

Qualified Review



The Qualified Review process is intended to provide an innovative review process that is tailored to the level of interest in a project by property owners and building occupants that are located within 300 feet of the project.

A Qualified Review process is available for certain uses which are listed as Qualified Review in Article 9 Use Regulations, such as Mobile Food Vendors (i.e. Food truck).

Upon receipt of an eligible, complete application, notice of receipt of a Qualified Review application will be sent to all properties within 300 feet of the request. The notice will provide the owner/occupant with the opportunity to request a formal public hearing. If a request for a hearing is received, then a hearing before the Planning Commission will be scheduled. If no request for a hearing is received, then the application will be reviewed at an administrative, or staff level. In either case, staff may contact the applicant with questions, request additional information, or may advise the applicant on changes or revisions to the application and submittals.

The findings of the review, which may include conditions of approval, will be sent to the applicant in writing within fourteen (14) days of the final determination.

Please note that permits cannot be issued for any building or site activity until the Qualified Review is completed. The use must commence within one (1) year of issuance of a Qualified Review approval.

The full text of relative to Qualified Review eligibility, process and requirements can be found in Zoning Ordinance Section 5.12.16.D.



Qualified Review

A. Property and Project Information

Property Address _____

Parcel Number _____ Zone District _____

Lot Size Frontage: _____ ft Depth: _____ ft Area: _____ Acres/Sq Ft ☐ Rectangle ☐ Irregular

Current use of property _____

Project Description _____

Number of parking spaces on site _____

Will the proposed use include any of the following activities? (Check all that apply)

☐ Mobile Food Vending (i.e. Food Truck)

B. Applicant Information

1. Applicant

Identify the person or organization requesting the Special Land Use:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Cell Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ Business Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

2. Applicant Interest

The applicant must have a legal interest in the subject property:

☐ Property Owner ☐ Purchaser by Option or Purchase Agreement

☐ Purchaser by Land Contract ☐ Lessee/Tenant

3. Property Owner ☐ Check here if Applicant is also Property Owner

Identify the person or organization that owns the subject property:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Cell Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ Business Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

4. Representative

Identify any person representing the property owner or applicant in this matter:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Cell Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ Business Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____



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C. Required Application Attachments

Supplemental Attachments. Please refer to the checklist on the last page of this application for required application materials.

D. Request and Affidavit

The applicant must read the following statement carefully and sign below:

The undersigned requests that the City of Grand Rapids review this application and related required documents and site plans as provided in Article 12 of the Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance. The applicant further affirms and acknowledges the following:

- ☐ That the applicant has a legal interest in the property described in this application.
- ☐ That the answers and statements contained in this application and enclosures are in all respects true and correct to the best of his, her or their knowledge.
- ☐ That the approval of this application does not relieve the undersigned from compliance with all other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance or other codes or statutes, and does not constitute the granting of a variance.
- ☐ That the applicant will comply with any and all conditions imposed in granting an approval of this application.
- ☐ That the applicant acknowledges that this is a multi-step review process. Should a public hearing be scheduled, the applicant will be required to submit an additional fee before the public hearing will be noticed.
- ☐ If also the owner, the applicant grants the City of Grand Rapids staff and the Planning Commission the right to access the subject property for the sole purpose of evaluating the application.

Applicant Name (printed)

Applicant Signature

Date

If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must read and sign below:

The undersigned affirms and acknowledges that he, she or they are the owner(s) of the property described in this application, and:

- ☐ Is/are aware of the contents of this application and related enclosures.
- ☐ Authorizes the applicant to submit this application and represent the undersigned in the matter being reviewed by the City of Grand Rapids.
- ☐ Grants the City of Grand Rapids staff and the Planning Commission the right to access the subject property for the sole purpose of evaluating the application.

Property Owner Name (printed)

Property Owner Signature

Date



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In addition to the Site Plan Review Standards of Section 5.12.08.E., the Planning Commission shall consider whether the proposed Special Land Use meets the following standards:

Standard #1. Master Plan/Zoning Ordinance.

Describe how the proposed use will be consistent with the purpose and intent of the *Master Plan* and Zoning Ordinance, including the Zone District.

Standard #2. Site Plan Review Standards.

Describe how the project will meet the Site Plan Review Standards of Section 5.12.08.E., including site design, environment; vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation; and public facilities. Additional information may be required for projects involving significant earthmoving or site changes.

Standard #3. Neighborhood Effects.

a. Describe how the proposed use will be compatible, harmonious and appropriate with the existing or planned character and uses of the neighborhood, adjacent properties, and the natural environment.

b. Describe how potentially adverse effects arising from the proposed use on the neighborhood and adjacent properties will be minimized through the provision of adequate parking, the placement of buildings, structures and entrances, as well as the location of screening, fencing, landscaping, buffers or setbacks.

c. Describe how the proposed use will not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future adjacent uses or to the public welfare by reason of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, odors, glare, visual clutter, and electrical or electromagnetic interference.



