



GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

Approval Authorities | Application Process | Review Procedure



CHARLEVOIX

Updated August 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION	3
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS	4
APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE	5
ZONING ORDINANCE	6
ZONING MAP	6
SCHEDULE OF USES, AREA, HEIGHT, PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS	6
MASTER PLAN	6
FEE SCHEDULE	7
PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS	7
DESIGN GUIDELINES	7
REZONING	8
ZONING PERMITS	9
SITE PLANS	10
SPECIAL LAND USE	11
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS	12
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCES	14
USE VARIANCES	15
SINGLE AND TWO-FAMILY IMPROVEMENTS	17
MULTIFAMILY IMPROVEMENTS	17
BUILDING PERMITS	18
BUILDING PERMIT INSPECTIONS	18
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	19
BUSINESS LICENSES	21
LIQUOR LICENSES	21
PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS	22

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

City Manager's Office

Mark Heydlauff, City Manager | (231) 547-3270 | markh@charlevoixmi.gov

Planning and Zoning

Jonathan Scheel, Zoning Administrator | (231) 547- 3260 | planner@charlevoixmi.gov

Electric

John Griffith, Electric Department Director | (231) 547- 3265 | johng@charlevoixmi.gov

Wastewater Treatment

Randy Wurst, Chief Operator | (231) 547- 3274 | randyw@charlevoixmi.gov

Water Supply

Nick Hilling, WTP Chief Operator | (231) 547-3256 | nickh@charlevoixmi.gov

Public Works

Pat Elliot, Public Works Superintendent | (231) 547- 3276 | pate@charlevoixmi.gov

City Clerk

Joyce Golding, City Clerk | (231) 547-3270 | clerk@charlevoixmi.gov

Assessor

Joe Lavender, City Assessor | (231) 547- 3614 | joel@charlevoixmi.gov

Main Street | Downtown Development Authority

Lindsey Dotson, Main Street DDA Executive Director | (231) 547- 3614 | lindseyd@charlevoixmi.gov

Department of Building Safety (Charlevoix County)

(231) 547-7236 | buildingsafety@charlevoixcounty.org

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

City Council

Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month,
6:00 p.m.

Staff Liaison:
Mark Heydlauff, (231) 547-3270

Planning Commission

Meets every 2nd Monday of the month, 6:00 pm

Staff Liaison:
Jennifer Neal, (231) 929-5096

Zoning Board of Appeals

Meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm

Staff Liaison:
Jonathan Scheel, (231) 547-3265

Housing Commission

Meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month, 2:00 pm

Staff Liaison:
Annessa Haist, (989)-773-3784

Downtown Development Authority

Meets every 4th Monday of the month, 5:30 pm

Staff Liaison:
Lindsey Dotson, (231) 547-3257

Board of Review

Meets in March, July, and December. For more
information, please see City of Charlevoix Website

Staff Liaison:
Joe Lavender, (231) 547-3614

Historic District Commission

Meets every 4th Friday of the month, 11:00 am

Staff Liaison:
Lindsey Dotson, (231) 547-3257

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 the Zoning Administrator at pre-application meetings, this table provides a general view of what local authorities will be reviewing their applications.

APPROVING AUTHORITIES

ZONING OR PERMIT APPLICATIONS	APPROVAL AUTHORITIES TABLE	Zoning Administrator	Planning Commission	Zoning Board of Appeals	City Council	Charlevoix County Department of Building Safety
	Zoning Permit	X				
	Site Plan Review (Level A)	X				
	Site Plan Review (Level B)	X (Recommendation)	X (Approval)			
	Special Land Use		X			
	Planned Unit Development		X			
	Rezoning Ordinance Amendment		X (Recommendation)		X (Approval)	
	Variance			X		
	Appeal			X		
	Building, Electrical, and other Construction Permits					X

PLANNING & ZONING

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 Charlevoix. Regulations can apply city-wide, or be specific to the designated zoning district. Please consult with Zoning Administrator if you have any questions regarding the zoning ordinance. To view the full zoning ordinance, please see:

[CHAPTER 153: PLANNING AND ZONING](#)

Zoning Map

The zoning map displays the different zoning districts that are established in the City of Charlevoix. 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.

[Click here to view the City of Charlevoix Zoning Map.](#)

Zoning Schedule of Uses, Area, Height, and Placement Requirements

The zoning ordinance has information on the permitted uses for each zoning district in both residential and non-residential/mixed zones, as well as requirements/restrictions on development dimensions and lot sizes. Reading the zoning ordinance will help developers better understand the functions permitted for sites in each zoning district. For questions regarding the schedule of uses, area, height, and placement requirements, please contact the Zoning Administrator. To learn more about dimensional and use variances, see their respective sections in this guide.

For information on residential districts, click the link below:

[RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS](#)

For information on commercial, industrial, and mixed use districts, click the link below:

[NON-RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED USE DISTRICTS](#)

For information regarding ordinances impacting all districts, click the link below. In relevance to height and placement requirements, sections 153.151 and 153.146 respectively address setback requirements and calculations of structure height.

[PROVISIONS GENERALLY APPLICABLE TO ALL DISTRICTS](#)

Master Plan

The City of Charlevoix Master Plan serves 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 is updated once every 5 years, keeping the document current with the perspectives of community stakeholders.

Applications of larger developments such as planned unit developments and special land use require locations, design, and uses compliant with the master plan. It is highly encouraged for developers to review the plan to ensure their proposed construction aligns with the community's vision for Charlevoix.

[Click here to view the Charlevoix Master Plan.](#)

PLANNING & ZONING

Fee Schedule

The fee schedule, located on the City of Charlevoix Planning & Zoning department page, provides the costs for applications submitted for Planning & Zoning approval. Further, the fee schedule also provides hyperlinks to the applications necessary for development, and the zoning ordinances relevant to the applications.

