

2021

BENZIE COUNTY

GUIDE TO PERMITTING & ZONING



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Introduction

Delays and issues with the permitting process can be costly to homeowners, construction companies, and even local governments. Unfamiliarity with permitting and zoning processes can arise for those not familiar with the road map and nuances of the process for different municipalities and agencies. The creation of the Guide to Permitting and Zoning for Benzie County is the result of the collaboration of county and regional stakeholders to assist individuals and businesses with the permitting and zoning process necessary to move development forward.

The primary goals of the guide are to act as a reference and to educate the public from individuals to contractors to developers with the resources to access information for applying for permits or beginning a project within a certain County or municipality. The applicant or contractor should always contact the local Zoning Administrator, plan reviewer, or permitting agent of the location's local agencies prior to starting the project.

This Guide is not intended to be a "Do-It-Yourself" tool or as a definitive guide to municipalities' regulations and processes relating to zoning and permitting. Each project is different and utilizing the flowcharts within this guide does not guarantee that a permit or approval will be issued. Potential applicants and contractors are encouraged to seek the assistance of local professionals who have experience dealing with the requirements of permits and approvals (i.e. Zoning Administrator).

An understanding of the permitting and approval process will improve the efficiency of the process for both the private and public sectors, in return creating a more successful project from the onset. More introductory information on the planning and zoning process is available in the New Designs For Growth A Citizen's Guide to Planning & Zoning, which can be found at www.nwm.org/citizensguide-planning.

How to Use This Guide

This guide outlines contacts and process for permit approvals through local units of government and other entities for development projects in Benzie County. A reader should use the following process.

1. Enabling legislation and Exempt Status of Tribal Properties "in-trust" is outlined on page 4.
2. Review pages 5 & 6 to identify and understand the outlined "Areas of Interest". This information will assist with necessary information that impacts individual units of government's approval processes.
3. View the County map on page 7 to identify the location of the community you wish to gain information, contacts, resources, or process flow for permit approvals. Note the referenced page number for community information from the map.
4. Utilize the building permit and other permit approvals as required outside of zoning on page 8.
5. Zoning Information:
 - * If the community is under service contract with the Benzie County Planning Department please refer to the County Planning Department contact information on page 9, the process flow chart on page 9 and the individual community contact information and links on page 10.
 - * If the community provides zoning services through their own staff please refer to page 9 for the process flow chart and pages 11 and 12 for individual community contact information.

Enabling Legislation

[Michigan Planning Enabling Act 33 of 2008](#)

An act to codify the laws regarding and to provide for county, township, city, and village planning; to provide for the creation, organization, powers, and duties of local planning commissions; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and agencies; to provide for the regulation and subdivision of land; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

[Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110 of 2006](#)

An act to codify the laws regarding local units of government regulating the development and use of land; to provide for the adoption of zoning ordinances; to provide for the establishment in counties, townships, cities, and villages of zoning districts; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain officials; to provide for the assessment and collection of fees; to authorize the issuance of bonds and notes; to prescribe penalties and provide remedies; and to repeal acts and parts of acts.

Tribal (In-Trust) Exempt Properties

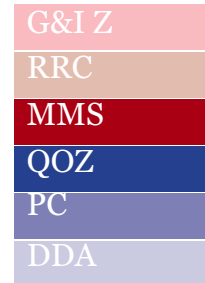
Any properties placed in tribal trust through the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is exempt from local zoning and building regulations, but are subject to tribal rules and regulations. For more information visit their [Website](#).



Areas of Interest

There are six (6) areas of interest that describe a communities' readiness for development which include public bodies that oversee a communities development process. These (6) areas of interest are:

- A Growth and Investment Zone
- A Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC)
- A Michigan Main Street community
- A Qualified Opportunity Zone
- Has a local Planning Commission
- Has a Downtown Development Authority or equivalent



The areas of interest are color-coded and organized into a bar chart for easy identification. A community that represents all six areas of interest will have an associated bar chart with all six representing colors. Shown here:



A Growth & Investment Zone

While many assets are needed for new growth and investment, there are five (5) essential criteria common to communities throughout the nation that support growth and investment potential. These five criteria were used in the selection of areas for additional analysis regarding growth and investment readiness, trends, and capabilities:

- Operational municipal water system
- Operational municipal sewer system
- Operational broadband service area - standard of 25 mbps download / 3 mbps upload
- Adopted master plan that recommends a defined higher density downtown core for development and investment
- Zoning ordinance that codifies higher density development in the downtown core
- Available governmental officials and staff to create effective growth- and investment-oriented policies and efficiently process requests and permits

A Redevelopment Ready Community

The Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) program is provided through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for communities across the state. Through the certification process, communities are empowered to build a strong foundation by establishing planning and process policies which retain and attract business investment and talent. Additionally, the program seeks to streamline the development approval process, by integrating transparency, predictability, and efficiency into community development practices. When encountering an RRC community, the following items shall be available:

- A updated Master Plan;
- An updated Zoning Ordinance;
- A comprehensive Guide to Development;
- A Public Participation Plan; and
- Strategic sites identified for development.

