



Site Plan Review (SPR)

What is a Site Plan?

Most Michigan communities have some form of site plan review. The State of Michigan "*Zoning Enabling Act*" defines the site plan as "*the documents and drawings required by the zoning ordinance to insure that a proposed land use or activity is in compliance with local ordinances and state and federal statutes.*" **Note: ALL SPECIAL USES REQUIRE SITE PLAN APPROVAL AS OUTLINED BELOW.**

The Benefits of Site Plan Review (SPR)

The whole point of reviewing a site plan is to make sure the site functions well, and is attractive and safe for the public. Poorly designed sites that are cramped, inconvenient, unsafe and unattractive can hurt a business, impact neighboring properties, and can also make a site more difficult to sell, lease or reuse. When reviewing a site plan staff and Planning Commission members visualize such things as: how vehicles and people will circulate on the site, how the rainwater will run off the site, where utilities will connect, and how the development will impact its neighbors. In addition to making sure the site plan meets ordinance standards, staff is available to assist the owner or developer and can often make suggestions that may help the developer utilize the site better, which can reduce costs, keep future development options open, and enhance the resale value of properties.

What Kind of Development Needs Site Plan Review?

All additions, new construction and uses in the Commercial or Industrial districts; multi-family dwellings in the R-3 district; special land uses; planned unit developments; open space developments; and churches, schools, or recreational facilities in the AG, RE, R-1, R-2 or R-3 districts need site plan review and **approval before a building permit can be issued**. Any use which does not specifically require SPR is still subject to review by the Zoning Administrator to ensure that Zoning Ordinance requirements are met.

Note: Planned Unit Development proposals are further governed by Chapter 14. Site Condominium projects are further governed by Chapter 15.

The SPR Process

1. The process starts with the Community Development Director (CDD), who coordinates with other Township staff, the county and consultants. A pre-application meeting with the CDD and other Township staff is strongly recommended prior to making formal site plan application.
2. Township staff takes the application and appropriate fee, along with the required escrow deposit (see note below). All SPR applications must be filled out completely and accurately by the applicant in order to be accepted. Applications must be signed by the owner of the property, or their authorized agent and must be accompanied by 6 copies of the complete site plan and supporting documents. Site plans may also need to be submitted to other county or state agencies – see the 'Additional Contacts' list below for specifics.
3. Township staff will complete an internal review of the site plan and will then notify the applicant within one week if any revisions or additional information is necessary. If revisions are necessary, then 15 copies of the will be required for distribution to staff and Planning Commission. If no revisions are necessary, then nine (9) additional copies shall be provided.

4. Along with the application you will need to provide current proof of ownership of the subject property or evidence of a contractual ability to acquire the land, such as an option or purchase contract.
5. Please note - If the site plan does not contain all the appropriate information required by Section 19.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, it will not be reviewed and the Planning Commission will take no action until all required information has been provided.
6. The complete site plan is reviewed by township staff, county departments and consultants for their comments and recommendations which are forwarded to the Planning Commission (PC) prior to the meeting date.
7. The PC will review the application, all submitted comments and all other relevant information provided at the meeting. The applicant or a representative needs to attend the meeting to answer any questions that the PC may have, or the PC may delay the review until their next scheduled meeting if they feel more information is needed to make a decision. If the PC determines that further information is required before a decision on the request can be made, any additional information needs to be submitted at least 2 weeks before the next PC meeting in order for the request to be considered then. The PC will approve the site plan, deny it, or approve it with conditions.
8. Once the site plan has been approved, the Community Development Director and Planning Commission Chairman sign 2 copies of it. One copy becomes part of the Township's files, and one copy is returned to the applicant.
9. Any major changes to an approved site plan, as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, requires the applicant to submit an amended site plan and associated fee for Planning Commission review.

What Should the Site Plan Include?