[Click here to view the fee schedule.](#)

Pre-Application Meetings

While not required, successful projects often begin with a pre-application meeting. Pre-application meetings serve to communicate clear expectations for application packages, informing the developer or key representative 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 abatements, the tax implications of different developments, and local incentives that might be available. The Zoning Administrator will include the City Manager, Assessor, Public Works Superintendent, Electric Superintendent 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

Design Guidelines

The City of Charlevoix Zoning Ordinance promotes creative and cohesive architectural design within General Commercial (GC), Professional Office (PO), and Commercial Mixed Use (CM) districts of the city. Maintaining quality design standards will have positive impacts on both the site being developed and surrounding properties. Harmonious aesthetics among sites in the business districts will improve and retain property values, encouraging investment for complementing businesses and increasing the sense of place fostered in downtown patrons. To view the transparent list of design guidelines that your proposed building may be subject to, please view the appropriate zoning ordinance:

[§ 153.170 BUILDING APPEARANCE.](#)

Development and renovations occurring in downtown Charlevoix have specific design guidelines to follow in addition to the zoning ordinance. These regulations preserve the historic aesthetic that serves as a cultural resource and property value stabilizer for sites in the Central Business District. To view the design principles for downtown development, please view the relevant link: [Downtown Design Guidelines.](#)

Notification Procedures

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 Charlevoix 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.

For more information on how public input is gathered in the planning and development review processes, please view the [City of Charlevoix Public Participation Plan.](#)

REZONING

Who can initiate a rezoning?

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

What is needed to initiate a rezoning?

Applications for rezoning must include a rezoning application form, legal descriptions of the property, a site analysis, a written evaluation on how the proposed rezoning complies with the City of Charlevoix Master Plan, and the necessary fee as described in the fee schedule. A pre-application meeting with the Zoning Administrator is recommended to discuss the level of detail and analysis that is involved in the rezoning application packet.

What is the 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 upon by the City Council, either passing the zoning map amendment or denying it.

Factors that could go into the Planning Commission's recommendation and the City Council's review include Master Plan compliance, practicality of rezoning, capability of the site to support the new uses accompanying the zoning change, city infrastructure, and more. For a full list of criteria and more information on the rezoning process, please view the relevant section in the zoning ordinance, linked below:

[§ 153.006 AMENDMENTS](#)

Rezoning Application and Review Flowchart



ZONING PERMITS

What is a zoning permit?

Zoning permits serve as certification that the building being constructed meets the dimensional requirements and permitted use as detailed in the zoning ordinance. Anyone seeking to erect or install a building or structure of any size in the City of Charlevoix must have a zoning permit before doing so.

How do I apply for a zoning permit?

To apply for a zoning permit, fully complete the zoning permit application and pay the fee as described in the fee schedule. A completed site plan must also accompany the application package. Prior to submitting an application for a zoning permit, property boundaries and building structures must be properly staked for inspection.

[Click here for a zoning permit application.](#)

What is the review process?

The Zoning Administrator will review the application package for completeness and adherence to the zoning ordinance. After review and inspection, the Zoning Administrator will issue a zoning permit to the applicant.

The Zoning Administrator will conduct inspections after issuing permits to ensure that construction has remained compliant with the regulations listed in the zoning ordinance.

Do I need a zoning permit for repairs or modifications?

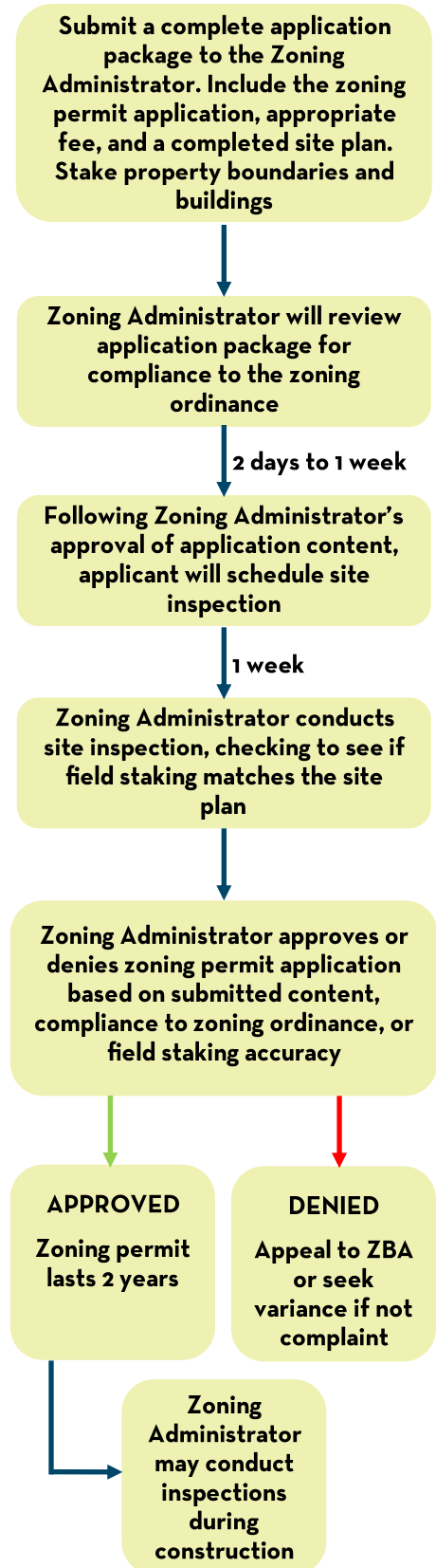
Zoning permits are not required for alterations which do not result in change in height, floor area, lot coverage, location of walls or other structural alterations. Further, facial alterations, installation of siding, windows, doors, shingles and replacements of existing or deteriorated materials and ordinary maintenance repairs made on all dwellings and their related outbuildings do not need zoning permits. However, these modifications may still require county, state, or federal permits. For more information on residential improvements, please consult the appropriate section in this guide.