A Michigan Main Street Community

Michigan Main Street (MMS) began in 2003 and is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. As a Main Street America™ coordinating program, MMS is affiliated with the National Main Street Center, which helps to lead a powerful, grassroots network committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. The Main Street program operates under the following four points:

- Economic Vitality
- Design
- Organization
- Promotion

A Qualified Opportunity Zone

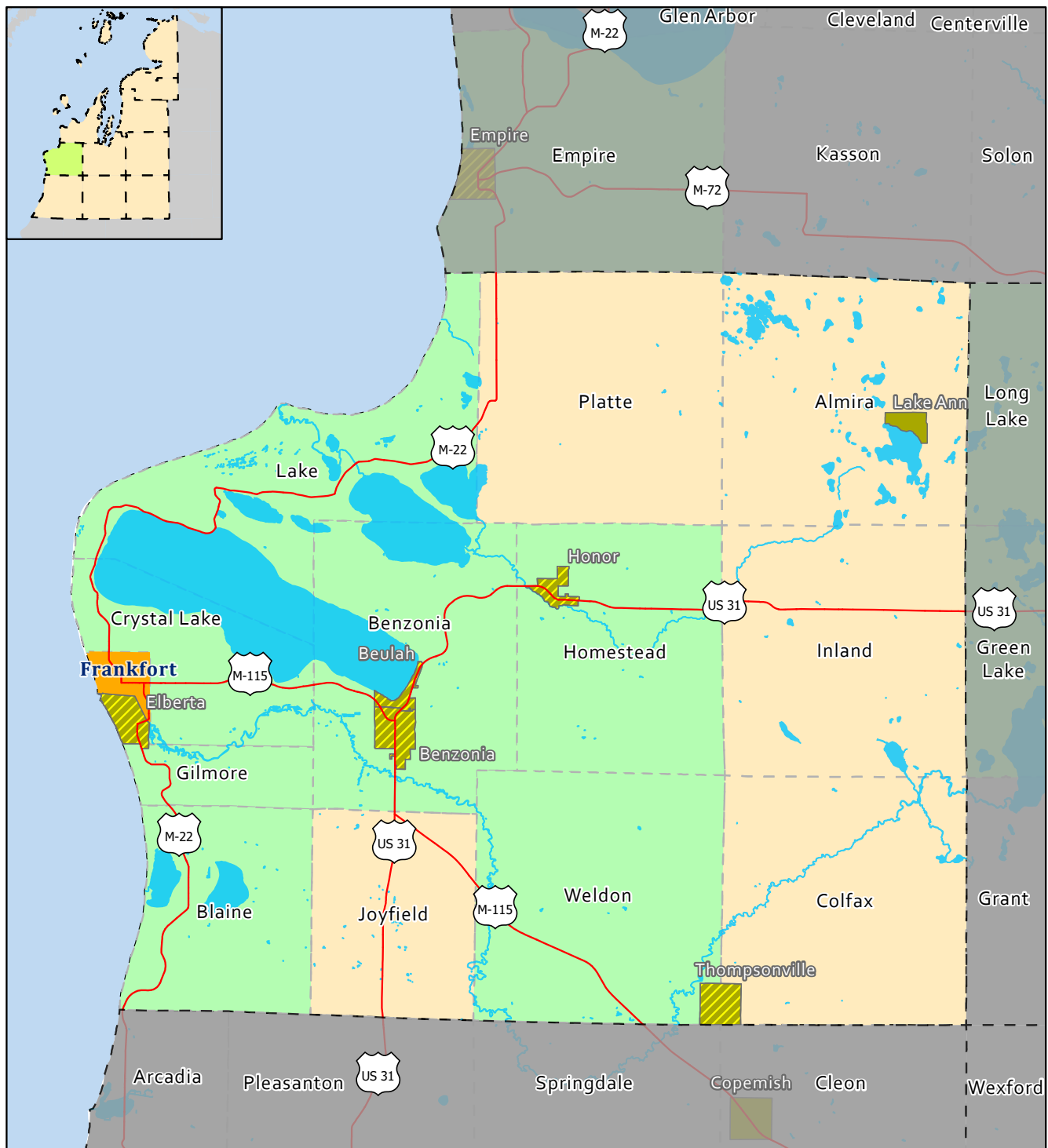
Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to stimulate economic development and job creation by incentivizing long term investments in low-income neighborhoods. Opportunity Zones are defined by the Economic Development Administration as an economically-distressed Census tract where private investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for capital gain tax incentives. Communities located in designated Opportunity Zone Census tracts will be identified.

