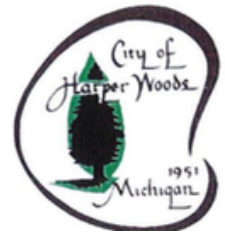


# CITY OF HARPER WOODS

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## GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT



APPROVAL AUTHORITIES | APPLICATION PROCESS  
REVIEW AUTHORITIES

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## **KEY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION**

### **City Manager's Office**

John Szymanski, Acting City Manager | 313-343-2505 | [jszymanski@harperwoods.net](mailto:jszymanski@harperwoods.net)

### **Economic & Community Development**

Tyrone Hinton, E&CD Director | 313-343-2501 | [thinton@harperwoods.net](mailto:thinton@harperwoods.net)

Stephen Lindley, E&CD Deputy Director | 313-343-2501 | [slindley@harperwoods.net](mailto:slindley@harperwoods.net)

### **Building Department**

Jim LaPalm, Chief Building Official | 313-343-2526 | [jlapalm@safebuilt.com](mailto:jlapalm@safebuilt.com)

### **City Clerk's Office**

Leslie Frank, City Clerk | 313-343-2510 | [lfrank@harperwoods.net](mailto:lfrank@harperwoods.net)

### **Department of Public Works**

Bill Snyder, Director of Public Works | 313-343-2570 | [harperwoodsdpw@gmail.com](mailto:harperwoodsdpw@gmail.com)

### **Assessing**

313-343-2527 | [assessing@harperwoods.net](mailto:assessing@harperwoods.net)

### **Department of Public Safety**

Vincent Smith, Director of Public Safety | 313-343-2530 | [vsmith@harperwoods.net](mailto:vsmith@harperwoods.net)

## BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

### **City Council**

- Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.
- Staff Contacts - John Szymanski, 313-343-2505 and Leslie Frank, 313-343-2510

### **Planning Commission (PC)**

- Meets every 4th Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday in November and December)
- Staff Contact - Leslie Frank, 313-343-2510

### **Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)**

- Meets, as needed, every 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
- Staff Contact - Leslie Frank, 313-343-2510

## APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE

- It is important that developers and residents understand the different local authorities who will approve or decline submitted applications. While the application and approval process will be discussed with staff at pre-application meetings, this table provides a general overview of which local authorities will be reviewing their applications.

|                                  | City Manager/<br>E&CD<br>Offices | Planning<br>Commission | Board of<br>Zoning<br>Appeals | City<br>Council | Building<br>Department | City<br>Assessor |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Site Plan Review                 | X                                | X                      |                               |                 | X                      |                  |
| Rezoning                         |                                  | X<br>(Recommendation)  |                               | X<br>(Approval) | X<br>(Review)          |                  |
| Variance                         |                                  |                        | X                             |                 | X<br>(Review)          |                  |
| Appeal                           |                                  |                        | X                             |                 |                        |                  |
| Special Land Use                 |                                  | X<br>(Recommendation)  |                               | X<br>(Approval) | X<br>(Review)          |                  |
| Planned Use<br>Development (PUD) | X<br>(Conceptual)                | X<br>(Recommendation)  |                               | X<br>(Approval) | X                      |                  |
| Lot Splits                       |                                  | X<br>(Recommendation)  |                               | X<br>(Approval) | X<br>(Review)          | X<br>(Review)    |
| Building/Construction<br>Permits |                                  |                        |                               |                 | X                      |                  |

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## **PLANNING AND ZONING INFORMATION**

### **Master Plan**

The City of Harper Woods Master Plan serves as an extension of the community's vision and goals for planning and land use. While the document doesn't explicitly regulate development in the City, it provides insight into what improvements or projects residents and business owners want to see in their community. The Master Plan should be updated once every 5 years, in order to keep the document current with the perspectives of community stakeholders. While the Master Plan serves primarily as a guiding document, it influences ordinances that are passed, economic development, and the future land use of the City. It is highly recommended that developers and residents interested in the future of Harper Woods read the Master Plan.