Chapters 15, 19, 19B and 19C of the Zoning Ordinance address parking, site plan review, landscaping and access management (respectively). In addition, several general provisions apply (noted following). Copies of these sections or of the full ordinance are available from the township at the address below or on the Township website: www.springlaketwp.org. To help sift through the technical language more quickly, below is a checklist of the Township's requirements. It is not meant to replace the ordinance, but to help an applicant work through the ordinance language more easily. **NOTE: just because all required information is on the site plan, does not assure approval. The Planning Commission still must evaluate the design according to standards set forth in Section 19.3 of the ordinance (included in page 5 of this handout).**

Basic Information

(see Section 19.2 of the Zoning Ordinance)

Every site plan should have "the basics" so anyone reviewing it can understand where the site is and what is being proposed (see Section 19.2 of the Zoning Ordinance). The site plan must be based on a certified land survey. In short, the sooner the PC gets oriented, the quicker the review will be. The basics include such things as:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Date, north arrow and scale. The scale needs to be at least 1" = 50' for properties less than 3 acres or 1" = 100' for properties 3 acres or more. | <input type="checkbox"/> Name, address, phone # of the site plan preparer, including seal is applicable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location of all proposed buildings, structures or other improvements. | <input type="checkbox"/> Location, size and type of present buildings or structures to be retained or removed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location of lot lines. | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of utilities and fire hydrants. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location of existing structures on land immediately adjacent to the site within 100 feet of the site's parcel lines. | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of existing and proposed streets, drives and parking lots. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gross areas of buildings and parking. | <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed staging of the project, if any. |

- The period of time within which the project will be completed.
- Preliminary architectural sketches and/or a general statement as to the type of construction and materials to be used in the proposed buildings or structures. Height and area of buildings and structures shall be described.
- A description of all aspects of the plan that might have an adverse effect on public health, safety and welfare.
- Method of financing and commitments, or other proof of ability to obtain financing.

District Dimensional Requirements

- Minimum lot size: _____
- Minimum lot width: _____
- Front Yard Setback: _____ See Section 3.35 for additional setback requirements
- Side Yard Setback: _____
- Rear Yard Setback: _____
- Maximum building height: _____
- Percentage of lot coverage: _____

Engineering and Utility Information

- Topographical features** including contour intervals no greater than five (5) feet. [Section 19.2 (1) (i)]
- Proposed method of providing **storm drainage**. Site Plans need to show that removal of storm waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties. Parking areas and driveways must be designed to provide adequate drainage. [Section 19.2 (1) (e), Section 19.3 (c), Section 15.5 (b)]
- Location of water and sewer lines, as well as **utilities** with reference to location, availability and compatibility. [Section 19.2 (1) (d) and (g)]

Parking, Access and Circulation (to be sure site circulation is efficient and safe)

- Location of existing and proposed **streets, drives and parking** lots. Every structure needs to have access to a public street, walkway or other area dedicated to common use. [Section 19.2 (1) (c), Section 19.3 (f)].
Chapter 19C addresses access management requirements regarding number and spacing of driveways, shared access drives and design standards.
Section 3.27A pertains to private roads. Section 3.27 addresses frontage requirements for lots.
Section 3.30 pertains to traffic visibility at corners.
- Loading** and unloading facilities. [Section 19.2 (1) (o), 15.6]
- All buildings need to be arranged as to permit **emergency vehicle access** by some practical means to all sides. [Section 19.3 (e)]
- A **pedestrian circulation system** needs to be provided which is insulated as much as practical from the vehicular circulation system [Section 19.3 (g)]
- For non-residential districts or uses, **parking areas** need to be within 300 feet of the building or use they are intended to serve. [Section 15.3 (b)] Anti-glare standards, additional landscaping and design standards apply [Section 15.5 and 19B.6]
- Adequate numbers of parking spaces** must be provided. Provide number of employees and Floor Area for parking calculations. [Section 15.1]
- Parking requirements vary according to the proposed use, see Section 15.1 (a) – (v) for details. Maximum Parking requirements apply [15.8] Deferred parking [15.7] may be employed.
 - Common parking areas between uses are encouraged, see Section 15.2 for details.
- The **minimum width for all parking spaces** is 9 feet. The **minimum length** is 18 feet for a 76-90 degree angle parking pattern, 21 feet for a 30-75 degree angle parking pattern and 25 feet for a parallel parking pattern. [Section 15.4]
- Maneuvering lanes** are required to be a minimum of 18 to 26 feet in width for two-way traffic and 12 feet in width for one-way traffic, depending on the parking pattern. [Section 15.4]
- Entrances and exits for parking areas need to be located so as to **minimize traffic congestion**. [Section 15.5 (d)]