When do zoning permits expire?

Once approved, zoning permits expire 2 years after approval, unless substantial construction has begun. For more information on zoning permits, click the link below:

[§ 153.021 ZONING PERMITS.](#)

Zoning Permit Application and Review Flowchart



SITE PLANS

Site Plans are essential to the development process.

To ensure orderly development, a consistent level of quality in the community, harmonious relationship 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. Site plans provide general information on the property to be developed, details on the existing conditions of the property, and plans for proposed development, engineering, and building details.

There are two levels of Site Plans.

Depending on the size of the building(s) to be constructed or relative size of the addition to be installed, the site plan can fall under two separate categories, Level A, or Level B. Generally, Level A site plans are used for smaller buildings or additions, or a change in use in a pre-existing structure.

Who approves site plans, and what is the process of approval?

Level A buildings are subject to review and approval from the Zoning Administrator. Level B site plans are reserved for larger buildings, special uses, planned unit developments, waterfront parcels, and other applications. Level B site plans are subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission.

The required information for site plan applications vary between the levels of site plans, and can be found in the zoning ordinance below. In addition to the required content, a site plan application form must be completed fully and submitted.

[§ 153.234 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS.](#)

A fee will accompany the site plan review, with varying amounts depending on the site plan's level and the expenses incurred. Please view the fee schedule on the City of Charlevoix Planning & Zoning department page 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 uses of land in the vicinity. The zoning administrator shall review the site plan for completeness, and shall obtain comments, as deemed necessary, from the city departments or consultants. For more information on the approval process, view the relevant zoning ordinance:

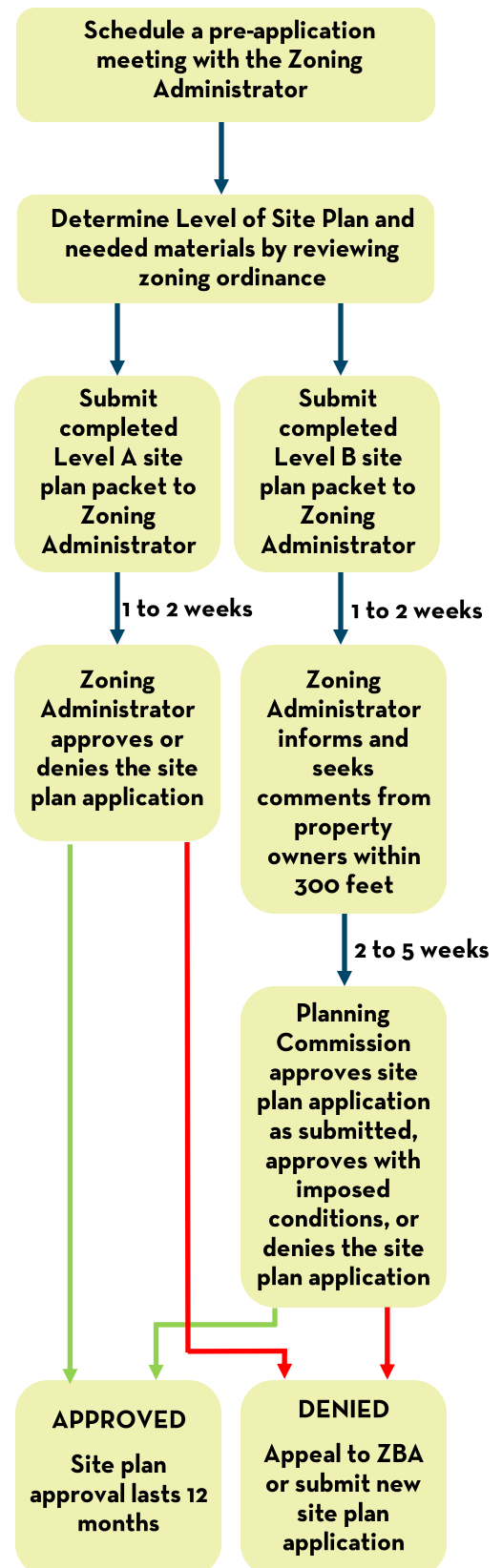
[§ 153.235 STANDARDS FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL.](#)

[§ 153.236 CONDITIONS OF SITE PLAN APPROVAL.](#)

How long does approval last?

Site plan approval last 12 months from approval date, with the possibility of extension.

Site Plan Application and Review Flowchart



SPECIAL LAND USE

What is a special land use permit?

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 could include increased traffic flow, odor, noise, or other nuisance effects.

How do I know if my project requires special land use approval?

Because of the case-by-case nature of the permit, it is highly recommended developers meet with the city for a pre-application meeting to determine whether a special land use application will be necessary during the application process.

How do I apply?

Special land use applications require a complete site plan (as described in the site plan section), an application form, and the necessary application fees.

What is the approval process?

Upon retrieval of complete package, the Zoning Administrator will create public notice in the local newspaper, and to the owners and occupants of all buildings within 300 feet. The Planning Commission will then hold a public hearing on the application, and can choose to approve the application, approve the application with conditions, or decline the application based on the submitted materials and public comment. The nature of conditions with approval can be found within the zoning ordinance, as can the standards for which special land use applications are approved or denied.

[§ 153.252 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.](#)

[§ 153.253 REVIEW STANDARDS.](#)

How long does approval last?

