



**GUIDE TO
DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF HANCOCK, MICHIGAN**



PREPARED BY
WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

This guide was prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region Commission (WUPPDR) with support from city staff and financial support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Program.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Guide to Development	4
Section 1: General Information	5
Key Staff	5
Outside Agencies.....	5
City Boards and Commissions	6
Planning and Zoning	6
Master Plan.....	6
Zoning Ordinance/Map.....	6
Section 2: Zoning Application/Permit	7
Section 3: Site Development Plan Review	8
Section 4: Principal Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions	10
Section 5: Zoning Variances	12
Section 6: Other Required Permits.....	14
Building, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Permits and Fees.....	14
Right-of-Way Permits	14
Sign Permits.....	14
Residential Rental Registrations	14
Section 7: Fees, Appeals, and Notification Procedures.....	15
Fees.....	15
Appeals.....	15
Notification Procedures	15
Community Engagement.....	15
Section 8: Development and Financial Assistance Tools	16
Business Development and Funding Incentives	16
City Financing Districts.....	16

Introduction to the Guide to Development

The City of Hancock takes a variety of approaches to streamline new development, redevelopment, and renovation of properties in the city. This is accomplished through intentional city planning, ordinances that are easy to understand and comply with, speedy administrative processes, and clear communication with the property owners and developers.

This Guide to Development outlines the external steps that are required to accommodate the city's internal processes. By following this guide, property owners and developers can work as closely as possible in synergy with city staff and decision makers to ensure all parties are coordinated to minimize hassles and delays. This guide is to be used as a tool for the planning of activity and structural growth within the city. Contact information, website links, and related documents will be indicated throughout the document for further information.

This guide is not intended as a replacement for city, county, state, or federal laws. In the event of any conflicts between this guide and applicable laws, those laws shall supersede this guide. Consultation with staff and/or outside professionals is recommended for most projects. Developers and businesses should contact the appropriate staff with additional questions.

This guide is organized into the following sections:

1. General Information
2. Zoning Application/Permit
3. Site Development Plan Review
4. Principal Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions
5. Zoning Variances
6. Other Required Permits
7. Fees, Appeals, and Notifications
8. Development and Financial Assistance Tools



City of Hancock City Hall
399 Quincy Street
Hancock, MI 49930

Phone: (906) 482-2720

Office Hours: M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

www.cityofhancock.com

Section 1: General Information

This section contains information that property owners and developers need for any type of development review: staff contact information, meeting schedules, pre-application procedures, and planning and zoning information. While this document provides detailed information on the process for development procedures, the best route for questions is to contact city staff at (906) 482-2720 directly for any questions prior to filling a petition or application.

Key Staff

City Manager's Office

Mary Babcock, City Manager	manager@cityofhancock.net	(906) 482-2720
Linda Kalinec, Treasurer	treasurer@cityofhancock.net	(906) 482-2720

Public Works

Bill Marlor, Director	dpwdirector@cityofhancock.net	(906) 482-1480
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Taxes/Assessing

Laura Erhart, Assessor	assessor@cityofhancock.net	(906) 358-0504
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Houghton County Building Department*

Building Department	building@houghtoncounty.net	(906) 482-2260
Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector	inspector@houghtoncounty.net	(906) 482-2260

*The County Building Department is located at 401 E. Houghton Avenue, Courthouse 5th Floor.

Outside Agencies

Additional agencies may hold jurisdiction on some development issues within the city depending on the project. The following list includes commonly involved outside agencies.

Houghton County Road Commission

www.houghtoncountyroads.org	(906) 482-3600
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MISSDIG

www.missdig.org	811
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SEMCO Energy

www.semcoenergygas.com	1-800-624-2019
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Upper Peninsula Power Company

www.uppco.com	1-800-562-7680
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City Boards and Commissions

[Click here for more information about the City's boards and commissions.](#)

Most development applications are considered by the Planning Commission. Other boards and commissions may become involved with your application if appeals, variances, rezoning, or text amendments are involved. Staff can direct you to the appropriate boards for your specific case. All boards and commissions meet at City Hall Council Chambers in downtown Hancock.