- Parking areas must be **surfaced with concrete or asphalt pavement**. A site plan note acknowledging the requirement helps. Parking spaces need to have curb stops located so that no part of a parked vehicle extends beyond the parking area. Curbing is also recommended as it extends the life of pavement, can help direct stormwater, and prevents damage to landscaped areas and fences. [Section 15.5 (b) and (e)]
- No part of any parking area can be **closer than 10 feet** to a street right-of-way line. [Section 15.5 (g)]
- Any use involving the receipt or distribution in vehicles of materials or merchandise must have adequate maneuvering space for delivery vehicles and **off-street loading spaces** in relation to floor area (see below). Loading spaces must be 10 feet wide, 35 feet long and 14 feet high, and must be at least 50 feet from any residentially-zoned lot. [Section 15.6]
 - Up to 20,000 square feet of floor area requires 1 loading space
 - 20,000 to 50,000 square feet of floor area requires 2 loading spaces
 - Each additional 50,000 square feet of floor area requires 1 additional loading space

Natural features, Landscaping, Screening, Lighting and Signs

- The site plan needs to show ground cover and other **pertinent physical features** of the site such as wetlands, trees, steep slopes, drainage ditches and water courses. See also the Township wetlands protection ordinance. [Section 19.2 (1) (j) and (k)]
See also Section 3.39 for rules pertaining to common use waterfront lots.
- The site plan needs to delineate the one hundred (100) year **floodplain** and any proposed uses therein. [Section 19.2 (6)] No dwelling units can be built in a floodplain (see Chapter 5)
- Proposed landscaping** (included also on a separate planting plan) must be shown on the site plan. See Section 19B.4 for specific requirements for the planting plan and Section 19B.5 for the standards by which the PC will review the planting plan. [Section 19.2 (1) (l)]
Industrial uses must also address Section 12.6.
- The landscaping needs to be **preserved in its natural state** as much as practical, by limiting tree and soil removal and by topographic modifications which result in maximum harmony with adjacent areas. [Section 19.3 (b)]
See also Section 3.40 for specific regulations regarding tree protection requirements.
- Conservation of **native vegetation and habitat** is encouraged. Innovative plans which accomplish this may be approved by the PC even if they do not fully comply with the requirements of Chapter 19. [Section 19B.3 (i)]
- Perimeter landscaping** is required for parking lots adjacent to or visible from within 20 feet of a street. Perimeter landscaping needs to be at least 10 feet in width and must have at least 1 tree for every 30 feet of street frontage for the parking lot, along with a continuous screen at least 36 inches high, consisting of a berm, hedge, wall, building or combination approved by the Building Inspector as not causing a clear vision hazard. [Section 19B.6 (a) and (b)]
- Interior landscaping** is required for parking lots exceeding 10,000 square feet in area. Interior landscaping needs to break up the expanse of paving area and must total at least 1 square foot for every 15 square feet of parking lot area (individual landscaped areas cannot be less than 150 square feet) and must have at least 1 tree for each 150 square feet. Around each tree there needs to be an open area of at least 75 square feet with a minimum diameter of 4 feet at the tree trunk. [Section 19B.6 (c)]
- All **Screening and buffering** is required to be shown on the site plan with reference to type, dimensions and character. The site plan needs to provide reasonable visual and sound privacy for all dwelling units. Fences, walks, barriers and landscaping need to be appropriately used to protect and enhance property and privacy of occupants. [Section 19.2 (1) (h), Section 19.3 (d)]
See Section 3.17 regarding general rules for fences (e.g., no barbed wire)
- Refuse and service areas need to be shown on the site plan. **Waste receptacles, HVAC units, loading/unloading areas and outdoor storage areas** are required to be screened by a wood or masonry solid wall or live conifer landscape material (narrow evergreen trees planted no more than 3 feet apart) at least 6 feet high or 1 foot above the object being screened, whichever is greater. [Section 19.2 (1) (f), Section 19.3 (h), Section 19B.6 (d), Section 3.6]