Special land use permits will expire 12 months after approval, unless substantial construction has begun on the project. Extensions may be granted by the planning commission, conditional that nothing regarding the original approval has changed.

[Click here for the application form.](#)

Special Land Use Application and Review Flowchart



PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

What is a planned unit development (PUD)?

Planned units developments are optionally created districts that allow for more flexibility and variety in regulation of land development, foster innovation in land use, ownership, and variety of design, and offer uniqueness in layout. While PUDs are more flexible in their regulations, they also seek to preserve historical, natural, and architectural features that other zoning districts may not prioritize, and seek to protect green space while providing amenities, public services, and utilities. PUDs should be developed in accordance with the goals of the master plan and promote a higher standard of quality than can be achieved through traditional zoning districts.

What are the requirements for a planned unit development?

Because planned unit developments are permitted greater flexibility in design, structure, and capacity than traditional zoning districts, successfully applying the overlay to PUD requires greater commitment and action from the applicant to uphold the community vision. This could entail many things, including preserving natural features, creating open spaces and greenway corridors, mixing land uses and housing types, renovating or removing blight, and more. Further, PUDs must be a least a half-acre in size to receive PUD approval. The Planning Commission may approve applicants with sites smaller than the minimum, but the applicant must prove the PUD still adheres to the specific requirements of the overlay. To view the full list of required features or actions for a PUD application, please view the relevant zoning ordinance:

[§ 153.272 PUD REQUIREMENTS.](#)

What are the benefits of a planned unit development?

Because planned unit developments undergo rezoning to their own district, regulations regarding the use of the sites are more varied than in traditional districts. Further, as long as the PUD meets the requirements listed in the zoning ordinance (specifically compatibility with surrounding uses/character and the minimum size requirement), PUDs overlays can be created in any districts of the city. PUDs can be formed from multiple parcels and sites, as long as they have a unified owner. There is also the capacity to allow greater unit and residential density within the PUD than in other districts, provided extra requirements and commitments are met during the application process.

How do I apply for a PUD?

Before applying for a planned unit development applicants must have a pre-application meeting with the Zoning Administrator. The purpose of this meeting is to determine if the site(s) qualify for a planned unit development, 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 will require more information to be submitted than site applications in traditional zoning districts. While the pre-application meetings will cover what is required, one can typically expect to submit information such as topographic maps, flood plain maps, property surveys, inventories on existing utilities, proposed uses, interior street locations, conceptual layouts, indication of architectural style and more. Application packages typically consist of a completed PUD application form, the necessary fees, a parallel plan, a preliminary development plan, and a summary of intent. For a complete list of items you will be required to submit, please view the relevant zoning ordinance below:

[§ 153.274 PUD REVIEW PROCEDURES.](#)

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

What is the approval process?

Upon submission of a fully completed PUD application, the Planning Commission will schedule a work session with the applicant to review the development concept and communicate the need for any additional information. When initial review is completed, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the PUD request. Upon considering the application materials and comments and evidence given during the public hearing, the planning commission can approve the PUD, deny the PUD, or approve the PUD with attached conditions.

The standards for which the Planning Commission will base its decision on include the PUD's adherence to the zoning ordinance and Master Plan, the PUD's compatibility with adjacent uses of land, natural environment, and public services, and its natural benefit to usage or planned character that could not otherwise be achieved in a traditional zoning district.

After approval and before construction, the applicant will enter into a development agreement with the city that determines obligations regarding the PUD, including a final development plan, an optional phasing plan, and remedies that will occur should the applicant default on the PUD.

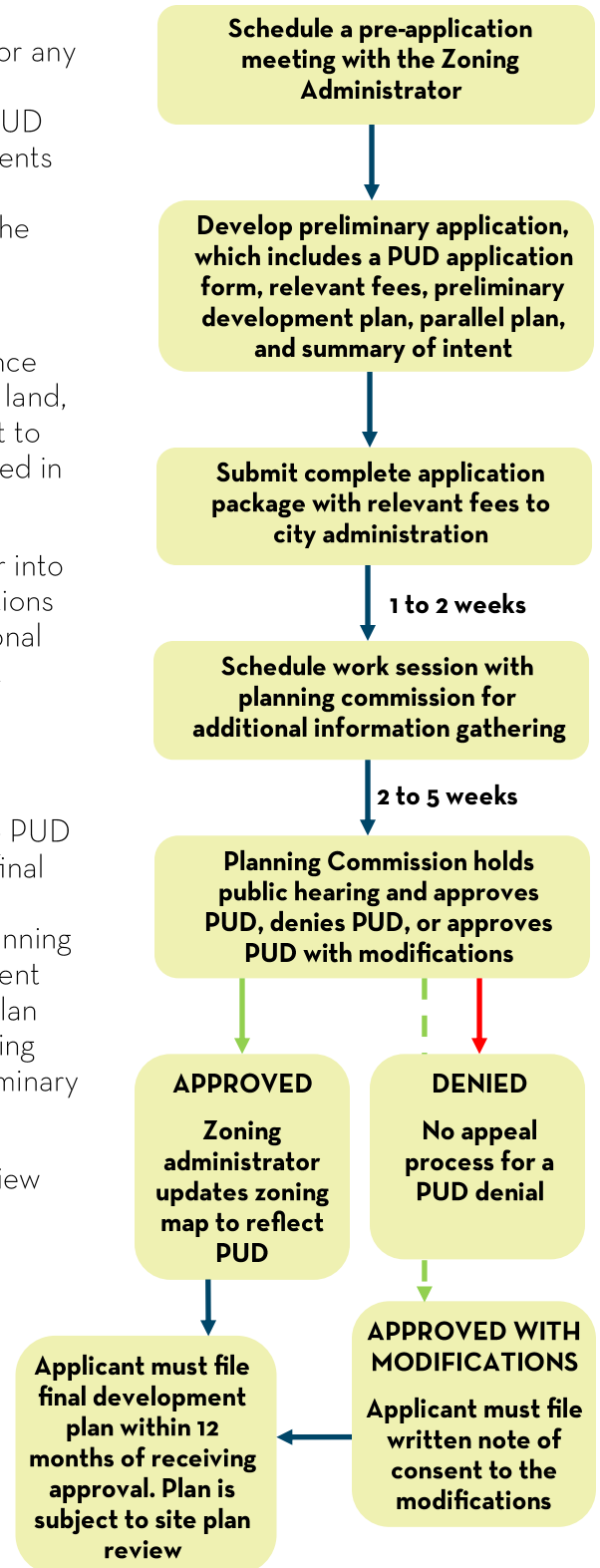
What steps occur after approval?