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d. Describe how the proposed use will not adversely affect the walkability of the neighborhood, impair pedestrian circulation patterns, disrupt the continuity of the urban street wall or otherwise hinder the creation of a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Standard #4. Environment.

Describe how the proposed use will retain as many natural features of the landscape as practicable, particularly where the natural features assist in preserving the general character of the neighborhood.

Standard #5. Public Facilities.

a. Describe how adequate public or private infrastructure and services already exist or will be provided at no additional cost, and will safeguard the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

b. Explain how the proposed use will not be detrimental to the financial stability and economic welfare of the City.

c. Describe how the proposed use will comply with all other applicable City ordinances and policies and all applicable State laws.



Qualified Review

1. General Information

A Qualified Review (QR) is required where the use of uses of land or structures that, because of their relationship to surrounding uses and structures, may require additional consideration in relation to the welfare of adjacent properties, the neighborhood, and the community. Uses eligible for a Qualified Review process are identified in Articles 5, 6 and 9 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance lists application procedures and review standards in Article 12, Section 5.12.16.

2. Pre-Application Consultation

A pre-application meeting with Planning staff is recommended prior to the submission of the application. Such a meeting helps ensure a smooth application process.

3. Neighborhood Outreach

Neighborhood outreach is strongly recommended for a Qualified Review application. The purpose of neighborhood outreach is to inform nearby stakeholders of the proposed project, receive comments and address concerns about the proposal, and whenever possible resolve conflicts in advance of submittal.

4. Application

An application packet for a Qualified Review is available from the Grand Rapids Planning Department, located on the third floor of 1120 Monroe Avenue NW or at the Planning Department's website www.grandrapidsmi.gov/planning under Forms and Applications. You may also call 616-456-4100.

6. Staff Review

Upon receipt, the application will be reviewed for completeness by Planning Department staff. A Planner may contact the applicant with questions or a request for additional information or may advise the applicant on recommended changes or revisions to the application and submittals for the purpose of clarity.

7. Notice of Receipt of QR Application

Following the staff review and determination of completeness, public notice of the receipt of a Qualified Review application will be provided. A notice will be published in the Grand Rapids Press, and a postcard will be mailed to property owners and residents within a 300 ft radius of the subject property. The notice will state the nature of the use and will provide information for affected persons to request a formal public hearing within fourteen (14) days of the mailing of the request.

If no request for public hearing is received, the Qualified Review request shall be processed pursuant to the Director Review procedures under Section 5.12.16.

8. Public Hearing at Planning Commission

If a request for public hearing is received, the Qualified Review request shall be processed consistent with the Special Land Use procedures under Section 5.12.09., requiring a public hearing at the Planning Commission, including the required fee.

All meetings of the Planning Commission are held in the Public Hearing Room on the 3rd floor of 1120 Monroe Avenue NW. The Planning staff introduces request to the Planning Commission. The applicant is then asked to present information on their proposal. The Planning Commission may ask questions of the staff and/or applicant. The Planning Commission then allows public comment on the application, and a chance for the applicant to respond to any concerns or questions. The public hearing is then closed, and the Planning Commission deliberates on the request in open session. The Planning Commission may approve, approve with conditions, deny, or postpone the request. If approved, the effective date is 16 days following the decision.

9. Written Notice

The applicant will be provided with a letter and resolution that documents the decision of the Planning Commission, including any conditions of approval.

10. Appeal of Denial

If the Planning Commission denies an application for a Special Land Use, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The appeal must be filed with the Planning Department within 15 days of the decision. Conditions of approval cannot be appealed.



Site Plan Review Checklist

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General Plan Requirements

- ☐ Project Info: Project address and name, scale, north arrow, location map, date(s) of submission/revisions, sheet number, name, address, phone number, and email of the designer(s) who prepared each plan
- ☐ Scale:
 - For less than 3 acres, 1" = 50'
 - For more than 3 acres, 1" = 100'

Site Data

- ☐ Existing zoning of property and all abutting properties
- ☐ Property dimensions and gross acreage or square footage (including width, length, and frontage)
- ☐ Net acreage or square footage, minus rights-of-way and submerged land
- ☐ Existing and proposed topography of the property and within 100' of the property at 2-ft intervals
- ☐ Existing lot lines, lot dimensions, building lines, structures, parking areas, and other improvements on the property and within 100' of the property
- ☐ Proposed lot lines, lot dimensions, building lines, structures, parking areas, and other improvements on the property and within 100' of the property
- ☐ Existing and proposed easements, including type