- Exterior **lighting and signs** need to be shown on the site plan. Lighting needs to be arranged to be deflected away from adjacent properties and so as to not impede traffic along adjacent streets. Flashing or intermittent lights are not permitted. [Section 19.2 (1) (p), Section 19.3 (i)]
- All proposed **signage** needs to meet the requirements of Section 3.16.

Ordinance Excerpt Site Plan Review Standards (SECTION 19.3)

In addition to any standards or requirements specified in other sections of this Ordinance which are relevant to the project for which site plan approval is sought, the following standards shall be considered in reviewing and approving site plans:

- (a) *All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to topography, the size and type of Lot, the character of adjoining property and the type and size of Buildings. The site will be so developed as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this Ordinance.*
- (b) *The landscaping and other existing natural features on the site shall be preserved in their natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications which result in maximum harmony with adjacent areas and existing drainage patterns.*
- (c) *Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of storm waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or surface or groundwater resources.*
- (d) *The site plan shall provide reasonable, visual and sound privacy for all dwelling units located therein. Fences, walks, barriers and landscaping shall be used, as appropriate, for the protection and enhancement of property and for the privacy of its occupants.*
- (e) *All Buildings or groups of Buildings shall be so arranged as to permit emergency Vehicle access by some practical means to all sides.*
- (f) *Every Structure or Dwelling Unit shall have access to a public Street, walkway or other area dedicated to common use.*
- (g) *A pedestrian circulation system shall be provided which is insulated as completely as reasonably possible from the vehicular circulation system.*
- (h) *All loading and unloading areas and outside storage areas, including areas for the storage of trash, which face or are visible from residential properties or public thoroughfares, shall be screened, by a vertical screen consisting of structural (fence) or plant materials no less than six (6) feet in height.*
- (i) *Exterior lighting shall be so arranged that it is deflected away from adjacent properties, so that it does not impede the vision of traffic along adjacent streets. Lighting shall further be arranged in a manner that is night sky friendly and shall provide reasonable site illumination without adverse light pollution. Flashing or intermittent lights shall not be permitted.*

- (j) *The site plan shall be consistent with the intent and purpose of this Ordinance and the Spring Lake Township Master Plan.*

Helpful Hints

1. Of course, if all the information and details necessary are provided on the site plan (i.e., you have done your “homework”), and if the plan meets all ordinance requirements, approval can be received quickly.
2. Remember, the site plan is a contract with the community and should not leave out information. Site plan notes assuring the Township that you know what your responsibilities are help speed up the approval process. For example, the ordinance requires that existing trees be preserved as much as practical. Less tree removal saves you time, money and may reduce additional landscaping requirements. It also makes the site more attractive and helps manage stormwater. If you have noted the trees on site, also note which ones are going “to be protected”. The Township also has a Wetlands Protection Ordinance. If wetlands are delineated on site and the site plan reflects them, it eliminates that question from the Planning Commission’s list.
3. Township staff is here to help facilitate the development process - ask for help if you need it!

