the erection of a main building or structure, other than a one or two family residential dwelling or accessory building related thereto.
2. Whenever a building permit is required for a structural alteration, addition or repair to a building when the estimated expense of such construction exceeds 25% of the appraised replacement cost of the entire building or structure, exclusive of the foundation, prior to its improvement (as determined by the Department of Community Development).
3. Whenever an existing building is changed to or occupied by a use of a different classification or type.
4. Whenever a parking lot is expanded by 25% or more, substantially altered, or a new but separate parking lot constructed on-site.

**The review and approval process for Landscape Plans includes:**

STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer of any site for which a landscape plan is required is encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the Zoning Code requirements for landscape plans and to generally discuss the plan.

STEP 2 ***Project submittal and administrative review and approval.*** Before a landscape plan is accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the proposed plan meets the general requirements and specifications for landscape plans specified in the Zoning Code. If the landscape plan is complete and accurate, the plan will be reviewed by the Community Development Department. Written comments addressing ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the landscape plan will be provided in writing to the applicant by the Development Officer. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the plan meets all of the requirements of the city, the plan will be stamped approved by the Development Officer.

## **PROJECT TYPE: Building Plans**

To begin construction of a project, building plans must be reviewed and approved before building permits can be issued. Through the building plan review process, the city insures that building plans are in conformance with any statutory requirements and city building, fire and related construction codes and environmental regulations, and that necessary construction permits are issued.

**The building plan review and approval process includes:**

- STEP 1. ***Preliminary discussion between the applicant and city staff prior to project submittal.*** The developer submitting building plans is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Development Officer to review the requirements and building, fire and related construction code and environmental regulations so that necessary construction permits are issued.
- STEP 2. ***Plan submittal and administrative review.*** Before plans are accepted for administrative review, the Development Officer will determine that the plans meet the requirements and specifications for building and plan review specified in the City of Portage Building Code. If the building plans are complete and accurate, the plans will be distributed to the Community Development, Transportation and Utilities and Fire Departments for comprehensive review. Each department will forward written comments addressing code/ordinance requirements and recommendations concerning the plans to the Development Officer, who will provide the comments in writing to the applicant. If necessary, revised plans incorporating the staff comments must be resubmitted by the applicant to the Development Officer. If the building plans meet all of the requirements of the city, the plans will be approved and permits prepared.
- STEP 3. ***Preconstruction meeting.*** A preconstruction meeting will be scheduled by the Development Officer with city staff and the applicant and the contractors for all building projects other than interior remodeling only. The Development Officer will review the Preconstruction Development Conditions document with the applicant and all parties will sign the document. Permits will then be issued.
- STEP 4. ***Permit issuance and inspection.*** The issuance of the building permit and related construction permits such as sewer, water, soil erosion, driveway/curb cut and sidewalk will begin the inspection process. Copies of the approved plans (site, building, landscape, water/sanitary sewer main and other applicable plans related to the development project) must be kept on the job site and available for reference. The contractors and subcontractors are responsible for obtaining required inspections by the city as outlined on the building permit placard which the applicant must post at the job site. The developer and/or construction manager/superintendent will be responsible for ensuring that the project is constructed as approved and that required inspections are completed.

STEP 5. ***Project completion and occupancy.*** Upon completion of a building project, a Certificate of Occupancy is required. In order to coordinate the final inspection process, the developer or contractor must notify the Development Officer five days in advance of the anticipated final inspection to arrange for the inspection of the project. Inspection of the building/site to ensure compliance with all applicable ordinances and regulations will be conducted by city staff and if the project is approved, a Certificate of Occupancy will then be issued.

If the building/site is not complete, or work has not been performed in accordance with approved plans and city requirements, a letter listing the deficiencies will be mailed to the developer by the Development Officer establishing a date by which all items must be remedied. If a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy is requested before all required improvements are completed, a performance guarantee must be provided by the developer to ensure completion of all building and/or site improvements. Following completion of the items and reinspection, a Certificate of Occupancy can then be issued and performance guarantee returned, if applicable.

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS**

Other development projects may be coordinated under the Development Review Program as determined by the Director of Community Development. Examples of these projects include:

1. Projects requiring building plan review which were part of a previously approved site plan, including major interior remodeling in commercial or industrial projects.
2. Projects requiring commercial or industrial plot plans.
3. Parking lot plans where significant site issues exist.

The approval process for these projects will vary based on the type of proposal. When preliminary discussions occur with staff and a determination is made by the Director of Community Development that review as part of the Development Review Program is necessary, the Development Officer will advise the applicant in writing of the procedural requirements for project approval.

## MATERIALS YOU NEED TO SUBMIT FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

- Development Application
- Review Fee
- Checklist for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Preconstruction Development Conditions
- Public Utilities Installation Information
- Preconstruction Checklist / Policy of Inspection
- \_\_\_\_\_ (other)

To schedule an appointment for a preliminary project review, or to ask questions about the contents of this guidebook or the status of your development project, please contact the Development Officer at (269) 329-4477 or fax to (269) 329-4506.

All project submittals should be made to the Development Officer at the Department of Community Development, Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage MI 49002.

By \_\_\_\_\_  
*City of Portage* \_\_\_\_\_  
*date*