City Council

Meets 3rd Wednesday, 6:00pm

Planning Commission

Meets 4th Monday, 6:00pm

Board of Zoning Appeals

Meets as needed

Downtown Development Authority

Meets 1st Monday, 6:00pm

Planning and Zoning

Before purchasing, developing, or altering property it is important that all city zoning codes and plans are referenced. It is also important to verify the zoning of the property. Planning is closely related to the Zoning Ordinance, which regulates the use and development of land within the city. Zoning controls the intensity and type of development allowed in specific areas of the city.

Master Plan

[City of Hancock Master Plan](#)

The Master Plan serves as the foundation for what the people of a community envision for their collective future. It establishes a framework for zoning and other public policies affect the community. The current Master Plan was adopted in 2018.

Zoning Ordinance/Map

[Zoning Ordinance](#); [Zoning Map](#)

The Zoning Ordinance establishes standards that apply both citywide and in individual zoning districts. **The Zoning Ordinance is the most critical factor in determining whether to undertake a development based on its location and characteristics.** You should review the ordinance and consult with city staff before initiating any change of use or construction project within the city. City staff can help determine what your property is zoned and what zoning requirements you may need to meet. Make sure to ask if a zoning district allows for the proposed use.

Section 2: Zoning Application/Permit

City of Hancock Zoning Application/Permit

The first step toward any type of development in the City starts with a Zoning Application/Permit. The application **must be completed and returned** to the City for review.

For a simple project not requiring a site plan review, and if the proposed project meets all requirements in the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Administrative Officer (City Manager) will approve the Zoning Permit and provide a copy to the applicant. The applicant can then obtain a building permit from the Houghton County Building Department.

For a more complex project that requires site development plan review, or if the proposed project does not meet all requirements of the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Officer will notify the applicant of the next steps of the process.

Below is a list of Approval Authorities for the permitting process:

	Approval Authorities			
	Zoning Administrative Officer	Planning Commission	City Council	Board of Zoning Appeals
Zoning Permit	Approves			
Site Development Plan		Approves		
Principal Uses		Approves		
Zoning Variances				Approves

Section 3: Site Development Plan Review

Zoning Ordinance: Section 1513. Site Development Plan Review (All Districts)

Site plan review provides the City with an opportunity to review the proposed use of a site in relation to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and City planning. Site plan review also provides the City with an opportunity to review the relationship of the plan to surrounding uses, accessibility, on and off-site pedestrian and vehicular circulation, off-street parking, public utilities, drainage, natural features, screening, and other relevant factors which may have an impact on the public health, safety, and general welfare.