Performance Guarantees

As a condition of any approval, the township can require a financial guarantee to assure the installation of features such as roadways, curbing, landscaping, fencing, walls, screening, lighting, drainage facilities, sidewalks, driveways, utilities, etc. Any performance guarantee will need to be 100% of the cost of materials and installation for the required improvements, plus engineering and contingency costs. A performance guarantee can be in the form of a cash deposit, certified check, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or surety bond acceptable to the Township.

Other Approvals

Sometimes developments are in a floodplain or may involve altering a wetland. These activities fall under state and/or federal law and often need state level permits. County approvals may also be necessary. Site Plan approval is often conditioned upon getting these other approvals. **Copies of such approvals must be provided to the Township prior to the issuance of a building permit.**

Note on Fees and Escrow Payments

The application fee generally covers normal Township expenses for processing the application (postage, newspaper ad, etc.). In addition, applicants are required to reimburse the Township for out-of-pocket expenses such as consultant fees, attorney fees, etc. The applicant must pay an initial deposit to cover these expenses and further deposits may also be required. Any excess amount deposited by the applicant but not spent by the Township will be returned to the applicant once the request has been completed.

Contact Information

Community Development Director:
Lukas Hill, AICP – 842-9270

Building Official:
Greg Mason – (231) 865-3310

Building and Planning Assistant:
Connie Meiste - 842-9270

Township DPW Director:
Ron Brondyke (616) 402-1670

Township Fire Chief:
Rick Nuvill (616) 844-0491

Additional Contacts:

For developments with well and septic:

Ottawa County Environmental Health Dept. (616)393-5645
Tom Olson
12251 James Street
Holland, MI 49424

For any development accessing a county road:

Ottawa County Road Commission (616)842-5400
Brett Laughlin
P.O. Box 739
Grand Haven, MI 49417

For any development disrupting more than 1 acre or within 500 feet of a water body:

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Stormwater Review
Ottawa County Drain Commission
414 Washington
Room 107
Grand Haven MI 49417

For stormwater review (2 copies must be submitted)

Ottawa County Drain Commission (616)846-8220
414 Washington
Room 107
Grand Haven MI 49417

For developments with frontage on M-104:

Michigan Department of Transportation (231)777-3451
Tim Terry
2225 Olthoff Drive
Muskegon, MI 49444

Any questions about the Planning Commission or Plan Review can be directed to the Community Development Director at: Spring Lake Township Hall, 106 S. Buchanan, Spring Lake, MI 49456. Phone: (616) 842-9270 Fax: (616) 842-1546
Email: lhill@springlaketwp.org

SITE PLAN AND SPECIAL USE APPLICATION

SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP, OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____
Fax: (____) _____ E-Mail: _____

APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____
Fax: (____) _____ E-Mail: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address: _____
Permanent Parcel Number: 70-03- _____
Existing Zoning: _____ Proposed Use: _____
Property Owner & Address: _____

REQUEST

State the reason(s) why Site Plan and/or Special Use Approval is being requested: _____

Section 19.3 of the Spring Lake Township Zoning Ordinance establishes standards that all Site Plans must meet in addition to any specific special use standards. These are listed in the information accompanying this form. On a separate sheet(s) please provide written explanation of how this request conforms to the review standards.

***All information submitted to the Township shall also be submitted on a compact disc in a PDF format. This information will be posted on the Township website for public review.**

I hereby attest that the information on this form is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate. I hereby grant permission for members of the Township Planning Commission, staff and consultants to enter the subject property for the purpose of gathering information related to the request.

Applicant's Signature

Date

For Office Use Only

Date Application Filed: _____
Application Fee Amount: _____ Date Paid: _____
Escrow Deposit Amount: _____ Date Paid: _____
Date of Planning Commission Meeting: _____ Public Hearing Date: _____
Date of Township Board Meeting: _____
Other Action Required: Rezoning _____ Variance _____ Special Use _____