

2021

GRAND TRAVERSE 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 Grand Traverse 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 Grand Traverse 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 Grand Traverse 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

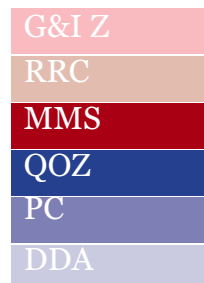
Any properties placed in tribal trust through the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians is exempt from local zoning and building regulations, but are subject to tribal rules and regulations. For more information visit their [Website](#).



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

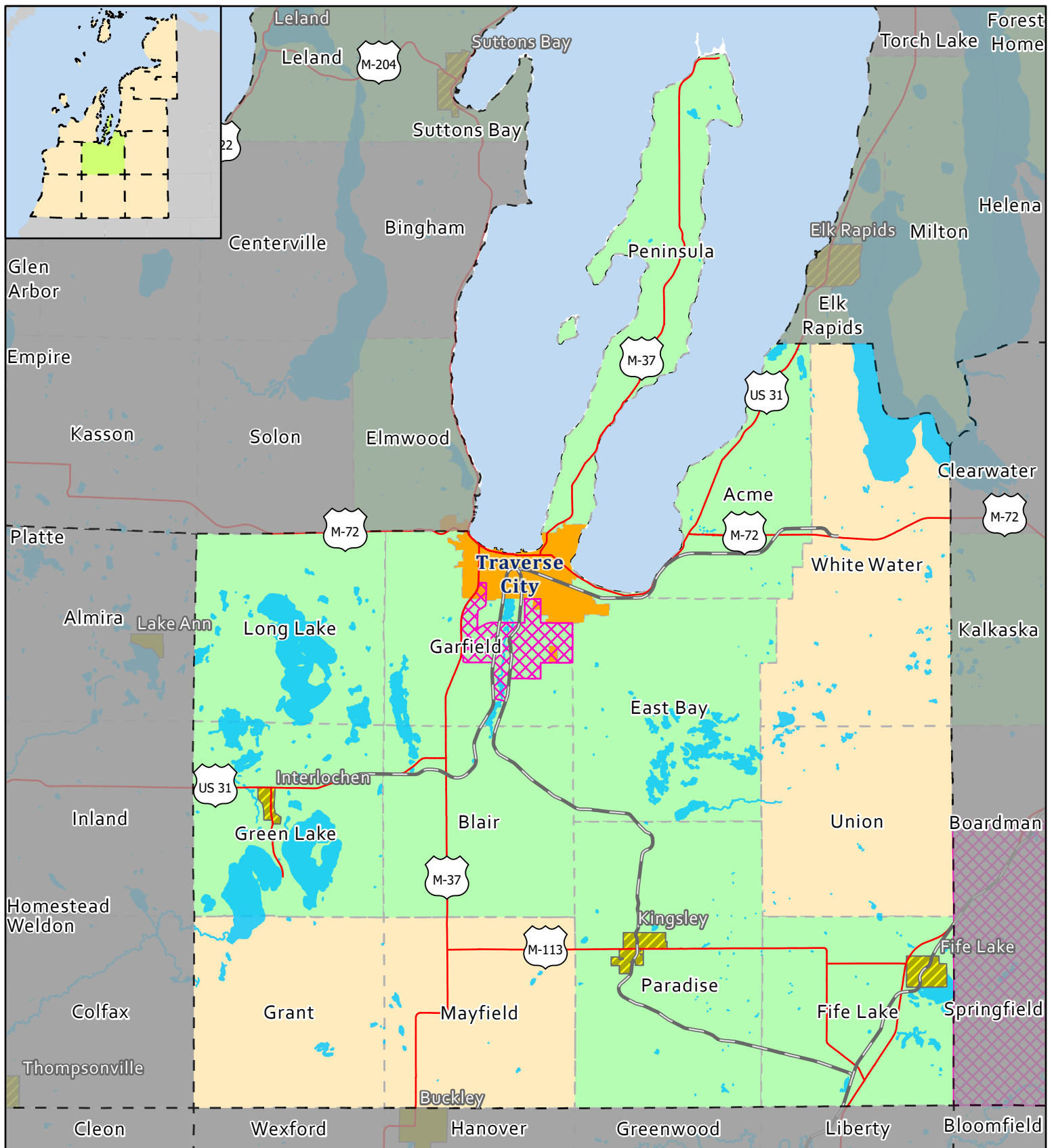
Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to stimulate economic development and job creation by incentivizing long term investments in low-income neighborhoods. Opportunity Zones are defined by the Economic Development Administration as an economically-distressed Census tract 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.



