City of Swartz Creek

Guide to Development

Where Friendships Last Forever

Prepared: December 2025

Introduction

This guide has been assembled as a one-stop tool reference tool for residents and developers seeking to make improvements upon property that require administrative or political approvals for building, planning, zoning, and incentives.

Fortunately, Swartz Creek City is a smaller community that has capacity to manage these matters without resorting to one-size-fits-all process or an inaccessible bureaucracy. If at any time, you would rather communicate with a person than rely on forms, guides, zoning ordinances, etc., you can contact the city's zoning administrator, Adam Zettel, at 810.287.2147 or azettel@cityofswartzcreek.org.

If there is one thing that we learned while attempting to put thousands of pages worth of plans, studies, ordinances, guidelines, standards, and applications into a one-stop shop, it is that there is no easy way to balance brevity with detail for such matters. Please take advantage of our staff availability! Call or email!

For those still reading, you will find that this packet contains additional contacts related to our development processes. This may help expedite matters if you are working on a specific issue and are seeking direct communication (e.g. you are seeking building code standards for a commercial fire wall). The packet also includes brief descriptions of our administrative service and various boards and commissions. This will help guide you to the right application forms, reference text, and public body if you know what approvals you require. Again, if you do not, call or email!

Lastly, the packet includes links to pretty much any application, ordinance, plan, and fee you should be seeking. There is also a flow chart to help visualize our approvals process.

We are here to help make any such process predictable, fair, and expedient. We do so while abiding by the ordinances, plans, and processes that the State of Michigan and Swartz Creek have established to provide for the public health, safety, and welfare. We have endeavored to present and arrange all such procedures, applications, and requirements in a manner that makes the process easy on the applicant.

If there is one feature of the developmental process we wish to stress for Swartz Creek, it is to reach out with any questions or to establish expectations for any level of application, be it a residential fence or a 100 acre commercial Planned Unit Development.

Sincerely

Adam H. Zettel, AICP
City Manager
City of Swartz Creek

Contact Information

The primary contact for all development in Swartz Creek is Adam Zettel, who serves as the City Manager and Zoning Administrator. In addition, he is the primary liaison for all communications (e.g. if an updated construction document is being sent to the city engineer, the point of contact should still be Mr. Zettel, in order to maintain a single point of contact).

To start a process you are unfamiliar with, or if you have any questions at any time, we encourage you to contact Mr. Zettel or the other staff at the city offices.

The following should serve to help applicants and others in the development process to find the appropriate contacts as needs arise.

City of Swartz Creek
8083 Civic Drive
Swartz Creek, MI 48473
Phone: 810.635.4464
Fax: 810.635.2887
www.cityofswartzcreek.org
Office Hours: Mon 8am-6pm, Tues & Thurs 8am-430pm, Wed 8am-4 pm, Fri 8am-12pm

Department	Contact	Title	Phone	Email	Duties
Planning & Zoning	Adam Zettel	City Manager	810.287.2147	azettel@cityofswartzcreek.org	Planning, Zoning, Incentives, and Process
Building (Mundy Township)	Tara Ford	Admin	810.655.4631	Tara.ford@mundytwp-mi.gov	Liaison for building and trade permits
Community Development	Greg Dietrich	Director	810.922.5283	Greg.dietrich@cityofswartzcreek.org	Local and state incentives, marketing
Department of Public Works	Robert Bincsik	Director	810.634.4464	rbincsik@cityofswartzcreek.org	Water, sewer, streets, and storm water
Engineering	Andy Harris	Director	810.396.4374	andy.harris@ohm-advisors.com	Engineering consultant
Planning	Justin Sprague	Principal	810.354.7311	justin.sprague@ohm-advisors.com	Planning consultant

Boards and Commissions

The city administrative service and various boards and commissions serve to guide and assist in developmental projects. They are responsible for creating and abiding by various plans, guides, ordinances, and standards that provide predictability, fairness, structure, and expediency to such developments. Staff and the commissions, with their respective policy frameworks, are here to aid developers to understand and successfully navigate the developmental process, while striving to achieve public objectives.

