

Chapter 5 ZONING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter opens with a general description of a zoning plan. It is followed by a brief explanation of the relationship between this Comprehensive Development Plan and the Zoning Ordinance of DeWitt Township. The intent and key dimensional standards of the zoning districts are briefly described.

WHAT IS A ZONING PLAN?

A “zoning plan” is another term for a “zone plan” which is used in the Michigan planning and zoning enabling acts. Section 1(a) of the Township Planning Act, PA 168 of 1959, as amended, requires that the plan prepared under that act serve as the basis for the zoning plan. Section 7 of the Township Zoning Act, PA 184 of 1943, as amended, requires a zoning plan be prepared as the basis for the zoning ordinance. The zoning plan identifies the zoning districts and their purposes. It must be based on an inventory of conditions pertinent to zoning in the township and the purposes for which zoning may be adopted (as described in Section 3 of the Township Zoning Act). This Plan fulfills that purpose for the Township.

RELATIONSHIP TO COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Comprehensive Development Plan sets forth the vision, goals and policies for growth and development in DeWitt Township for approximately the next twenty years. It includes a specific strategy for managing growth and change in land uses and infrastructure in the area over this period, and will be periodically reviewed and updated at least once each five years. This chapter presenting the Zoning Plan, along with the rest of the relevant parts of this Comprehensive Development Plan, is intended to guide the implementation of and future changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Existing permitted uses of land, including density, setbacks and other related standards are as established in the Zoning Ordinance.

As a general policy, it is recommended that the rezoning of any land in support of the Future Land Use Map be deferred until specific applications are made. This will allow maximum opportunity to ensure that appropriate levels of public utilities are available to support the development. Similarly, no rezoning should be made that is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map and/or text of this Plan, unless this Plan is first amended after careful study to establish the appropriateness of the change. As a general rule, this means if the proposed use is dense or intense enough to require public sewer and/or water and both are not present at the site, a rezoning request to permit the use should be denied, until the necessary public utilities are available to the site.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESIGNATIONS COMPARED TO ZONING DISTRICTS

Following is Table 5-1, a comparison of the designations on Map 4-1, the Future Land Use Map and comparable districts in the Township Zoning Ordinance.

Table 5-1
Comparison of Map Designations on Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map

Future Land Use Map Designation	Zoning District
Environmental Protection and Conservation	
Conservancy	No comparable district, but there are separate regulations over floodplains and wetlands
Agricultural Land Uses	Agricultural District
AP – Agricultural Preservation	A District: Agricultural
A – Agricultural	A District: Agricultural
Residential Land Uses	Residential Districts
SF-L - Low Density Single Family Residential	R1 and R2 Districts Residential Single Family
SF-M – Medium Density Single Family Residential	R3 District: Residential Single Family R4 District: Residential Single Family and Two Family
SF-H - High Density Single Family Residential	R5 District: Residential Single and Two Family R6 District: Residential Single Family
MFR - Multiple Family Residential	M-1 through M-4 Districts: Multiple Family Residential
MHP - Manufactured Home Park	MHP District: Mobile Home Park Development
Commercial Land Uses	Commercial Districts
NC - Neighborhood Oriented Commercial	BL - Business, Local
CC - Community Oriented Commercial	BC - Business, Community and BSC – Business Shopping Center
HC - Highway Oriented Commercial	BC – Business, Community
ACOM - Airport Commercial	BC – Business, Community I-P – Industrial Park
Office Land Uses	Office Districts
O - Office	PO – Professional Office OP – Office Park POD – Planned Office Development
Industrial Land Uses	Industrial Districts
I-L - Light Industrial	IL - Industrial, Light
I-H - Heavy Industrial	IH - Industrial, Heavy
I-P - Industrial Park	I-P - Industrial Park
Institutional Land Uses	
INS - Institutional	Includes properties in any district that are owned by public or nonprofit institutions

ZONING DISTRICTS

Following are the general purposes and characteristics of zoning within DeWitt Township. The specific purposes of individual zoning districts and permitted land uses are listed in the specific district provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. The Section references indicate where detailed ordinance language for each district is located within the Zoning Ordinance.

Agriculture District

One zone is an agriculture district:

Section 5.4 A District: Agricultural

This district is intended to preserve, enhance and stabilize existing areas within the Township which are presently used for general farming and areas which, because of their soil characteristics and flora, should be conserved for agricultural purposes. In addition, premature urban development within rural areas can result in increased public costs because of the necessity of serving scattered urban development with water, sewer, schools, roadways, and other public services. It is, therefore, the intent of this district to preserve essential rural land from urban development and to safeguard these lands and their essential economic value as agricultural lands. The Township might consider creating a second agricultural district that focuses on preservation of the agricultural lands in the northeast quadrant of the Township per the recommendations in the last chapter, and retain this agricultural district for other agricultural lands in the Township.

Photo 5-1
Agricultural District



Photograph by Bruce Keilen

Residential Districts

The following zoning districts are residential districts:

Section 5.5	R1 District: Residential Single Family
Section 5.5A	R2 District: Residential Single Family
Section 5.6	R3 District: Residential Single Family
Section 5.6A	R4 District: Residential Single and Two-Family

Section 5.7
Section 5.7A
Section 5.8
Section 5.9
Section 5.10
Section 5.10A
Section 5.11

R5 District: Residential Single and Two-Family
R6 District: Residential Single Family
M-1 District: Multiple Residential
M-2 District: Multiple Residential
M-3 District: Multiple Residential
M-4 District: Multiple Residential
MHP District: Mobile Home Park Development

Photo 5-2
Residential District



Photograph by Stephen Gobbo

The principal purpose of these districts is to provide for a range of residential dwelling types at various densities within individual zones tailored for specific uses. The “Residential Single Family” districts are categorized through density, with “R1” being the least dense and “R6” as having the greatest amount of density. The “R1” district is established to encourage the development, on fairly large lots, of residential properties of semi-rural character within areas of the Township which presently have public water and sewerage services or will receive such services shortly. The “R2”-“R6” districts establish higher density through building on smaller lots and include areas within the Township which presently have or will have within the reasonable future, public water and sewer facilities.