[City of Harper Woods Master Plan](#)

### **Zoning Map**

The zoning map displays the different zoning districts that are established in the City of Harper Woods. Zoning districts regulate specific uses, designs, and layouts for developments. Please consult the zoning map to determine what uses may be permitted at your site.

[Zoning Map](#)

### **Zoning Ordinance**

The zoning ordinance regulates the usage of properties and buildings while determining the parameters for new construction or installation in the City of Harper Woods. Please consult with the Economic and Community Development Director if you have any questions regarding the zoning ordinance. To view the full zoning ordinance, please see:

[Zoning Ordinance](#)

### **Fee Schedule**

The fee schedule, located on the City of Harper Woods Planning and Zoning page, provides the costs for applications submitted for community development and zoning approval.

[Fee Schedule](#)



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## **PLANNING AND ZONING INFORMATION**

### **Conceptual Review Meeting**

Prior to beginning any development process in the City, applicants are encouraged to meet with City staff for a conceptual review meeting. This meeting can help promote a smooth approval process once a formal application is submitted.

Conceptual review meetings serve to communicate clear expectations for application packages, informing the developer or key representative of specific codes or regulations they need to meet in all steps of the application, review, and development. With expectations transparent and predictable, developers can save valuable time and money in creating an application package that is complete and ready for review. This is also an opportunity to explore larger-scale matters like infrastructure needs, qualifications for tax abatement, the tax implications of different developments, and local incentives that might be available. The E&CD Department and Building Department will include the City Manager, Director of Public Works, and other key staff as may be appropriate for the project. To the extent permitted by the Freedom of Information Act, these conversations will be kept confidential until the owner is ready to submit formal documents.

Applicants should be prepared to discuss the intended development and its fit with surrounding land uses. Preliminary sketches should also be prepared for the meeting (hand-drawn rough sketches are sufficient.)

### **[Conceptual Review Meeting](#)**

### **Notification**

When certain development actions require a notification procedure compliant with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended), the City of Harper Woods will publish notifications in a newspaper of general circulation and mail/hand deliver notification to the subject property and all persons owning property within 300 feet of the boundary of the subject property at least 15 days before the hearing. All occupants of apartment buildings within the 300 ft. boundary will be notified if the apartment has fewer than 12 units. Notices will describe the nature of the request or application review, identify subject property, state where and how the request or application review is being considered, and will indicate how written responses are being collected for the public hearing.

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## SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS

### **Site Plans**

[Site plans](#) are essential to the development process. To ensure orderly development, a consistent level of quality in the community, harmonious relationships between building usages, and compliance with the zoning ordinance and master plan, all development proposals must undergo site plan review and approval by the appropriate local authorities. For a complete list of uses that require a site plan review see Section 10-761.1 Uses Requiring Site Plan Review in the zoning ordinance.

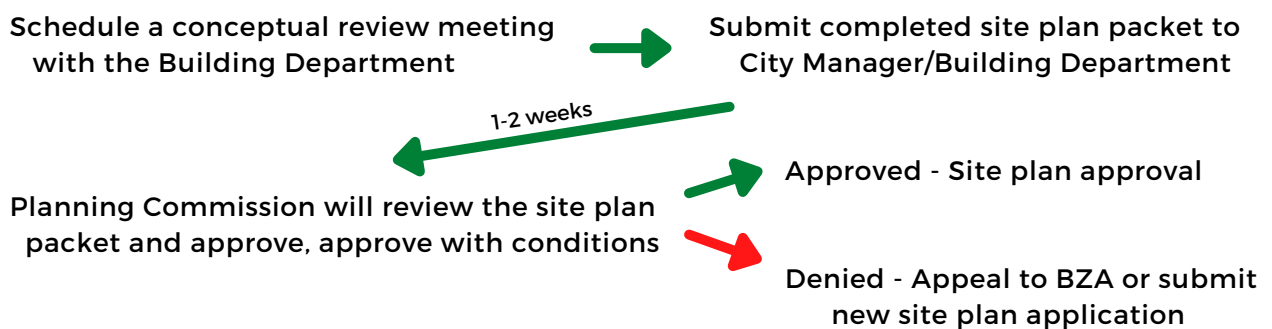
Projects with minor modifications to a legally existing and conforming use may be eligible for administrative approval. A **sketch plan** may be submitted rather than a complete site plan package. To see if a project qualifies for a sketch plan see Section 10-761.2 Projects Eligible for Sketch Plan Review in the zoning ordinance.

