

WHITE RIVER TOWNSHIP: PROPERTY OWNERS GUIDE TO BUILDING WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP

General information

- White River Township is a zoned community which means all land parcels have a designated zone as illustrated by the current zoning map. Lakeshore parcels may lay within the Critical Dune Overlay Zone in addition to the underlying zone.
- White River Township follows the WRT Zoning Ordinances adopted for each district, which can be found under the Zoning tab of this website. You may also request a printed version of the entire WRT Zoning Ordinance or individual chapters by contacting the WRT Clerk.
- These zoning ordinances are designed to promote public health and safety through regulating the development of land, land uses and structures.
- All WRT property owners should contact the WRT Zoning Administrator prior to any renovation or new construction commences (including private drives and driveways). A Building Permit will not be issued without first obtaining a Zoning Permit. Failure to acquire all necessary permits prior to construction is a violation and will result in penalties as described in the WRT Zoning Ordinance.
- Zoning and building permits are required for all new construction and building expansions including; but, not limited to: decks on homes; 3-season rooms; additional accessory building, prebuilt or built on site; roof expansion; swimming pool, in or above ground; and ground or structure mounted solar arrays. Please note that storage/accessory buildings placed near the waterfront have different specifications from other zoning districts.

WRT Zoning Administrator

- The WRT Zoning Administrator is appointed by the WRT Board to administer the WRT Zoning Ordinance and enforce compliance of zoning ordinances with the assistance of the WRT Code Enforcement Officer.
- The WRT Zoning Administrator will advise property owners on the specific requirements of each project. In some districts the WRT Zoning Administrator is authorized to approve site plans and issue zoning permits without further action; however, in some districts further review may be required.
- All property boundary changes and parcel splits (land divisions) must be reviewed by the WRT Zoning Administrator prior to submission to the appropriate Muskegon County department for final approval.
- Registering property boundary changes/new parcels with the Muskegon County Register of Deeds is the property owner's responsibility and is recommended for the benefit of all residents.

General Zoning Permit Requirements:

- If a site plan is required it should include the proposed new construction, lot dimensions, road locations, existing buildings, wells, septic system components, ponds, impermeable structures including driveways, patios or fire pits with size, location and distances between structures and property lines denoted. Note that setbacks from property lines are required to be followed; as well as, line of sight on Waterfront District buildings. The Zoning Administrator may require additional elements to the site plan. All items must be drawn to scale and presented in typical blueprint size.

- If the property is in the Critical Dune Overlay District, you are required to get an EGLE (Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy) permit and a Muskegon County Department of Public Works Soil Erosion Control Permit prior to receiving a WRT Zoning Permit.
- You are also required to get a Muskegon County Health Department permit for all new wells and septic systems in all districts.
- The application for a zoning permit, including a site plan and other documents, is completed by the property owner or an architect, builder, or contractor authorized by the property owner and submitted to the Zoning Administrator.
- If required by the WRT Zoning Ordinance, an application for site plan review will need to be submitted to the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator will determine if WRT Planning Commission review is necessary and will schedule a presentation to the Planning Commission, typically at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting.
- For Waterfront District properties, the WRT Planning Commission must review and approve the site plans prior to the Zoning Administrator approval.
- Critical Dune Overlay District properties require a public hearing prior to the Planning Commission approval and Zoning Administrator approval.
- A signed Zoning Permit is required to apply for a building permit.
- If the Zoning Administrator determines that not all requirements are met, the Zoning Administrator will advise the property owner of options available.
- If the WRT Planning Commission denies approval of a site plan, the applicant may request a hearing with the WRT Zoning Board of Appeals.

Note: A Zoning Board of Appeals hearing is a public hearing which requires the WRT Clerk to notify that property's neighbors by mail and place a notice of the meeting in the local newspaper; therefore, the property owner will be responsible for paying the current fee for a public hearing prior to the WRT Clerk scheduling the ZBA hearing.

The current WRT fee schedule is posted on this website.

Please contact the WRT Zoning Administrator for all building, zoning and other White River Township ordinance questions.

WRT Zoning Ordinance Requirements Example:

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS (EXAMPLE)	
FRONT YARD	40 feet
SIDE YARD	15 feet each side
REAR YARD	25 feet
BUILDING HEIGHT	Maximum 2-1/2 stories not to exceed 35 feet (except lawful non dwelling agricultural buildings—no height limit)
LOT COVERAGE	20% total of non-porous surface
MINIMUM LOT AREA	1 acre
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH AND STREET FRONTAGE	150 feet
MAXIMUM LOT DEPTH TO WIDTH RATIO	4:1 MINIMUM
DWELLING UNIT FLOOR AREA	Above one story - 600 square feet on ground floor