Local Planning Commission

The group of appointed community residents who make up the Planning Commission serve as the sounding board for planning and development projects within the community. Each local government in Michigan has the authority to create a Planning Commission, but not all have one. Many communities in Michigan rely on County planning services. However, all local municipalities with a local planning department are listed in this guide. While the community may or may not have a dedicated planning staff member, the local Planning Commission will still be called upon to provide input on development projects. Where a community has enacted a local zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission will offer recommendations to the relevant City Council, Village Council, or Township Board. A community who is under county-wide zoning will offer recommendations to the County Planning Commission.

Local Downtown Development Authority

Part 2 of Act 57 of 2018: Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act describes the authority, purpose, and powers of local Downtown Development Authorities. The State legislation can be found [here](#). The Downtown Development Authority Board is made up of appointed officials charged with creating a development plan for a defined tax increment financing district. The Authority is a stakeholder body and instrumental to the growth and development of the district.



Benzie County & Local Units of Government

Legend

Highways	G&I Areas Villages	All Villages
Hydrology	G&I Areas Cities	Benzie County
Great Lakes	Surrounding G&I Twps.	Other NW MI Counties
Qualified Opportunity Zone	All Townships	Counties Outside Region

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Map produced by Networks Northwest
Community Development 4/29/2021

Building Permitting & Other Approvals Outside of Zoning

Building Permitting & Inspections

Benzie County Building Inspections

Benzie County Building Safety and Code Enforcement

Building Inspectors: Jim Zimmerman

Primary Office

Hours: Monday thru Friday 8AM – 12PM / 1PM - 5PM

448 Court Place

Beulah, MI 49617

Email: building@benzieco.net Phone: (231) 882-9673 Fax: (231) 882-0033

[Website](#)

Other Permit Approvals as Required

- **Local Fire Department Review**
Depending on the project use, location, and scale, a review by the local fire department may be required for safety, access, and siting issues. See local jurisdiction contact information.
- **County Soil Erosion Officer**
Before contracting for, allowing, or engaging in an earth change in Antrim County, a Landowner or Designated Agent shall obtain an earth change permit in the landowner's name from Antrim County Conservation District if the earth change:
 1. Will disturb one or more acres of land, or
 2. Will be located within 500 feet of the ordinary high water mark of waters of the State, or
 3. Will result or contribute to soil erosion or the accumulation of sedimentation in adjacent properties or waters of the State.

Contact Antrim County Conservation District with questions, Heidi Shaffer, Soil Erosion Officer, (231) 533-8363. A Soil Erosion Permit Application is found [here](#).

- **Road Jurisdiction - Either**

Benzie County Road Commission

Office:

11318 Main Street (US 31)

P.O. Box 68

Honor, MI 49640

Phone: (231) 325-3051

Fax: (231) 325-2767

Email: info@benzieroad.org

[Website](#)

Or

Michigan Department of Transportation

Traverse City Transportation Service Center

2084 US 31 South, Suite B

Traverse City, MI 49685

Phone: (231) 941-1986

Fax: (231) 941-1512

Email: lakej1@michigan.gov

[Website](#)

- **District #10 Health Department**
Businesses may reach out to the Health Department regarding food safety/licensing, water safety, air quality, other use type inspections, and employee health and wellness. Here is a link to their [website](#).
- **Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy**
Projects with the potential to impact air and water quality require EGLE-issued permits. Additionally, development near or in state protected wetlands, lakes, or streams may require EGLE-issued permits. View the EGLE [website](#) for more information. List all applicable development situations- critical dunes, high-risk erosion. Designated wetlands on-line viewer [here](#).