### **Review and Approval Process**

The required information for site plan applications can be found in the zoning ordinance. In addition to the required content, a [site plan application](#) must be completed fully and submitted. A fee will accompany the site plan, at varying amounts depending on the development size and the expenses incurred. Please see the fee schedule above for more information.

Site plan approval will be granted to site plans that are fully completed, adhere to the zoning ordinance and all other applicable city code, and are compatible with other land uses in the vicinity. See Section 10-762 Site Plan Application and Review Requirements in the zoning ordinance for more information.

### **Site Plan Application and Review Flowchart**



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## SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS

### **Rezoning**

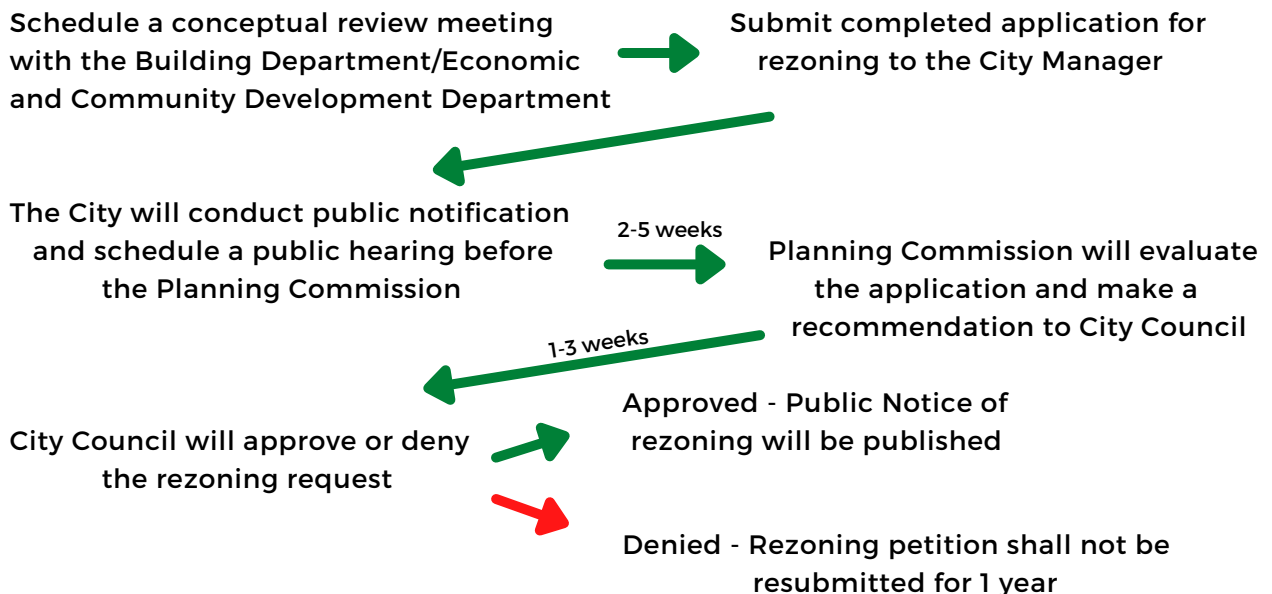
An amendment to change zoning district boundaries can be initiated by property owners (or residents with the permission of property owners), the Planning Commission, or City Council.

