

# Chassell Township Development Guide



The template for this guide was borrowed from one prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region Commission (WUPPDR) for the City of Hancock in concert with with 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

# Introduction to the Guide to Development

Chassell Township takes a variety of approaches to streamline new development, redevelopment, and renovation of properties in the township. This is accomplished through intentional township 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 township's internal processes. By following this guide, property owners and developers can work as closely as possible in synergy with township 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 township. 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 township, 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



**Chassell Township**  
41950 Willson Memorial Drive  
Chassell, MI 49916

**Phone:** (906) 523-4000

**Office Hours:** M-F 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

<https://chasselltownship.org>

## 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 township the Zoning Administrator, Tim Palosaari, at (906) 370-2960 or [chassellza@up.net](mailto:chassellza@up.net).

### Key Staff

#### Township Office

Lynn Gierke, Township Supervisor	<a href="mailto:chasselltownshipsupervisor@gmail.com">chasselltownshipsupervisor@gmail.com</a>	(906) 523-4000
Andrea Aho, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:chasselltownshiptreasurer@gmail.com">chasselltownshiptreasurer@gmail.com</a>	(906) 523-4000
Bethany Baetsen, Clerk	<a href="mailto:chasselltownshipclerk@gmail.com">chasselltownshipclerk@gmail.com</a>	(906) 523-4000

#### Public Works

Craig Austin, Director	<a href="mailto:chasdpw@up.net">chasdpw@up.net</a>	(906) 370-5827
------------------------	--	----------------

#### Taxes/Assessing

Mark Maki, Assessor	<a href="mailto:jojozimmy@aol.com">jojozimmy@aol.com</a>	(906) 446-3335
---------------------	--	----------------

#### Houghton County Building Department\*

Building Department	<a href="mailto:building@houghtoncounty.net">building@houghtoncounty.net</a>	(906) 482-2260
Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector	<a href="mailto:inspector@houghtoncounty.net">inspector@houghtoncounty.net</a>	(906) 482-2260

\*The County Building Department is located at 401 E. Houghton Avenue, Courthouse 5<sup>th</sup> Floor.

### Outside Agencies

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

#### Houghton County Road Commission

<a href="http://www.houghtoncountyroads.org">www.houghtoncountyroads.org</a>	(906) 482-3600
--	----------------

#### MISSDIG

<a href="http://www.missdig.org">www.missdig.org</a>	811
--	-----

#### SEMCO Energy

<a href="http://www.semcoenergygas.com">www.semcoenergygas.com</a>	1-800-624-2019
--	----------------

#### Upper Peninsula Power Company

<a href="http://www.upppo.com">www.upppo.com</a>	1-800-562-7680
--	----------------

## Township Boards and Commissions

Click here for more information on the township board: <https://chasselltownship.org/board-minutes/> For more information on the planning commission: <https://chasselltownship.org/planning-commission/> Most development applications are considered by the Planning Commission. Other boards may become involved with your application if appeals, variances, rezoning, or text amendments are involved. Meetings occur in the Chassell Fire Hall.

### Township Board

Meets 2nd Wednesday, 6:00pm

### Planning Commission

Meets the Thursday before the Township Board meeting, 7:00pm

### Board of Zoning Appeals

Meets as needed

## Planning and Zoning

Before purchasing, developing, or altering property it is important that the township zoning ordinance 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 township. Zoning controls the intensity and type of development allowed in specific areas of the township.

### Master Plan

[Chassell Township 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 on March 17, 2023.

### 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 the planning commission before initiating any change of use or construction project within the township. The Planning Commission 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

### Chassell Township Zoning Application/Permit

The first step toward any type of development in the Township starts with a Zoning Application/Permit. The application **must be completed and returned** to the Zoning Administrator for review at [chassellza@up.net](mailto:chassellza@up.net).

For a simple project not requiring a site plan review, and if the proposed project meets all requirements in the zoning ordinance, the Zoning Administrator 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 Administrator 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 Administrator	Planning Commission	Township Board	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 Township with an opportunity to review the proposed use of a site in relation to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Township planning. Site plan review also provides the Township 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.