Below is a summary for each governing units, along with their respective policy guidance tools, responsibilities, and meeting information. Again, we encourage all applicants to start with a phone or in person consultation with staff to lay the foundation for a fast and predictable process. If projects are of a sufficient scale or complexity, expectations for a preapplication meeting can be set. This will enable an applicant to communicate with staff, the consultant planner, engineer, or other personnel that can assist with a developmental proposal.

Note that special meetings may be requested for any board or commission. Seek assistance from staff to schedule such a meeting. Additional fees apply. Required public hearings will be held in accordance with the state statute and local code requirements. This typically involves a fifteen-day advance notice of the project, with a general description, in a newspaper of general circulation, as well as fifteen-day advance notice to impacted property owners within 300 feet of a parcel subject to said review.

Administrative Service

The administrative service is responsible for liaising with prospective developers on all matters. They are also able to provide information, review and approve certain permits, and assist in the application to boards and commissions. This is the recommended first stop for any and all potential applications.

Zoning Services

Administrative zoning matters include fences, grading, and limited expansions/additions. The zoning liaison can help distinguish which processes are administrative and which ones may need additional review by a public body. Staff can also help determine if a proposal requires a zoning change, special land use, full site plan, variance, or other applications.

Links are available for the following documents.

Online permitting portal
Zoning ordinance
Zoning map
Building and fee schedule
Zoning permit application

Building Services

Building services are provided in conjunction with Mundy Township. Permits for building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and zoning permits can be obtained online or in person. Such permits can also be submitted online, in person, or via email. Questions can be directed to Tara Ford (see contact page).

Links are available for the following documents.

Online permitting portal
Building and fee schedule

Engineering Services
Engineering services are provided by the city's Director of Public Works, in conjunction with contractual professional services. Such services directly related to land development applications and can also include administrative reviews of right of way changes, grading, and limited expansions. Reviews can occur for these uses directly or in conjunction with a more expansive site plan and/or construction engineering plan.

Links are available for the following documents.

Engineering, Design, and Construction Standards Manual
Building and fee schedule

Planning Commission

The planning commission is responsible for reviewing rezoning requests, non-administrative site plans, and special land uses. This is a nine-member public body that makes recommendations on zoning matters, both for the zoning map and zoning provisions of the code. They are the decision making body for site plans and special land uses. Applications for such matters are available online and in person.

Predevelopment meetings should be scheduled with staff for all matters to go before the planning commission. Staff can help determine exactly what applications/permits are needed and how to apply. A specific procedural plan, timeline, planning strategy, and review budget is set at this time.

Planning commission timelines and review expenses vary, but most projects observe a 90 day review period if multiple revisions are not necessary. Applications must be submitted at least thirty days prior to a scheduled meeting to ensure proper notice for any public hearings, staff review, and meeting packet delivery.

The planning commission is scheduled to meet at the city office council chambers at 7:00 pm on the first Tuesday of each month.

Links are available for the following documents.

Zoning ordinance
Zoning map
2022 master plan
Building and fee schedule
Zoning permit application
Zoning change application
Site plan application
Special land use application
Planning commission rules of procedure
Pre-Application Checklist

Zoning Board of Appeals

The ZBA is responsible for reviewing variances (both use and dimensional) and interpretations of the zoning code. They also hear appeals of administrative service, planning commission, and city council zoning decisions. This is a five-member public body. They are the final decision making body, with appeals of said decisions being directed to circuit court. Applications for such matters are available online and in person.

ZBA Timelines vary but most projects observe a 60 day review period. Applications must be submitted at least thirty days prior to a scheduled meeting to ensure proper notice for any public hearings.

The ZBA is scheduled to meet at the city office council chambers at 6:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month.

Links are available for the following documents.

Zoning ordinance
Zoning map
2022 master plan
Building and fee schedule
Variance application
ZBA rules of procedure

Downtown Development Authority

The DDA is responsible for reviewing incentives for developmental projects within the downtown district. This is a nine-member public body. The city council, subsequent to a review by the DDA, is the final authority on local tax and state program incentives. The DDA is the review authority for the façade improvement program and MDOT logo sign program.

The DDA is scheduled to meet at the city office council chambers at 6:00 pm on the second Thursday of each month. Samantha Fountain, staff Community Development Director is the preferred contact for such matters.

Links are available for the following documents.

DDA façade program
Incentive policy
2022 downtown plan
Downtown design guidelines