Applications for rezoning must include a [rezoning application form](#), legal description of the property, a site analysis, and the necessary fee as described in the fee schedule. A Conceptual Review Meeting with the Building Department and/or the Economic and Community Development Department is recommended to discuss the level of detail and analysis that is involved in the rezoning application packet.

### **Review Process**

Upon receiving a complete rezoning application, a public hearing will be held before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will then recommend approval or decline of the amendment. Following the Planning Commission's recommendation, the proposed rezoning will be voted on by the City Council, either passing the zoning amendment or denying it. See Section 10-780 Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for more information.

### **Rezoning Application and Review Flowchart**





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## **SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS**

### **Variances**

Variances are permissions or approvals of specific features and measurements on a property that are not aligned with the standards set in the zoning ordinance.

Variances permit minor changes to dimensional regulations, provided that the changes are still harmonious with uses and surrounding properties. Variances may be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals after submission of a completed [variance application](#) and a public hearing in accordance with the zoning act.

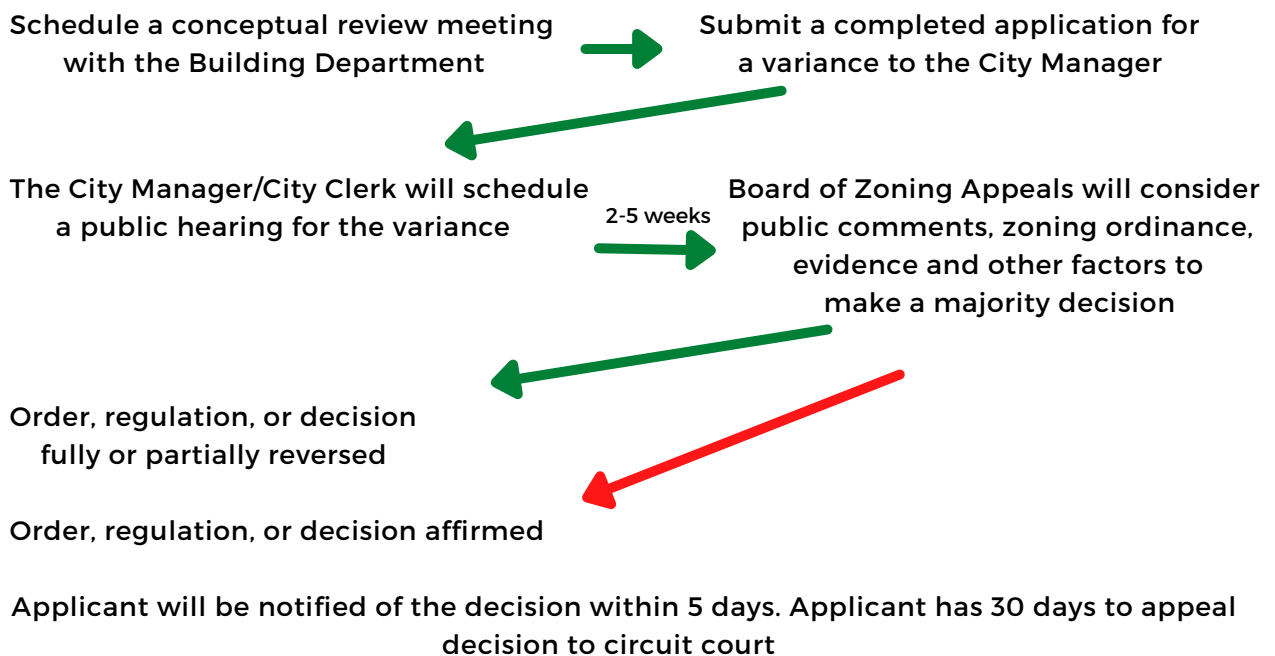
Applicants should meet with the Building Department to determine if a variance is needed and to establish agreed upon facts before completing an application. The Building Department will then submit the completed application to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

### **Requirements**

Applicants will need to prove the following conditions:

- Need for the variance is caused by the conditions of the property (topography, shape, etc.), not the applicant's economic or personal reasons
- The need for variance was not caused by current or previous owners
- The applicant is pursuing the minimum variance needed to do substantial justice to the property owner and surrounding property owners
- The variance will not cause an adverse impact on surrounding property, property values, or the use and enjoyment of property in the zoning district.