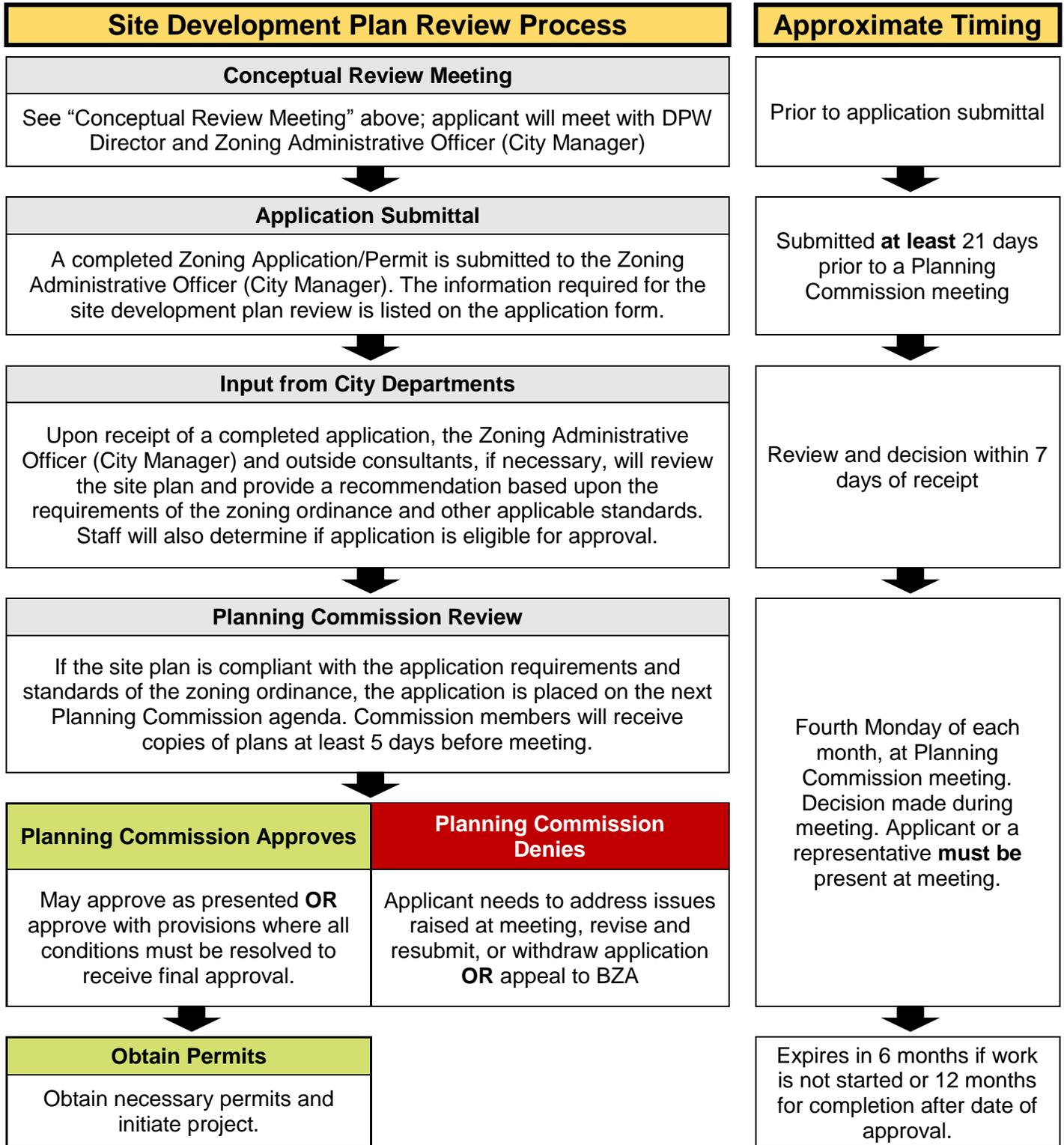
A site plan review is required for any of the following developments and activities:

1. Apartment building containing 2 or more dwelling units
2. 2 or more multiple-family buildings on a lot, parcel, or tract of land, or on a combination of lots under single ownership
3. Mobile home park
4. Subdivision including 4 or more dwelling units
5. Commercial, office, industrial, business, recreational, or institutional structures/uses that include any changes in exterior material, landscaping, parking, and new additions to buildings
6. All other uses that the Zoning Ordinance requires a site plan review and approval

Conceptual Review Meeting: Prior to submission of an application, applicants should request a conceptual review meeting with the Zoning Administrative Officer (City Manager) and DPW Director. This pre-application meeting includes preliminary review of a site plan and explanation of zoning requirements, and it addresses circumstances that would otherwise result in an application being postponed or not accepted. To set up a meeting, please call (906) 482-2720. Applicants should bring a completed Zoning Application/Permit and preliminary plans to meeting, which includes the following:

- Location of project
 - Include information on adjoining lots.
- Clear vision for the project
 - What type of improvement is occurring?
 - How will the project be completed?
- Sketch of the property where the project is located showing:
 - Accurate lot dimensions, including lot width, length, and area calculations of the subject property.
 - Parking areas accurately depicting location, size, and number (if applicable).
 - Location and dimensions of all structures, including height and setbacks from other structures and property lines and structures within 100 feet of property.