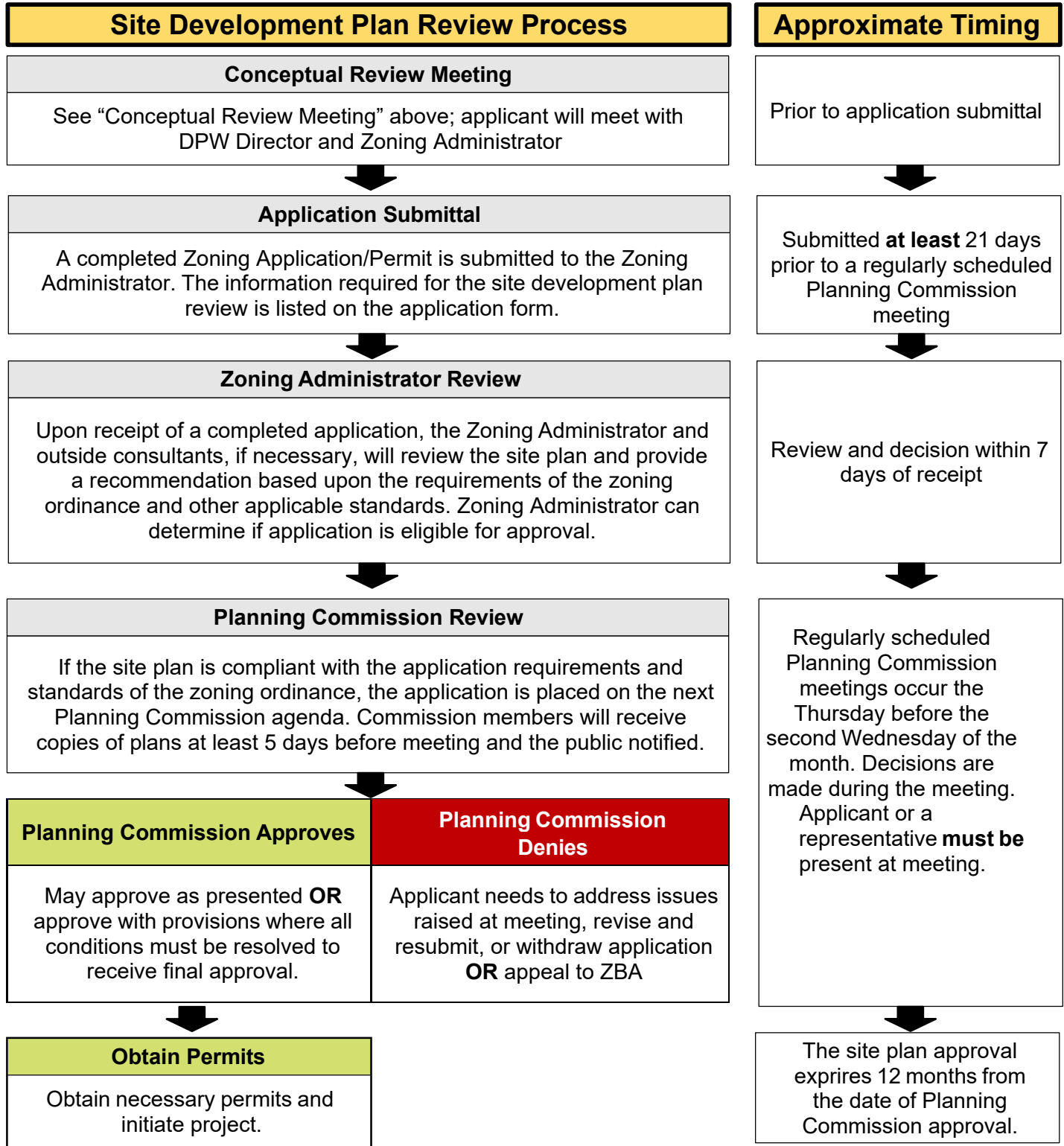
A site plan review is required for any of the following developments and activities:

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 Administrator 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 the Zoning Administrator, Tim Palosaari, at (906) 370-2960. 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 12 months after permit approval.