### **Variance Application and Review Flowchart**



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## **SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS**

### **Special Land Uses**

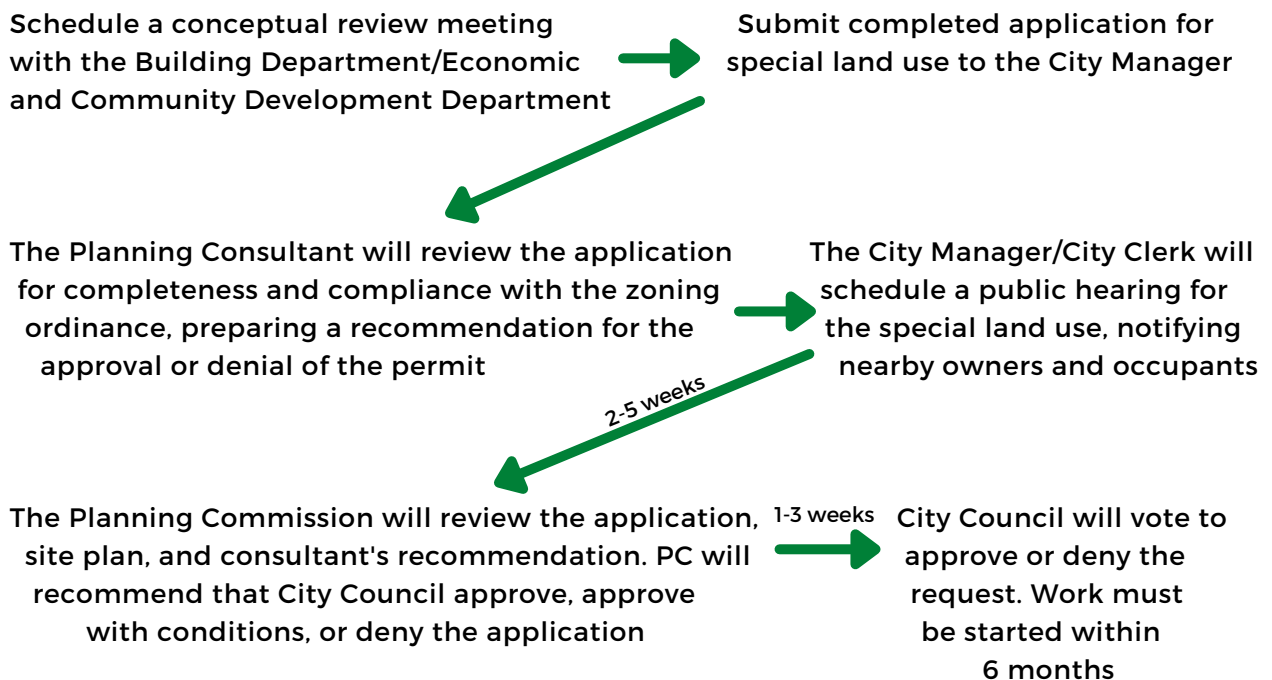
Special land use permits are required for developments that may have uses consistent with the zoning district it occupies but have elements or features that are not suitable for every location within the zoning district. These elements include increased traffic flow, odor, noise, or other nuisance effects.

Because of the case-by-case nature of the permit, it is highly recommended that developers meet with the city for a conceptual review meeting to determine whether a special land use application will be necessary during the application process. Special land use applications require a complete site plan (as described in the site plan section), an [application form](#), and the necessary application fees.

### **Review and Approvals Process**

Upon receipt of the complete application package and after a written recommendation is prepared and filed with the City Council by the Planning Commission, the City Clerk will create public notice in the local newspaper, and to the owners and occupants of all buildings within 300 feet of the proposed development. City Council may deny, approve, or with approve with conditions, request for special approval of a land use. The decision will be incorporated in a statement of conclusions relative to the specific land use under consideration. A basis for the decision and any conditions imposed will be specified in this statement. See Section 10-770 Special Land Uses of the zoning ordinance for more information.