Grand Traverse County & Local Units of Government

Legend

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



0 1.5 3 6 Miles

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

Building Permitting & Other Approvals Outside of Zoning

Building Permitting & Inspections

Grand Traverse County Building Inspections (except Garfield Township)

Grand Traverse County Construction Code Department

Building Inspector: Vince MacDonald and Ron Wasson

Primary Office

Hours: Monday thru Friday 8AM – 4PM, closed from 12PM - 1PM

2650 LaFranier Road

Traverse City, MI 49686

Email: codes@gtcountymi.gov Phone: (231) 995-6044

[Website](#)

Garfield Township Building Inspections

Garfield Township Hall

3848 Veterans Drive

Traverse City, MI 49684

231-941-1620

Email: cstudzinski@garfield-twp.com

[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 Grand Traverse County, a Landowner or Designated Agent shall obtain an earth change permit in the landowner's name from Grand Traverse County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program 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 Grand Traverse County Environmental Health Department with questions at eh@gtcountymi.gov or 231-995-6051. A Soil Erosion Permit Application is found [here](#).

- **Road Jurisdiction - Either**
Grand Traverse County Road Commission
Office:

1881 LaFranier Road

Traverse City, MI 49686

Phone: (231) 922-4848

Email: gtrc@gtrc.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) 941-3397

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 Grand Traverse County Communities

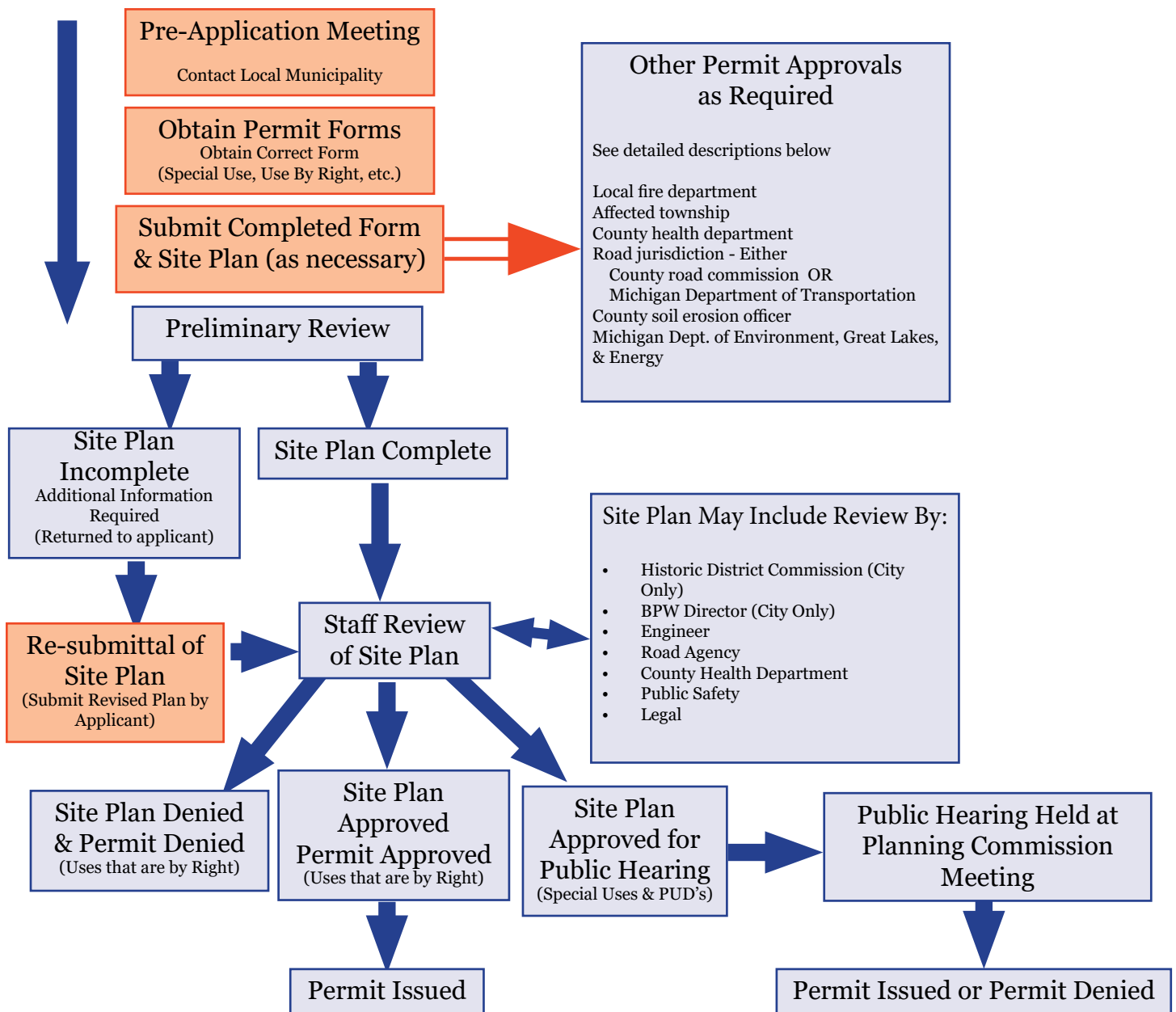
While there is no County Zoning in Grand Traverse County, all municipalities in Grand Traverse County have their own Zoning Ordinances.