Time Limit of Approval and Work Completion: Site plan approval is valid for 12 months from the date of approval. Any request for an extension shall be made in writing to the Planning Commission. A permit will become invalid if the authorized work is not started within 6 months after permit approval.



Section 4: Principal Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions

Zoning Ordinance: Article III – Zoning Districts and Map

Zoning Ordinance: Section 1505. Uses not otherwise included within a specific use district.

The City of Hancock has 9 distinct zoning districts, 6 of which allow for special use conditions. Principle uses requiring a permit are listed under each zoning district in the Hancock Zoning Ordinance (Articles IV – XI). To be permitted, a permitted principal use may not adversely affect public health, safety, and/or general welfare. No principal use is permitted without a zoning permit issued in accordance with the zoning district.

Upon receiving an application from the Zoning Administrative Officer (City Manager), the Planning Commission will hold at least one noticed public hearing to accept public comment. Public notice of the hearing is posted on the city's website, at City Council Chambers, and distributed to neighbors within 300 feet of location under review. All applications for principal uses (and associated site plans) are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

Principal Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions Permitting Process

Approximate Timing

Conceptual Review Meeting
 Applicant meets with DPW Director and Zoning Administrative Officer (City Manager)

Prior to application submittal

Application Submittal
 Submit Zoning Permit Application to the City Offices. The information required for the Principal Uses is listed on the application. Staff will ensure that application is complete and has necessary supporting material. It then is given to the Planning Commission.

Submitted **at least** 21 days prior to a Planning Commission meeting

Input and Review by Planning Commission
 The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing, providing notice to those near the property. After the hearing, the commission, and other city staff consultants if necessary, will review the use permit and provide a recommendation based upon the requirements of the zoning ordinance and other applicable standards.

Planning Commission meeting: Fourth Monday of each month

Planning Commission Approves

Planning Commission Denies

May approve as presented **OR** approve with provisions where all conditions must be resolved to receive final approval.

Applicant needs to address issues raised at meeting, revise and resubmit, or withdraw application **OR** appeal to Circuit Court

City Council meeting: Third Wednesday of each month

Section 5: Zoning Variances

Zoning Ordinance: Article XVII – Board of Appeals. Section 1804: Jurisdiction

Under certain circumstances, physical characteristics of an individual parcel, such as shape and terrain, may significantly impede beneficial use by reducing the size of or buildable area within the allowable building footprint (between required setbacks and yards) of the zoning district. When such characteristics exist beyond the control of a property owner, a variance to these “dimensional” requirements may be requested by the owner and considered by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The BZA has the authority to grant variances only if it will not unreasonably diminish the use of adjacent properties or impair public health, safety, or welfare. The granting will also not adversely affect the purposes or objectives of the Zoning Plan of the city.

Zoning Variance Process

Conceptual Review Meeting
 Applicant meets with Zoning Administrative Officer (City Manager) and DPW Director

Variance is Determined Necessary
 Submit request for variance to City for review.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Consideration
 The BZA will hold a public hearing and review the request to determine if strict enforcement of zoning regulations would cause issues or hardship unique to the individual property defined in variance request.

BZA Grants Variance
 Follow steps for permitted use within applicable zoning district.

BZA Denies Variance
 Appeal to Circuit Court

Approximate Timing

Prior to application submittal

One week to 10 days

15 days public notice requirement

Expires in 6 months if work is not started or 12 months for completion after date of approval.