Access, Circulation and Parking Plans

- ☐ Dimensions, curve radii and centerlines of existing and proposed access points, streets, rights-of-way, or access easements
- ☐ Existing driveways and street intersections within 250 feet of the property
- ☐ Dimensions of acceleration, deceleration and passing lanes
- ☐ Cross section details of proposed streets, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks and non-motorized paths, with materials and thickness
- ☐ Traffic regulatory signs and pavement markings
- ☐ Designation of fire lanes
- ☐ Existing and proposed parking and loading areas, including location and size
- ☐ Calculations for the required number of parking and loading spaces
- ☐ Dimensions of parking spaces, landscape islands, circulation aisles, and loading zones
- ☐ Existing and proposed sidewalks or pathways within the site and in the right-of-way

Landscape and Screening Plans

- ☐ Locations, sizes, and types of existing trees 6 inches in diameter, measured at 3½ ft off the ground, including what is to be removed and what is to be preserved
- ☐ General location of all other existing plant materials, identification of the plant material, including what is to be removed and what is to be preserved
- ☐ Existing and proposed lawns and landscaped areas

Landscape and Screening Plans (cont.)

- ☐ Location and type of all proposed shrubs, trees, and other live plant material
- ☐ Planting list for proposed landscape materials with caliper size or height of material, quantity, botanical and common names, and method of installation
- ☐ Details on screening
- ☐ Location, size, height, and construction materials for all fences, walls and berms

Building and Structure Plans

- ☐ Location, height, and exterior dimensions of all proposed structures on the property
- ☐ Building floor plans and total floor area, including number and height of stories
- ☐ Building elevations for all sides, at an appropriate scale
- ☐ Description of all exterior building materials and colors (samples may be requested)
- ☐ Calculations of transparency requirements

Drainage and Utility Plans

- ☐ Location of existing drainage courses, floodplains, streams, wetlands, and other water bodies
- ☐ Existing and proposed water mains, water service, storm water loads and fire hydrants
- ☐ Stormwater retention/detention ponds, including grading, side slopes, depth, high water elevation, volume and outfalls, and calculations
- ☐ Site grading, drainage patterns, and other stormwater management measures
- ☐ Underground storm sewers and drains, including location and size
- ☐ Existing and proposed, above and below ground gas, electric, and telephone lines
- ☐ Transformers and utility boxes, including locations and dimensions

Other Site Features

- ☐ Location, height, and dimensions of storage facilities
- ☐ Waste receptacles and transformer pads and enclosures/screening
- ☐ Extent of any outdoor sales or display area
- ☐ Existing and proposed building and site lighting
- ☐ Photometric plan with: 1) foot candle readings at 10' intervals or less, 2) table showing minimum and maximum lighting levels, and maximum to minimum illumination ratios, and 3) location and mounting heights of fixtures [If the project is located in the East Beltline Overlay District, see Section 5.8.04.F.]
- ☐ Size, height, and method of shielding for all lighting on the building and the site
- ☐ Location, size, height, and lighting of all proposed signs on the building and the site



Application Checklist

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The following items are required for a complete Qualified Review (QR) application.
Please note that Site Plan Review is part of a Qualified Review. Incomplete applications will be returned.

Signed Application Form

Complete pages 2 and 3 of the SLU application form.
Application must be signed by the applicant and the property owner (if different).

Response to QR Review Standards

Complete pages 4 and 5 of the QR application form. Use additional paper if needed.

Nature of Proposed Use

Provide a detailed written description of the proposed development project, other required state or local permits or approvals, any joint use agreements or easements, and other relevant information.
(Use letterhead if possible.)

Site and Building Layout

Provide a written description of the proposed site and/or building layout, building and structure design, floor plans, parking calculations, fencing, landscaping, current environmental conditions, adjacent land uses, and other pertinent information. (Use letterhead if possible.)

Site Plans, Building Elevations and Floor Plans

Enclose plans as described in the Site Plan Review checklist:

- ☐ Survey of existing conditions
- ☐ Site plan
- ☐ Floor plan(s)
- ☐ Elevations
- ☐ Any other plans as requested by Staff

Neighborhood Outreach

Include a summary of activities conducted, any correspondence distributed, meeting sign-in sheets, meeting notes, letters of support, etc. Failure to conduct outreach activities may result in tabling of the application.

Fee (FY2026) (Either by check made payable to City of Grand Rapids, by credit card in person, or by credit card over the phone by calling (616) 456-4100)

- ☐ Qualified Review \$1,220
- ☐ Special Land Use \$2,570

☐ Plan Submittal

- ☐ One (1) digital copy in PDF format (CD, flash drive, cloud storage, or email to planning@grcity.us)