### **Special Land Uses Application and Review Flowchart**



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## **SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS**

### **Planned Unit Developments**

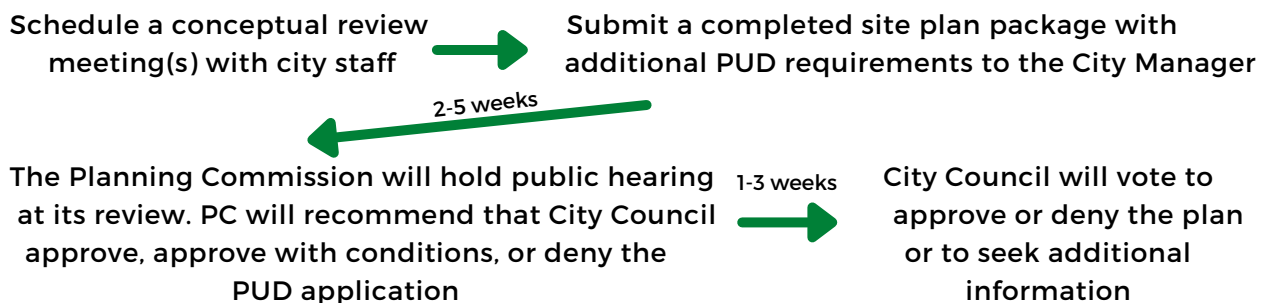
A planned unit development (PUD) offers an added degree of flexibility from the standard zoning ordinance permits. The purpose is to encourage a more efficient and innovative use of land and public services and the preservation of natural features through the use of a unified and flexible planning approach. City Council may waive the respective zoning district regulations as part of a PUD, after recommendation of the Planning Commission. The general boundaries of any PUD approved by Council shall be indicated on the Zoning Map as information for zoning purposes. See Section 10.262 Planned Unit Developments of the zoning ordinance for more information.

### **Application, Review, and Approvals Process**

Before applying for a planned unit development applicants must have a conceptual review meeting with city staff. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the site/use needs planned unit development approval, if the prospective uses and design of the sites can be accomplished under traditional zoning districts, and to review the items that will need to be submitted in the planned unit development application. Due to the size and resources required for PUDs, applications could require more information to be submitted than site applications in traditional zoning districts. A complete list of additional requirements can be found in the zoning ordinance.

After submission of a fully completed PUD package, the City Manager will schedule a public hearing to occur at the next Planning Commission meeting. The city's planning consultants will also review the package and offer their recommendation of approval or denial. The Planning Commission will listen to public comment, review the site plan against the appropriate zoning district ordinances, site plan review criteria, and PUD review criteria. After its review, the Planning Commission will formulate a recommendation on the site plan/PUD to City Council to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application. City Council will then vote on the site plan/PUD application.

### **PUD Application and Review Flowchart**



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## **SITE PLANS AND ZONING PERMITS**