Within 12 months of the Planning Commission's approval of the PUD rezoning and development, the applicant shall submit either a final development plan for the PUD as a whole, or for a phase of development. Development of PUDs in phases must have a planning commission-approved schedule of completion. Final development plans are subject to the process and review standards of site plan Level B. Should a final development plan not be submitted during the 12 month period or within an approved extension, the preliminary development plan and PUD rezoning will be null and void.

For more information on Planned Unit Developments, please view the relevant zoning ordinance:

[Click here for a PUD application.](#)

Planned Unit Development Application and Review Flowchart



DIMENSIONAL VARIANCES

What is a dimensional variance?

Dimensional 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.

Who grants a dimensional variance?

Dimensional variances may be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals after submission of a completed variance application and a public hearing in accordance with the zoning act. The variance granted will be the minimum required to permit the applicant full use of their site while still considering the zoning ordinance regulations.

What are the requirements for a dimensional variance?

Variances can be considered if there are difficulties in adhering to the zoning ordinance's standards for construction, equipment or alteration of buildings or structures, and stormwater management.

Consideration of variances will only occur under the following conditions:

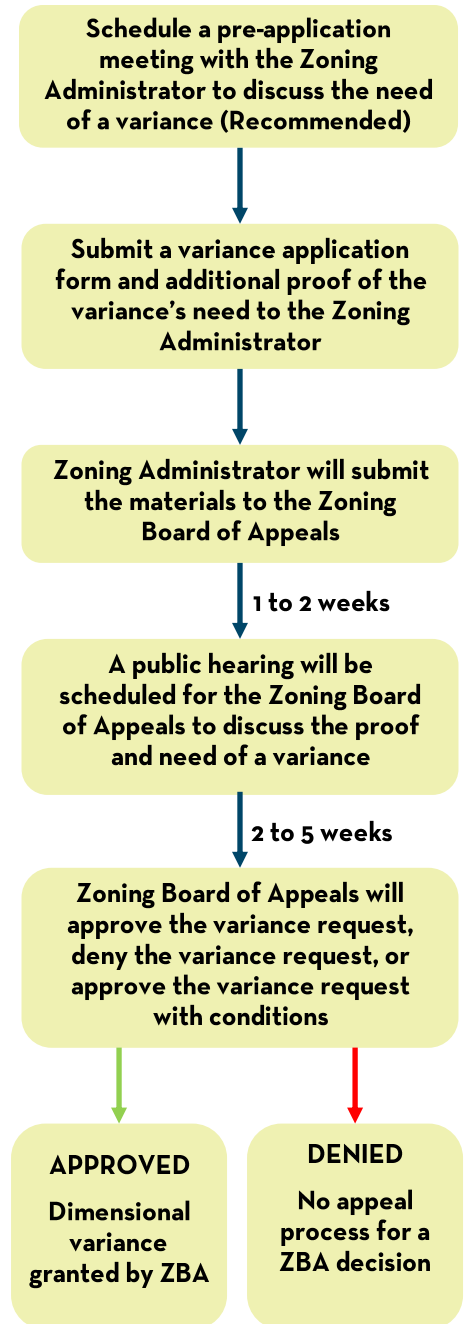
- Extraordinary circumstances created barriers to development or use as allowed by the zoning code.
- Compliance with the strict letter of the zoning ordinance would unreasonably prevent intended use.
- Granting of the variance will not negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood in any way.
- Granting of the variance will not negatively impact public safety or welfare.
- The applicant nor previous owners of the property were not the cause of the barriers that necessitate a zoning variance.

[Click here to view the variance application.](#)

How do I apply for a dimensional variance?

Applicants should meet with the Zoning Administrator to determine if a dimensional use is needed and to establish agreed upon facts before completing an application. The applicant must complete a variance application form and provide necessary proof that a variance is needed. The Zoning Administrator will then submit those materials to the Zoning Board of Appeals, who will grant the application an appropriate amount of discussion during a public hearing. The applicant must be present during this hearing. The Zoning Board of Appeals will then decide to approve the dimensional variance, deny the dimensional variance, or approve the dimensional variance with conditions deemed reasonable.

Dimensional Variance Application Flowchart



USE VARIANCES

What is a use variance?

Use variances are granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals for properties that cannot be used for purposes as permitted in the zoning district.

Who grants a use variance?

Use variances may be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals after submission of a completed variance application, the necessary fees, and a public hearing in accordance with the zoning act. The variance granted will be the minimum required to permit the applicant full use of their site while still considering the zoning the ordinance regulations.

What do I need to apply for a use variance?