The “Multiple Residential” districts follow the same pattern in regards to density, with “M-1” having the least amount of density and “M-4” as having the greatest. These districts are provided to accommodate a mixture of two-family and multiple family dwellings on specified lands. These districts can also serve as transitions between low and high density residential areas. The allowable density within the “Multiple Residential” districts, range from 2 units per net acre to 24 units per net acre.

The “MHP” district is intended to provide for the development of Mobile Home Parks and Planned Mobile Home Park developments in areas of the Township where public utilities are available and to insure that the residents of such communities shall be provided with certain minimum standards for quality of their living environments.

Office Districts

The following zoning districts are office districts:

- Section 5.12 PO District: Professional Office Services
- Section 5.12A O-P District: Office Park
- Section 5.12B POD District: Planned Office Development

The “PO” District is intended to provide for quiet, non-retail types of business and public health uses that do not generate constant high volume traffic from the general public. The “O-P” District is intended to provide for the development of a variety of office uses of a business and professional nature as well as to provide for the development of certain related activities in proximity to office uses. The regulations contained in the “O-P” section are designed to ensure a harmonious relationship between the Office Park District and the abutting land uses and to promote efficient functioning for uses located within the Office Park District. A new “POD” District has been created to address siting issues with the new Auto Owners campus and similar office development that may be attracted to the Township

Commercial Districts

The following zoning districts are commercial districts:

- Section 5.13 BL District: Business, Local
- Section 5.14 BC District: Business, Community
- Section 5.15 BSC District: Business, Shopping Center

The general purpose of these districts is to provide retail shopping opportunities for Township residents and those living within the region. The “BL” district is designed to provide convenient day-to-day retail and personal services to persons living in local adjacent residential areas with a minimum impact upon that surrounding residential development. This district accommodates a major portion of the existing strip commercial development, but it is the intent of this district that future local business development be placed in planned centers rather than small scattered local business zones. The “BC” district is designed to facilitate the needs of a larger consumer population than is served by the local business districts; and typically, accommodates those retail and business establishments that serve the community at large rather than localize residential areas as would be served by local business activity. In regard to the “BSC” district, the intention is to provide for and encourage the development of grouped retail sales and service establishments at logical and sound locations. Typically, such planned centers are located on a single unified site and are designed and constructed as an integrated unit for shopping and other business activity.

Industrial Districts

The following zoning districts are industrial districts:

- Section 5.16 IL District: Industrial, Light
- Section 5.17 IH District: Industrial, Heavy
- Section 5.17A I-P District: Industrial Park

The “IL” district is established primarily to accommodate wholesale, warehouse, and industrial activities which, if properly buffered, can function with a minimum of undesirable and detrimental effects on surrounding districts. It is also intended to accommodate certain limited commercial uses that offer convenience to persons employed in the industrial district as well as those commercial uses that have characteristics which are recognized as being detrimental to other retail activities and

residential uses. The “IH” district is intended to encourage and facilitate the development of industrial enterprises in a setting conducive to public health; economic stability and growth; and to protect from blight, deterioration and incompatible non industrial encroachment. It is the intent of this district to allow for heavier industrial enterprises that generally require larger areas, greater outside storage and inherently produce greater levels of noise, odor, dust and smoke. The “I-P” district is designated to accommodate a variety of light industrial, applied technology, research and related office uses within a subdivision setting. The use of this specialized district is intended to provide a campus environment through the coordinated application of development standards such as building height, gross area coverage, signage, landscaping and other unifying elements.

SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Standards related to bulk, height, density, and building setbacks for each of the zoning districts are listed in the aforementioned sections of the Zoning Ordinance and/or Section 5.18 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance also includes chapters that address signs, landscaping, parking, and the like for developments in the respective districts.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO ZONING ORDINANCE

Following is a list of changes that could be made to the Township Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the policies in this Plan.

- Add a new planned unit development office district (POD).
- Add a new PUD for mixed use residential and open space.
- Add lock-in driveway’s regulations along undeveloped land throughout Township through an approved Access Management Plan.
- Establish right-of-way preservation standards in the zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Increase zoning setbacks along arterials and collectors based on future ROW.
- Add site plan review standards that will allow future transit stops to be provided for uses along the US-27BR corridor.
- Add interconnected bicycle and pedestrian circulation system (non-motorized transportation) standards to the site plan review standards of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Review veterinarian hospital and kennel regulations.
- Review standards for auto-oriented businesses such as drive-through oil changes.
- Review fence regulations.
- Review current regulations regarding in-home child care in residential districts.
- Determine whether reductions are appropriate for rear yard setbacks in residential districts.
- Examine the minimum number of parking spaces required for the various uses in the Township and determine whether any adjustments, deletions, or additions are necessary.
- Consider adding a comprehensive set of lightning standards to the Zoning Ordinance.
- Review the landscaping standards to assure that the Township’s rural character will be adequately protected.

- Conduct a review of the uses allowed in the various districts to assure that modern uses are adequately addressed.
- Review regulations and update as needed to assure that the private sector can provide necessary services to an aging population, including housing and health care.