Zoning & Planning Contact Information for Benzie County Communities

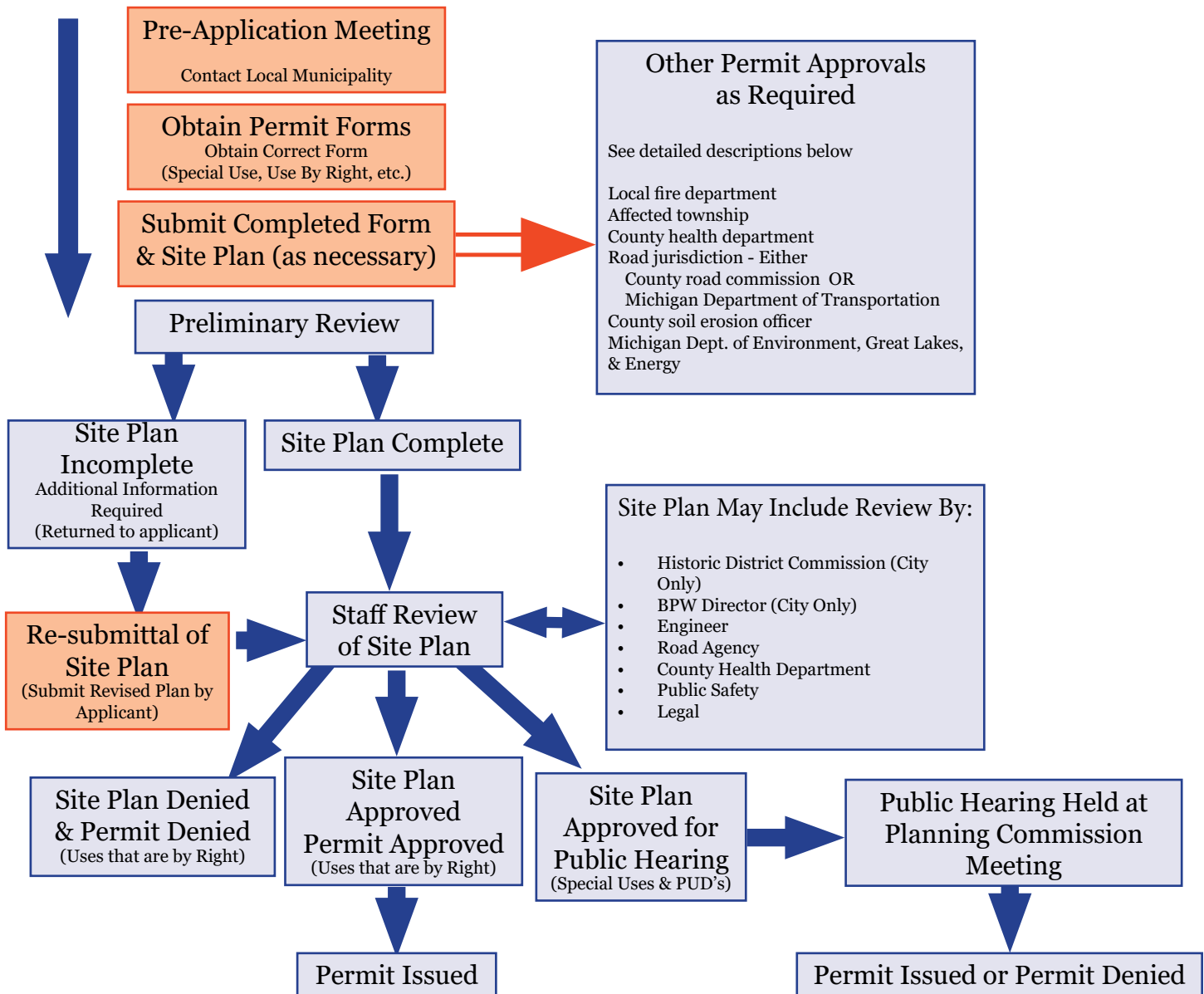
Benzie County does not have a county-wide zoning ordinance, all townships, villages and cities administer zoning,

Benzie County County Administrator Department

Benzie County County Administrator
448 Court Place
Beulah, MI 49617
Phone: (231) 882-0558
Email: mdeisch@benzieco.net
[Website](#)

- Mitch Deisch, County Administrator
- Sherry Taylor, Assistant

Typical Permit Application & Site Plan Review/Approval Flow Chart (May vary slightly by community)



Communities With Zoning

City of Frankfort

412 Main Street
Frankfort, MI 49635
PH: 231-352-7117
Clerk Email: kkidder@cofrankfort.net

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Josh Mills
Phone: 231-651-9117
Email:

G&I Z

RRC

QOZ

PC

DDA

Village of Honor

10922 Platte Street
Honor, MI 49640
PH: 231-325-8432
Clerk Email: clerk@villageofhonor.org

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance - Not Available Online](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms - Not Available Online](#)