## **Section 4: Principal Accessory/Special Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions**

Zoning Ordinance: Section 3 – Zoning Districts

Zoning Ordinance: Section 2 - General Provisions.

Chassell Township has 7 distinct zoning districts, all allow for special use conditions. Principal uses requiring a permit are listed under each zoning district in the Chassell Township Zoning Ordinance (Section 3). To be permitted, a permitted principal use may not adversely affect public health, safety, morals, comforts and and/or general welfare. No principal accessory/special use is permitted without a zoning permit as approved below.

If the Zoning Administrator receives an application for a principal accessory/special use or a request for re-zoning, the application will be forwarded to the Planning Commission which will hold at least one noticed public hearing to accept public comment. Public notice of the hearing is posted on the township's website, at the Township Fire Hall, and distributed to neighbors within 300 feet of location under review. All applications involving principal accessory/special uses and re-zoning (and associated site plans) are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

**Principal Accessory/Special Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions and Re-Zoning Permitting Process**

**Approximate Timing**

**Conceptual Review Meeting**  
 Applicant meets with DPW Director and Zoning Administrator

Prior to application submittal

**Application Submittal**  
 Submit Zoning Permit Application to the Zoning Administrator. The information required for the Principal Accessory/Special Use or re-zoning requested is listed on the application. The Zoning Administrator 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 regularly scheduled 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 consultants if necessary, will review the use permit and provide a recommendation to the Township Board to approve/disapprove based upon the requirements of the zoning ordinance and other applicable standards under MCL Section 125.3501 of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110 of 2006.

Regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings occur the Thursday before the second Wednesday of the month. Decisions are made during the meeting. Applicant or a representative **must be present** at meeting.

**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

Regularly scheduled Township Board meetings occur on the second Wednesday of the month.

## Section 5: Zoning Variances

### Zoning Ordinance: Article XVII – Board of Appeals. Section 9

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 Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

The ZBA 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 township.

**Zoning Variance Process**

**Conceptual Review Meeting**  
 Applicant meets with Zoning Administrator and DPW Director



**Variance is Determined Necessary**  
 Submit request for variance to Township Clerk for review.



**Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Consideration**  
 The ZBA 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.



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

**ZBA 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.](#)

### **Sign Permits**

[Zoning Ordinance: Section 5](#)

Prior to any sign installation exceeding fifteen square feet, a sign permit must be issued. The application for sign permit is available at the township office where the fee can also be paid. The Zoning Administrator may administratively approve a sign permit.

### **Residential Rental Registrations**

[Rental Registration Form](#)

Chassell Township. Short and long-term rental properties are required to be registered with the township prior to occupancy as a rental property with a responsible party identified to the township on the registration form.

## Section 7: Fees, Appeals, and Notification Procedures

### Fees

There are no fees required for any of the required for township 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 as well as for signage. Current fees can be found on the [chasselltownship.org](http://chasselltownship.org) website at this link:

### Appeals

Applicants choosing to appeal a determination of the Zoning Administrator 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

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

Chassell Township publishes notices in the Daily Mining Gazette ([www.mininggazette.com](http://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 township website <https://chasselltownship.org>), posted at the township office, and sent out electronically via the Chassell residents subscribing to SMS messaging from the township. Notices are sent at least 15 days prior to hearing.

### Community Engagement

Chassell Township strives to include, consult, and inform residents when appropriate for community initiatives and large projects. Developers are encouraged to do the same.

## Section 8: Development and Financial Assistance Tools

An overview of development and financial assistance tools used by Chassell Township 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), MEDC Business Development and Community Development programs, MSHDA housing programs including the new Housing Tax Increment Financing, and tax abatements. 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. Funding through the Community Development program is available to support redevelopment of properties in traditional downtowns. The Chassell Township Planning Commission and KEDA can assist businesses in determining whether the MEDC may be able to meet their needs, and if so, can connect businesses with the appropriate agency staff.