ECORSE ZONING ORDINANCE

New Zoning Ordinance Frequently Asked Questions

The City of Ecorse is preparing a new zoning ordinance. The goal of the project is to align the City's zoning ordinance with the 2023 Master Plan. The new zoning ordinance will establish land development regulations to ensure that new development and redevelopment in the City reflects the community's vision for the future, as illustrated in the master plan. The City is working with Giffels Webster, a planning and zoning consulting firm, to develop draft ordinance language.

There will be multiple opportunities for public input into the zoning ordinance rewrite process.

The following frequently asked questions have been prepared to provide information to residents, property owners, and business owners seeking to be informed about the new zoning ordinance.

Why Is the City of Ecorse Updating the Zoning Ordinance?

There are three primary reasons that the City is updating the ordinance:

- To implement the 2023 Master Plan
- To provide general updates to reflect case law and current planning practice
- To make regulations more user-friendly and easier for City staff to enforce



What Is Zoning?

Zoning is a key tool municipalities use to regulate land development within its boundaries. It divides land into zones, each with rules governing how the land may be used. These regulations help communities achieve valuable goals, such as a balance of housing choices, adequate and accessible goods and services, safe buildings and public spaces, and sufficient roads and utilities. Zoning also tries to limit negative impacts to the environment, separate incompatible uses and protect property values, among other community goals.

A community defines its goals in a master land use plan that anticipates what will be needed to be encouraged, managed, or prohibited in the future. The zoning regulations are created or revised based on that master plan. Zoning rules from one community may not work in another community, because each community has different goals.

A zoning ordinance provides the rules and regulations about allowable land uses, the size and shape of buildings (building form), as well as other standards for development. It also describes how the municipality will ensure the rules are being followed. A zoning map shows the location of the zoning districts established in the zoning text.

Continue reading on next page

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Public Input Opportunities

- Information about the zoning ordinance update process will be posted on the project website: www.engage.giffelswebster.com/ecorse-zoning-update.
- A community survey for sharing your experiences with the current ordinance is available at the project website through November 5th.
- The Planning Commission will hold a zoning ordinance rewrite kick-off meeting on November 18, 2026, at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Albert B. Buday Civic Center, 3869 W. Jefferson – 2nd floor, which the public is welcome to attend. Findings from the survey and an audit of the current ordinance will be presented.
- Up to four Planning Commission workshops, focused on different corridors or districts and topics requiring further exploration will be held throughout the process.
- Upon completion of the draft zoning ordinance, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing. An informal open house will take place before the hearing to allow the community to understand key zoning changes and ask questions will be held.
- The email address posted at the end of this FAQ is available to receive public comment.

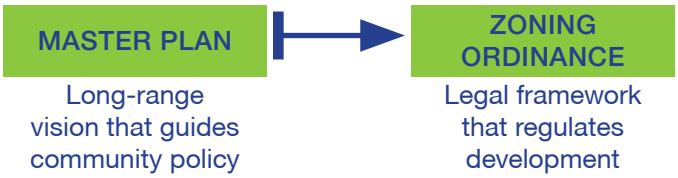
Continued from page 1

What Is the Difference Between the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance?

A **master plan** is:

- A "big picture" and long-range (10- to 15-year) blueprint establishing how a community wants to look in the future
- Looks at many important parts of a community together like housing, economic development and transportation
- Helps guide land use decisions (e.g., rezonings) and policies (e.g., the zoning ordinance)

The **zoning ordinance** is a set of rules that make sure the community looks like what's in the master plan.



The 2023 Master Plan is available on the City's website: https://www.ecorsemi.gov/government/master_plan.php.

When the New Zoning Ordinance is Approved, Will I Have to Change My Building or Signs to Reflect New Regulations?

Existing uses, sites, and structures may remain as they are if they were lawfully constructed or established under previous zoning regulations. If they do not align with the updated ordinance, they will be considered legal nonconforming uses, sites, and structures. Once the new zoning ordinance is adopted, if you build a new building, it will need to comply with the new regulations. Expansions and alterations of nonconforming uses, sites and structures may require partial or complete compliance with the new ordinance.

Will There Be a Public Hearing for the New Ordinance?

Yes. A public hearing is required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. Notice of the hearing will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City not less than 15 days before the date of the hearing.

Who Establishes and Administers Zoning?

A zoning code or ordinance are rules adopted by the governing body (City Council) following a recommendation by the planning commission. Administration of the zoning ordinance is established in the zoning regulations, but is also influenced by state law, which may require certain bodies to act on certain requests.

Why Do Communities Need Zoning?

Zoning regulations allow communities to:

- **Protect and/or buffer sensitive land uses**. For example, zoning can separate residential areas from more intense uses, like industrial uses that create noise, traffic, odor, glare, or other impacts.
- **Protect and/or regulate sensitive natural features**. Communities can limit how much development takes place in certain areas or require mitigation of the impact (like planting more trees).
- **Boost economic development**. Zoning can direct businesses and industry to suitable locations, such as major roads or rail corridors, and encourage workforce housing near its employment centers or corridors.
- **Protect individual property values**. Buffering or separating certain less intense land uses from those with negative impacts helps protect property values. Property values are also maintained when there is certainty about what will be developed nearby. For example, if someone follows the zoning rules and builds a house in a residential zone, they can feel secure with their investment knowing other property owners have to follow the same rules.
- **Provide orderly process for considering changes**. Zoning regulations should explain the process to change zoning classifications, permitted uses in a district, and associated regulations.
- **Protect a community's historic district or historic sites**. Many communities with historic downtowns want to keep buildings up to the sidewalk as was done in the past and may have different rules for parking or signage.
- **Provide standards for development review and approval**. The review process should be fair and show consistent results.
- **Provide for appeals**. The zoning ordinance provides for an appeals process where there are practical difficulties that prevent a property owner from complying with dimensional or other non-use-related zoning regulations.

What Can't Zoning Do?

- Eliminate a land use that had been legally established, but due to ordinance changes, is no longer a permitted use (sometimes called "grandfathered" uses).
- Guarantee that certain development will take place.
- Be used to change or modify other ordinances, such as building or electrical codes.

For more information or other questions, please contact contact Angeline Lawrence, Planning, Zoning and DDA Director, at alawrence@ecorsemi.gov or 313-386-2520.