

# Code and Ordinance Worksheet

## for moving toward better site design



### Summary & Directions

The Code and Ordinance Worksheet allows an in-depth review of the standards, ordinances, and codes (i.e., the development rules) that shape how development occurs in your community. The worksheet consists of a series of questions that are based on the Code and Ordinance Worksheet developed by the Center for Watershed Protection. Slight modifications have been made in order to capture the specific needs of communities in the South Branch Shiawassee River Watershed.

Two tasks need to be performed before sitting down to begin the worksheet. **First**, identify all the development rules that apply in your community. Some key local documents that you will need include the zoning ordinance, subdivision codes, parking requirements, street standards, building and fire regulations/standards, stormwater management or drainage criteria, buffer and floodplain regulations, environmental regulations, tree protection or landscaping ordinance, erosion and sediment control ordinance, and grading ordinance. **Second**, identify the local, state and federal authorities that actually administer or enforce the development rules in your community. A team approach may be helpful. You may wish to enlist the help of a local plan reviewer, land planner, zoning official, land use attorney or civil engineer.

Upon completing the worksheet, please send your responses back to us at the address listed at the end of the document. We will compile the results and see how your rules stack up to the Model Development Principles that are the ideal set of rules to protect water resources. The worksheet should be a useful guide for your community to review its development rules, and serves as a basis for determining where future improvements could be made.

### Local, State, and Federal authorities responsible for development in your community

Development responsibility	State/Federal	County	Town
Sets road standards	Agency:		
	Contact Name:		
	Phone:		
Reviews/approves subdivision plans	Agency:		
	Contact Name:		
	Phone:		
Establishes zoning ordinances	Agency:		
	Contact Name:		
	Phone:		

Development responsibility		State/Federal	County	Town
Establishes subdivision ordinances	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Reviews/establishes stormwater management & drainage criteria	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Provides fire protection & fire protection code enforcement	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Oversees buffer ordinances	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Oversees wetland protection	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Establishes grading requirements or oversees erosion & sediment control programs	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Reviews/approves septic systems	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Reviews/approves utility plans (e.g., water & sewer)	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			
Reviews/approves forest conservation & tree protection plans	Agency:			
	Contact Name:			
	Phone:			

Please answer all questions with a YES or NO response where appropriate. If your community does not have an ordinance or standard relating to a specific question but does negotiate with developers on a case-by-case basis, please indicate as such. Please do not leave any questions blank.

**1. Street width**

What is the minimum pavement width allowed for streets in low-density developments that have less than 500 average daily trips (ADT)?

At higher densities are parking lanes allowed to also serve as traffic lanes (i.e., queuing streets)?

When were the street width standards last updated?

**2. Street length**

Do street standards promote the most efficient street layouts that reduce overall street length?

**3. Right-of-way width**

What is the minimum right of way width for a residential street?

Does the code allow utilities to be placed under the paved section of a right of way?

**4. Cul-de-Sacs**

What is the minimum radius allowed for cul-de-sacs?

Can a landscaped island be created within the cul-de-sac?

Are alternative turnaround areas such as “hammerheads” allowed on short streets in low-density residential developments?

**5. Vegetated Open Channels**

Are curbs and gutters required for most residential street sections?

Are there established design criteria for swales that can provide stormwater quality treatment (i.e., dry swales, biofilters, grass swales)?

Are typical lawn care maintenance activities (e.g., fertilizer & herbicide application, routine mowing, etc) discouraged or prohibited in vegetated open channels?

**6. Parking Ratios**

What is the minimum parking ratio for a professional office building (per 1000 sq. ft of gross floor area)?

What is the minimum required parking ratio for shopping centers (per 1000 sq. ft gross floor area)?

What is the minimum required parking ratio for single-family homes (per home)?

**7. Parking Codes**

Is the use of shared parking arrangements promoted?

Are model shared parking agreements provided?

Are parking ratios reduced if shared parking arrangements are in place?

If mass transit is provided nearby, is the parking ratio reduced?

**8. Parking Lots**

What is the minimum stall width for a standard parking space?

What is the minimum stall length for a standard parking space?

Are at least 30% of the spaces at larger commercial parking lots required to have smaller dimensions for compact cars?

Can pervious materials (e.g., gravel, pervious pavement) be used for spillover parking areas?

**9. Structured Parking**

Are there incentives for developers to provide parking within garages rather than surface parking lots?

**10. Parking Lot & Other Runoff**

Is a minimum percentage of a parking lot required to be landscaped?

Is the use of bioretention islands (uses landscaping and soils to treat stormwater runoff by collecting it in shallow depressions before filtering it through a fabricated planting soil media) and other stormwater practices within landscaped areas or setbacks allowed?

Are car wash companies required/encouraged to retain and reuse wash water?

**11. Open Space Design**

Are open space or cluster development designs allowed in your community?

Is land conservation or impervious cover reduction a major goal of the open space design ordinance, if any?