Section 6: Other Required Permits

Building, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Permits and Fees

[Houghton County Building Department](#)

All building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permits are issued by and available at the Houghton County Building Department and online. A zoning compliance certificate is required before a building permit can be applied for. A permit application must be filed with Houghton County before any construction begins. The [building permit fee schedule is online](#).

Right-of-Way Permits

A City of Hancock permit is required to construct, operate, maintain use, and/or remove a structure within a city street right-of-way. The need for a right-of-way permit is determined upon review of a zoning permit and/or during a review meeting for a site plan. The Department of Public Works may administratively approve a right-of-way permit. The application for a right-of-way permit is available at City Hall or on the [City website](#).

Sign Permits

[Zoning Ordinance: Section 1508. Signs](#)

Prior to any sign installation, a sign permit must be issued. The application for sign permit is available at City Hall. The Zoning Administrative Officer may administratively approve a sign permit.

Residential Rental Registrations

[Zoning Ordinance: Title IX: General Regulations. Chapter 99: Rental Registration](#)

[Rental Registration Form](#)

The City of Hancock licenses residential rental properties. These properties are required to be registered with the city prior to occupancy as a rental property. The application and fee amount will be posted on the City of Hancock website.

Section 7: Fees, Appeals, and Notification Procedures

Fees

There are no fees required for any of the required permits in the development process, except for water and sewer hook-up fees required for any new construction that needs a connection to the service.

Appeals

Applicants choosing to appeal a determination of the Zoning Officer or Planning Commission must first appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Determinations of the Board of Zoning Appeals may be appealed directly to Houghton County Circuit Court

Notification Procedures

The City of Hancock meets or exceeds the notification requirements of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (Michigan P.A. 110 of 2008, as amended).

The City of Hancock publishes notices in the Daily Mining Gazette (www.mininggazette.com) and mails notices to all owners and occupants of property located within 300 feet of the subject parcel(s). Notices are also posted on the City website (www.cityofhancock.com), posted at City Hall, and sent out electronically via the City of Hancock residents email listserv (subscribe at <http://www.cityofhancock.com/contact.php>). Notices are sent at least 15 days prior to hearing.

Community Engagement

The City of Hancock strives to include, consult, and inform residents when appropriate for community initiatives and large projects. Developers are encouraged to do the same. More information regarding community engagement is available in the city's Public Participation Plan, which is available upon request.

Section 8: Development and Financial Assistance Tools

An overview of development and financial assistance tools used by the City of Hancock is provided within this section. The intent of this section is to provide information to a potential investor to assist in making an initial decision to proceed with an investment. This list is intended to provide an example of some of the available tools and is not a complete list.

Business Development and Funding Incentives

[Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance \(KEDA\)](#): KEDA works directly with current and prospective businesses in the Houghton area (and the Keweenaw overall) with planning, securing financing, and accessing other resources such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). KEDA also works with communities to fulfill various business development program requirements.

[Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region \(WUPPDR\)](#): WUPPDR helps to facilitate access to community development funding sources such as the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) and various state agencies. WUPPDR also serves as a central point of contact for data and resources throughout the Western Upper Peninsula.

[Michigan Economic Development Corporation \(MEDC\)](#): MEDC offers many funding incentives geared toward gap financing for community and business development infrastructure and acquisition projects. In most cases business development funding is contingent on job creation. The Hancock City Manager and KEDA can all assist businesses in determining whether MEDC may be able to meet their needs, and if so, can connect businesses with the appropriate agency staff.

City Financing Districts

[Two financing districts](#) have been established to promote and finance certain types of commercial development in the city.

[City of Hancock Downtown Development Authority \(DDA\)](#): The DDA was created to assist with development and investment in Downtown Hancock.

[Local Development Finance Authority \(LDFA\)](#): The LDFA was created as part of the SmartZone designation authorized for the Cities of Hancock and Houghton. SmartZones were created to spur development of technology-based businesses in communities with technology-based universities.

The City Manager can assist with determining whether either of these districts may be relevant to a proposed project.