Use variance applications require a use variance application form, a drawn-to-scale plan showing the prospective uses/additions required, necessary fees and proof that a use variance is necessary. Information to be included in the application to establish the proof of facts include:

- Proof that the property cannot be used for permitted purposes
- The problem preventing use is exclusive to applicant's property, and not a condition that impacts the larger neighborhood.
- Proposed use does not alter neighborhood culture or characteristics.
- Lack of administrative relief that would allow reasonable use of property.
- Witnesses or experts that will testify for the above conclusions at the public hearing (optional)

What is the approval process?

Before a public hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals, applicants will schedule a pre-hearing conference with the Zoning Administrator. The pre-hearing conference will be used to identify all persons to testify and evidence presented on applicant's behalf, establish agreed-upon facts by all parties, discuss possible relief by non-use variance and explore satisfactory alternatives, and establish a need or desire for verbatim record of the hearing. The Zoning Administrator will determine what parties need to be present to accomplish the purposes of the pre-hearing conference.

During the public hearing, the applicant will have the burden of proof before the Zoning Board of Appeals and must adequately display a use variance is warranted. The hearing will begin with the community representatives presenting on the zoning district involved, and the purpose behind the regulations listed in the zoning ordinance for the zoning district. Then, the applicant will present their evidence and expert witnesses supporting their claim that a use variance is warranted. Witnesses may be required to attend, with the purpose of the ZBA asking questions regarding their testimony. Interested parties and members of the public will also have an opportunity to present their perspective and evidence on the use variance, to which the applicant may respond. A continuation may occur if the public hearing on the use variance is not completed within the given meeting time.

USE VARIANCES

What is the approval process? (Continued)

The Zoning Board of Appeals may make its decision to grant or deny the use variance at the end of the meeting, or schedule a date for its decision, depending on whether review of presented evidence is necessary for members. If the ZBA decides to grant a variance to the applicant, it will do so in a manner that is most compliant with established ordinances. The variance can be in the form of a use variance, as applied for, or dimensional variances that will permit property to function in its allowed use. Conditions may be imposed on the variance, with conditions detailed further in [Zoning Ordinance § 153.038 G.4.c\(1-5\)](#).

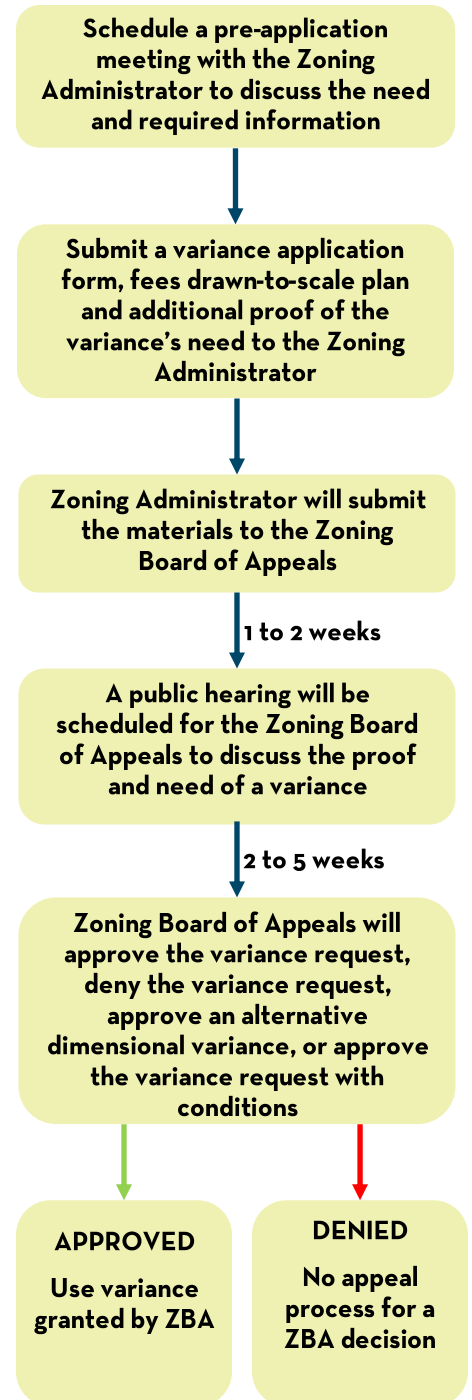
The standards for which the Zoning Board of Appeals grants use variance align with the evidence that must be included with in the application, specifically that the property cannot be used for uses permitted in the zoning district, that unusual conditions created these barriers of use (not self-created by applicant or previous owners), that the character of the neighborhood is unaffected by the potential use variance, and that infrastructure and public services are unaffected by the potential use variance.

For more information on use variances, please view the relevant ordinance:

[§ 153.038 POWERS AND DUTIES.](#)

[Click here to view the variance application.](#)

Use Variance Application Flowchart



RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Single and two-family dwellings

Standard single-family and two-family repairs do not require a building permit or site plan application. However, per Michigan Building Code, a building permit is required if creating additions to the building, or improvements that include:

- Removing or cutting away any wall, partition or portion thereof,
- Removing or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support,
- Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the exit requirements
- Changing, adding, or removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical

For more information on building permits or other permits for improvements, please view the relevant section in this guide.