Are the submittal or review of requirements for open space design greater than those for conventional development?

Is open space or cluster design a “by-right” form of development?

Are flexible site design criteria available for developers that utilize open space or cluster design options (e.g., setbacks, road widths, lot sizes)?

**12. Setbacks and Frontages**

Are irregular lot shapes (e.g., pie-shaped, flag lots) allowed in the community?

What is the minimum requirement for front setbacks for a one half (1/2) acre residential lot?

What is the minimum requirement for side setbacks for one half (1/2) acre residential lot?

What is the minimum requirement for rear setbacks for one half (1/2) acre residential lot?

What is the minimum frontage distance for a one half (1/2) acre residential lot?

**13. Sidewalks**

What is the minimum sidewalk width allowed in the community?

Are sidewalks always required on both sides of residential streets?

Are sidewalks generally sloped so they drain to the front yard rather than the street?

Can alternate pedestrian networks be substituted for sidewalks (e.g., trails through common areas)?

**14. Driveways**

What is the minimum driveway width specified in the community?

Can pervious materials be used for single-family home driveways (e.g., grass, gravel, porous pavement, etc)?

Can a “two-track” design be used for single-family driveways (2 strips for driving with a grassy strip in the middle)?

Are shared driveways permitted in residential developments?

**15. Open Space Management**

Does the community have enforceable requirements to establish associations that can effectively manage open space?

Are open space areas required to be consolidated into larger units?

Does a minimum percentage of open space have to be managed in a natural condition (e.g., non-landscaped)?

Are allowable and unallowable uses for open space in residential developments defined?

Can open space be managed by a third party using land trusts or conservation easements?

**16. Rooftop Runoff**

Can rooftop runoff be discharged to yard areas?

Do current grading or drainage requirements allow for temporary ponding of stormwater on front yards or rooftops?

**17. Buffer Systems**

Is there a stream buffer ordinance in the community?

If so, what is the minimum buffer width?

Is there a wetland buffer ordinance in the community?

If so, what is the minimum buffer width?

Is expansion of the buffer to include steep slopes and/or the 100-yr floodplain required?

**18. Buffer Maintenance**

*If you do not have buffer maintenance requirements in your community, skip to section 19.*

Does the buffer ordinance specify that at least part of the buffer be maintained by native vegetation?

Does the buffer ordinance outline allowable uses?

Does the ordinance outline enforcement and education mechanisms?

**19. Clearing and Grading**

Is there any ordinance that requires or encourages preservation of natural vegetation at residential development sites?

Do reserve septic field areas need to be cleared of trees at the time of development?

**20. Tree Conservation**

If forests of specimen trees are present at residential development sites, does some of the stand have to be preserved?

Are the limits of disturbance shown on construction plans adequate for preventing clearing of natural vegetative cover during construction?

**21. Land Conservation Incentives**

Are there any incentives to developers or landowners to conserve non-regulated land (e.g., open space design, non-regulated wetland preservation, density bonuses, stormwater credits, or lower property tax rates)?

If so, which?

Is flexibility to meet regulatory or conservation restrictions (e.g., density compensation, buffer averaging, transferable development rights, off-site mitigation) offered to developers?

Is so, which?

Is there a transfer of development rights (TDR) program which allow landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel for your community?

**22. Stormwater Outfalls**

Is treatment of stormwater for *quality* improvement required before it is discharged?

Are there effective design criteria for stormwater best management practices (BMPs)?

If so, when were they last updated?

Can storm water be directly discharged into a jurisdictional wetland without pretreatment?

Does a floodplain management ordinance exist that restricts or prohibits development within the 100-year floodplain?

**23. Land Runoff**

Are incentives available for landowners to use organic fertilizers as opposed to chemical applications for your community?

Does your community provide incentives for landowners to test their soil for nutrient content?

Does your community have a standard regarding irrigation activities on public and private land?

Does your community have a standard regarding fertilizer, herbicide, and/or insecticide application rates? If so, please specify which one.

**24. Farmland Preservation**

Does your community currently have an agricultural protection zoning (APZ) ordinance?

Does your community currently have a right-to-farm ordinance in addition to the state law?

Are “no-net-loss” farmland mitigation ordinances and policies in place in your community?

**Additional questions:**

Does your community have a wetland protection ordinance for wetlands less than 5 acres in size?

Who is responsible for enforcing soil erosion and sedimentation control (SESC) standards in your community? If the municipality is responsible for enforcement, do your standards vary from the county standards?

What is the allowable discharge rate for stormwater detention ponds in your community?

Does your community have an inspection program for private septic systems? If so, briefly describe.

**Congratulations!** You've completed the COW! The answers you've provided will greatly enhance our efforts in the watershed and will be a tool to help your community.

Please send responses to:

Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.  
555 Hulet Drive  
P.O. Box 824  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0824  
Attention: Jacy Paul

Thank you  
for your  
participation  
in the COW  
process!