Grand Traverse County Administration Department Contact Information

Grand Traverse County Administration Dept.
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: 231-922-4780
Email: admin@gtcountymi.gov
[Website](#)

Nate Alger, County Administrator
Chris Forsyth, Deputy County Administrator
Sarah Adams, Office Manager
Lisa Emery, Administrative Assistant
Jordan Van Loo, Marketing & Communications Specialist

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



Communities Under Own Zoning

City of Traverse City

400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49686
PH: 231-922-4700
Clerk Email: bmarente@traversecitymi.gov
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Dave Weston
Phone: 231-922-4464
Email: dweston@traversecitymi.gov

G&I Z

RRC

QOZ

PC

DDA

Blair Township

2121 County Road 633
Grawn, MI 49637
PH: 231-276-9263
Clerk Email: clerk@blairtownship.org
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Vacant
Phone: 231-276-9263
Email: zoning@blairtownship.org

PC

Village of Fife Lake

616 Bates Road
Fife Lake, MI 49633
PH: 231-8794291
Clerk Email: villageoffifelake@gmail.com
[Website](#)
Master Plan Not Online
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Ron Broening
Phone: 231-735-3805
Email: villageoffifelake@gmail.com

G&I Z

PC

DDA

East Bay Township

1965 North Three Mile Road
Traverse City, MI 49696
PH: 231-947-8647
Clerk Email: scourtade@eastbaytwp.org
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Leslie Couturier
Phone: 231-947-8681
Email: lcouturier@eastbaytwp.org

PC

RRC

Village of Kingsley

207 South Brownson Avenue
Kingsley, MI 49649
PH: 231-263-7778
Clerk Email: kvclerk@villageofkingsley.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Roger Williams
Phone: 231-357-5116
Email: Not Available

G&I Z

PC

DDA

Fife Lake Township

134 Morgan Street
Fife Lake, MI 49633
PH: 231-879-3963
Clerk Email: fltclerk@gmail.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Bob Hall
Phone: 231-879-3963
Email: fifelakezoning@gmail.com

PC

Acme Township

6042 Acme Road
Williamsburg, MI 49690
PH: 231-938-1350
Clerk Email: cdye@acmetownship.org
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Lindsey Wolf
Phone: 231-938-1350
Email: zoning@acmetownship.org

PC

Garfield Township

3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
PH: 231-941-1620
Clerk Email: lmcmamus@garfield-twp.com
[Website](#)
[Master Plan](#)
[Zoning Ordinance](#)
[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Micheal Green
Phone: 231-941-1620
Email: mgreen@garfield-twp.com

PC

RRC

QOZ

Communities Under Own Zoning

Grant Township

8986 Davis Road
Buckley, MI 49620
PH: 231-269-2102
Clerk Email: moriarty1984@gmail.com

[Website](#)

Master Plan- Not available online

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Steve Vandeford
Phone: 231-276-3157
Email: Not Available

PC

Paradise Township

2300 East M-113
Kingsley, MI 49649
PH: 231-263-4251
Clerk Email: clerk@paradisetwp.org

[Website](#)

[Master Plan](#)

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Roger Williams
Phone: 231-263-5251
Email: zoning@paradisetwp.org

PC

Green Lake Township

9394 10th Street
Interlochen, MI 49643
PH: 231-276-9329
Clerk Email: jkramer@greenlaketownship.org

[Website](#)

[Master Plan](#)

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Alycia Reiten
Phone: 231-276-9329
Email: zoning@greenlaketownship.org

PC

Peninsula Township

13235 Center Road
Traverse City, MI 49696
PH: 231-223-7117
Clerk Email: clerk@peninsulatownship.com

[Website](#)

Master Plan-Not available online

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Christina Deeren
Phone: 231-223-7318
Email: zoning@peninsulatownship.com

PC

Long Lake Township

8870 North Long Lake Road
Traverse City, MI 49685
PH: 231-946-2249
Clerk Email: Clerk@LongLakeTownship.com

[Website](#)

[Master Plan](#)

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Kim Smith
Phone: 231-946-2249
Email: Zoning@LongLakeTownship.com

PC

Union Township

5020 Fife Lake Road
Fife Lake, MI 49633
PH: 231-369-3261
Clerk Email: cstonetreasurer@acegroup.cc

[Website](#)

Master Plan-Not available online

Zoning Ordinance-Not available online

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Mary Erickson
Phone: 231-564-2201
Email: manne.erickson@gmail.com

PC

Mayfield Township

2991 West Center Road
Kingsley, MI 49649
PH: 231-263-4599
Clerk Email: mayfieldclerk2991@gmail.com

[Website](#)

Master Plan-Not available online

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Land Use/Zoning Forms](#)

Zoning Administrator: Tim Lueck
Phone: 231-357-4830
Email: tlueck24@gmail.com

PC