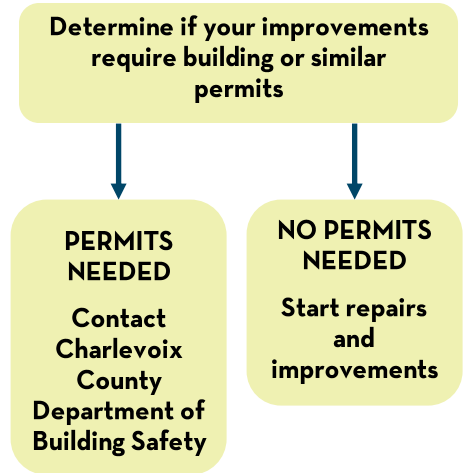
Multifamily dwellings

Standard multifamily repairs do not require a building permit or site plan application. However, structures containing 3 or more units are subject to site plan review processes with the City of Charlevoix in addition to the building permits criteria listed in the Michigan Building Code when making the additions or the following renovations:

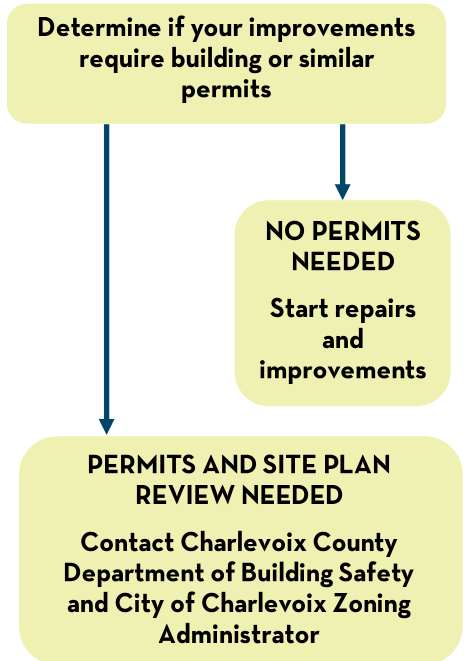
- Removing or cutting away any wall, partition or portion thereof,
- Removing or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support,
- Removing or changing of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the exit requirements
- Changing, adding, or removing standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical

If improvements and additions are located in a building with less than 2,000 square feet or the addition is not larger than 20% of the area of the building prior to expansion, a Level A site plan must be completed with the City of Charlevoix Zoning Administrator. If the building is above 2,000 square feet or the addition is above 20% of the area of the building prior to expansion, a Level B site plan must be completed with the City of Charlevoix Zoning Administrator and reviewed by the Planning Commission. For more information on the site plan review process, please view the relevant section in this document.

Single and two-family dwellings improvement flowchart



Multifamily dwellings improvement flowchart



BUILDING PERMITS

Who approves construction permits such as building, electrical, and plumbing?

All permitting and inspections regarding construction and utilities are approved and scheduled by Charlevoix County Department of Building Safety.

What is required to apply?

Certain documents and information are required to be submitted with the building permit application. Information required for all buildings permits include the address of the job site, a zoning permit, a complete signed application by the proper applicant, a set of construction plans, and permits including electrical, plumbing, and mechanical/heating. There may be further information including additional permits and certifications depending on the architecture and materials of the structure, its geographic location, or environmental factors possibly impacted by the construction. Fees accompany each permit. For a checklist of all items that need to be submitted with a building permit application, please view the PDF below:

[Charlevoix County Building Requirements Checklist](#)

Permit type	When is it required?
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 present ones.
Mechanical Permit	Installing new mechanical/heating fixtures or altering present ones.
Soil Erosion Permit	Moving or changing earth within 500 ft. of a lake or stream, changes that occur over 1 acre, and gravel operations within 500 ft. of a lake or stream or over 1 acre in size.

Where can I find out more about inspections?

Inspections will be required at multiple points throughout the project, for each permit issued. Inspection scheduling is a responsibility of the developer, and should occur when the work is ready for respective inspection. Charlevoix County inspectors will perform the mandatory inspections a reasonable amount of time after the request for inspection has been made. For more information regarding the schedule of inspections or inspection contacts for each permit, please visit the Charlevoix County Department of Building Safety, linked below:

[Charlevoix County Department of Building Safety Home Page](#)

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

A wide range of financial assistance and incentive programs may be available to your project at federal, state, and local levels. For those wishing to use these tools in their development process, it is important to understand what is available, what your project may be eligible for, and what requirements the programs set.

Commercial Redevelopment District:

Per Public Act 255 of 1978, the City of Charlevoix City Council may award commercial property tax abatements for up to 12 years to properties within the commercial redevelopment district. The commercial property must operate with one of the following uses: engineering, office, parts distribution, research and development, retail sales or warehousing.

Further, certain criteria must be met in order to be awarded with the Commercial Facilities Exemption Certificate that allows for the tax abatement. This criteria also determines the length of the property tax abatement. Properties applying must document job growth or retention, costs of construction or renovation, safety compliance, adherence to design & historic preservation standards, energy-saving construction or operation, and development of second floor housing.

[Click here to see the Commercial Facilities Exemption Certificate Policy](#)

Industrial Development District:

To encourage greater industrial development and spur manufacturing opportunities for developers, business owners, and laborers, the City of Charlevoix offers tax incentives for development involving industrial-zoned sites. These incentives can be applied in the expansion of pre-existing facilities, renovation of aging facilities, and constructing of new facilities, per PA 196 of 1974, the Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts Act. The Industrial Facilities Exemption certificate can provide property tax abatement for a maximum of 12 years. For more information on the Industrial Development District, please contact City Manager Mark Heydlauff at markh@charlevoixmi.gov.

Redevelopment Liquor Licenses:

Redevelopment liquor licenses can be obtained by dining, entertainment or recreation businesses operating within a redevelopment district. The business must have spent or have a commitment to spend at least \$75,000 in restoring the building in which the business is operating. Further, redevelopment liquor licenses can only be obtained when standard liquor licenses are no longer available. In addition to applying to the State Liquor Control Commission, a resolution from City Council must be passed pursuant to PA 501 of 2006.

[Click here to learn more about redevelopment liquor licenses.](#)

Match On Main Grant

Match on Main is a grant program hosted by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and available to small businesses within Select or Master-level Main Street Communities. Businesses must be located within Main Street boundaries, and develop a business plan through the community's Main Street director and the appropriate Small Business Development Center.