Zoning Administrator: Open
Phone: 231-325-8432
Email:

G&I Z

RRC

PC

Village of Benzonia

1276 Michigan Avenue
Benzonia, MI 49616
PH: 231-882-9981
Clerk Email: villagebenzoniaweb@gmail.com

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Sara Kirk
Phone: 231-882-9981
Email:

G&I Z

RRC

PC

Village of Lake Ann

19639 Maple Street
Lake Ann, MI 49650
PH: 231-275-5267
Clerk Email: lakeannclerk@gmail.com

[Website](#)
[Master Plan - Not Online](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Jim Strumer
Phone: 231-620-0600
Email:

PC

Village of Beulah

7228 Commercial Avenue
Beulah, MI 49617
PH: 231-882-4451
Clerk Email: clerk@villageofbeulah.net

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Coury Carland
Phone: 989-621-4832
Email:

G&I Z

PC

Village of Thompsonville

14714 Lincoln Avenue
Thompsonville, MI 49683
PH: 231-378-2521
Clerk Email: Not Available online

No Website
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Patrick Workman
Phone: 231-378-4265
Email:

G&I Z

PC

Village of Elberta

401 First Street
Elberta, MI 49628
PH: 231-352-7201
Clerk Email: clerk@villageofelberta.com

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Josh Mills
Phone: 231-651-9117
Email:

G&I Z

PC

Almira Township

7276 Ole White Drive
Lake Ann, MI 49650
PH: 231-275-5862
Clerk Email: clerk@almiratownship.org

[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Roger Williams
Phone: 231-275-5862
Email:

PC

Communities With Zoning

Benzonia Township

1020 Michigan Avenue (US 31)
Benzonia, MI 49616
PH: 231-882-4411
Clerk Email: clerk@benzoniatownship.org
Website
Master Plan
Zoning Ordinance
Land Use/Zoning Forms

Zoning Administrator: Jason Barnard
Phone: 231-882-4411
Email:

PC

Gilmore Township

401 First Street
Elberta, MI 49628
PH: 231-325-5047
Clerk Email: Not Online
No Website
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
Land Use/Zoning Forms

Zoning Administrator: Josh Mills
Phone: 231-651-9117
Email:

PC

Blaine Township

4760 Herring Grove Road
Arcadia, MI 49613
PH: 231-383-0353
Clerk Email: Not Online
No Website
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
Land Use/Zoning Forms - Not Available Online

Zoning Administrator: Josh Mills
Phone: 231-651-9117
Email:

PC

Homestead Township

11508 Honor Highway (US-31)
Honor, MI 49640
PH: 231-325-6772
Clerk Email: clerk@homesteadtwp.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Rosemary Naulty
Phone: 231-383-1696
Email:

PC

Colfax Township

7607 Michigan Avenue
Thompsonville, MI 49683
PH: 231-378-2144
Clerk Email: colfaxbenzieclerk@gmail.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Shelley Greene
Phone: 231-378-2334
Email:

PC

Inland Township

19668 Honor Highway
Interlochen, MI 49643
PH: 231-275-6568
Clerk Email: clerk@inlandtownship.org
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Sara Kopriva
Phone: 231-383-1229
Email:

PC

Crystal Lake Township

1651 Frankfort Highway
Frankfort, MI 49635
PH: 231-352-9791
Clerk Email: clerk.clt@gmail.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Tony Kucera
Phone: 231-352-9791
Email:

PC

Joyfield Township

5490 Benzie Highway
Benzonia, MI 49616
PH: 231-882-0133
Clerk Email: Not online
[No Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Betsy Evans
Phone: 231-882-0133
Email:

PC

Communities With Zoning

Lake Township

5153 Scenic Highway (M-22)
Honor, MI 49640
PH: 231-325-5202
Clerk Email: clerk@laketwp.org
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Bob Blank
Phone: 231-325-5202
Email:

PC

Platte Township

6821 Indian Hill Road
Honor, MI 49640
PH: 231-325-5202
Clerk Email: Not Online
No Website
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
Land Use/Zoning Forms - Not Available Online

Zoning Administrator: Dave Neiger
Phone: 231-882-7037
Email:

PC

Weldon Township

14731 Thompson Avenue
Thompsonville, MI 49683
PH: 231-378-2477
Clerk Email: weldonclerk@acegroup.cc
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Craig Meredith
Phone: 231-970-9361
Email:

PC