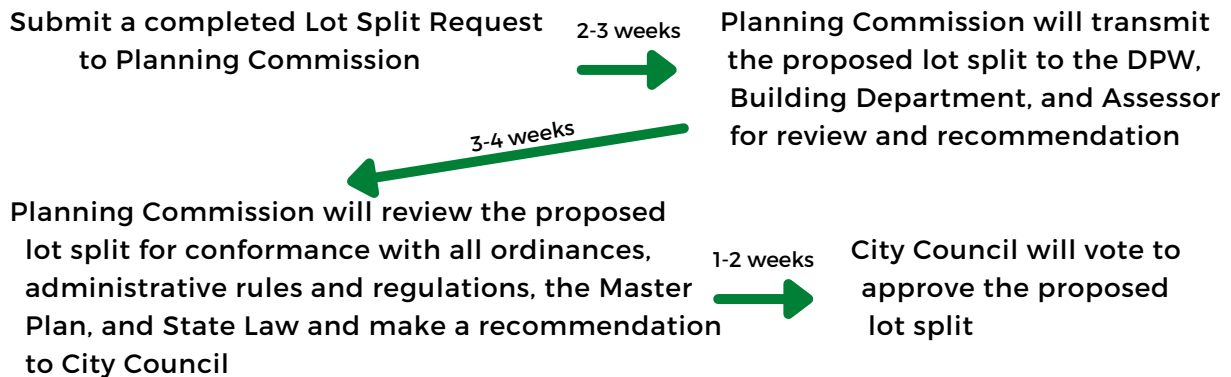
### **Lot Splits**

Lot split permits are required for any subdividing of parcels. Petitioners or Developers must submit to the City Clerk or Building Department a [Lot Split Request form](#).

### **Review and Approvals Process**

A lot split request form and all documentation that is submitted not less than 15 days prior to the next regular Planning Commission meeting, held on the fourth Wednesday of each month will be reviewed for conformance with all ordinances, administrative rules and regulations, the Master Plan for the City, and State law. Planning Commission will then prepare recommendations to be submitted to the City Council for approval.

### **Lot Split Application and Review Flowchart**



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## **BUILDING PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS**

All permitting and inspections regarding construction and utilities are approved and scheduled by the [Building Department](#). All contractors working in the city are required to submit a [Contractor Registration Form](#). Checklists for [Commercial Plans](#) and [Residential Plans](#) are available as well.

Links to the applicable permit and a description of when it is required is found below.

- [Building Permit](#) - constructing, enlarging, altering, repairing, moving, demolishing or changing the occupancy of a building or structure.
- [Electrical Permit](#) - installing new electrical wiring, equipment, or altering electrical wiring.
- [Plumbing Permit](#) - installing new plumbing fixtures or altering existing ones.
- [Mechanical Permit](#) - installing new mechanical/heating/cooling fixtures or alter existing ones.
- [Concrete, Fences, and Sheds Permit](#) - installing new concrete, [fencing](#), or an [accessory structure](#).

### **Inspections**

Inspections will be required at multiple points throughout the project, for each permit issued. Scheduling inspections is a responsibility of the developer, and should occur when the type of work is ready for its respective inspection. Building Department inspectors will perform the mandatory inspections as quickly as possible after the request for inspection has been made.

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## **BUSINESS LICENSES**

### **Business License**

A business license is required prior to a business operating in the City of Harper Woods. Business licenses are obtained through the City Clerk's Office. The office is open Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm and can also be reached at [lfrank@harperwoods.net](mailto:lfrank@harperwoods.net) or 313-343-2510.

### **Liquor License**

A liquor license is required for businesses that seek to sell or serve alcoholic beverages. An applicant must first submit an application for a liquor license to the [Michigan Liquor Control Commission](#) before submitting to the City of Harper Woods an application for liquor license approval. No applications for a liquor license will be considered by the city until the city has been notified by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission that they have received such an application.

Interested parties can find the entire application process in the city's Code of Ordinances [here](#).



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## **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

### **Brownfield Tax Increment Financing**

Brownfield Tax Increment Financing, through P.A. 381 of 1996, allows developers to receive reimbursement on environmental and non-environmental redevelopment activities. Brownfields are properties and or sites that are contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete or hold historic value. Reimbursement for costs associated with redeveloping brownfields occurs through the collection of incremental state and local taxes as the taxable value of the property increases through the revitalization process. To benefit from brownfield TIFs, developers will need to work with the local Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to produce a workplan for state review (Michigan Strategic Fund for non-environmental activities, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for environmental activities.)

To learn more about the brownfield program, initial evaluations, and workplan development, please contact the local Brownfield Redevelopment Authority through the City Clerk's Office at [lfrank@harperwoods.net](mailto:lfrank@harperwoods.net) or 313-343-2510.