For more information on the requirements and project process steps for applying to Match on Main in Charlevoix, please click on the following link:

[Charlevoix Main Street Match on Main Grant for Small Businesses](#)

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The community development block grant is a federal program managed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. CDBG funds for the City of Charlevoix are administered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation on behalf of the Michigan Strategic Fund. The city can choose to directly use the funding to address services and infrastructure for low-moderate income individuals in the City of Charlevoix, or sub-contract the funds out to organizations that will improve services for this demographic. Possible uses of CDBG funds include, but are not limited to:

- Façade grants
- Blight elimination
- Minor home repair programs
- Critical infrastructure maintenance
- Business assistance loans/grants
- Rental rehabilitation
- Small business working capital loans
- Job creation
- Public facilities

For information on past, current, or potential CDBG uses by the City of Charlevoix, please contact Mark Heydlauff, City Manager at (231) 547-3270.

Downtown Housing Grant

Offered by the Downtown Development Authority, the Downtown Housing Grant can reimburse developers up to \$25,000 per housing unit created within the downtown district. Reimbursement will be on the basis of \$15.00 per square foot of renovation or new construction, and that the property owners participate in the year-round deed restriction program for the units being built. Eligible projects include site preparation, permanent building improvements with universal functionality, electrical/wiring, plumbing, lighting, and HVAC uses conducive to residential use, and flooring improvements, among others.

For more information on the Downtown Housing Grant, please view the [Downtown Housing Grant website](#).

Development Assistance Grant

The City of Charlevoix offers a development assistance grant to projects located within the city and enter a development agreement to add housing units (if residential) or full-time employment opportunities (if commercial or industrial). In addition to this, developments must also align with the City of Charlevoix Master Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Market Snapshot, or other city-conducted study that displays local demand for the product or service provided.

For more information on the Development Assistance Grant, please contact Mark Heydlauff, City Manager at (231) 547-3270.

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 their 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 Charlevoix County Clerk by phone at (231) 547-7200 or by email at clerk@charlevoixcounty.org

BUSINESS LICENSES

Business Licenses

Business licenses are required prior to a business operating in the City of Charlevoix. Business licenses can be obtained through the City Clerk. The City Clerk can be reached from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact information for the City Clerk is as follows:

Phone: (231) 547-3270

Email: clerk@charlevoixmi.gov

Liquor Licenses

Liquor licenses are required for businesses that seek to sell or serve alcoholic beverages. Applications for a liquor license must be filed to both the City of Charlevoix City Council and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. Applications sent to the City Council must meet the requirements found in the following zoning ordinance:

[§ 113.03 LICENSE APPLICATION; NEW AND TRANSFER.](#)

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission can be contacted at:

Phone: (517) 284-6310

Email: LARA-MLCC-Licensing-Information@michigan.gov

Redevelopment Liquor Licenses are also available as a business incentive to operations within an established business district or redevelopment area. For eligibility, please view the financial incentives pages located earlier in this guide.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

The City of Charlevoix Downtown Development Authority serves to create development plans, protect the downtown business district from deteriorating property values, promote historic preservation, and foster general economic growth. Using funds from tax increment financing, the DDA engages in business attraction and retention through marketing, event planning, and business & development incentives. The DDA also manages the Vault, a co-working space

For developers, the Downtown Development Authority provides a list of available properties for rent or sale in the central business district, with information listed such as address, square footage, nearby amenities, property bio, and contact information. Developers and business owners alike can find a complete list of local incentives and financial assistance tools (many of which are listed earlier in this guide) at the Downtown Development Authority's website, found here: charlevoixmi.gov/312/Main-Street

To contact the Downtown Development Authority, please contact the Main Street Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Lindsey Dotson at (231) 547-3257 or lindseyd@charlevoixmi.gov

Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce

The Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce connects and serves 400 business in the Northern Michigan area by providing business support, networking opportunities, education, advocacy, programming, and tourism-based events.

Like the DDA, the Chamber of Commerce website offers a list of properties currently for sale, with pictures, descriptions, and contact information. The Chamber also produces information on the vital statistics of the area, helping highlight workforce and business demographics.

For business owners, the website also provides similar information on properties for lease, along with connections to economic and business development organizations in the region.

Information on the activities of the Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce can be found on the non-profit's website at: charlevoix.org

For questions regarding benefits of joining the Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce, please call (231) 547-2101, or send a message at: business.charlevoix.org/contact

Visit Charlevoix

Visit Charlevoix is a non-profit convention & visitors bureau (CVB) that promotes and markets businesses pertaining to tourism and travel. Visit Charlevoix's destination marketing captures visitors seeking a trip rich in cultural heritage, a nature-oriented aesthetic, and a vibrant downtown. As such, businesses and developments that contribute to and benefit from the high number of visitors to the City will have a vested interest in the promotions and supported activities of the convention & visitors bureau. The types of businesses benefiting directly or indirectly from the CVB could include cafes, bars, and restaurants, hospitality, general retail and specialty shops, art galleries and more.

If you are seeking to develop a property or start a business that contributes to tourism in the area, contacting Visit Charlevoix is highly recommended. Please visit visitcharlevoix.com/Contact-Us or call 231-547-2101.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves Antrim, Charlevoix, and Cheboygan Counties. NLEA focuses on creating private-public sector partnerships to assist business leaders and innovators in creating or retaining high quality jobs for residents in Northeast Michigan. Developers and business owners seeking to add retail, commercial, or industrial employment positions to Charlevoix through their projects should visit the NLEA's website to view the financial incentives and community tools they have posted. [Click here to visit the "Community Tools" page on the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance website.](#)

To contact the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, call (231) 582-6482 or email info@northernlakes.net.