

- AGENDA -

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION TO BE HELD AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY HALL, 121 N. FOURTH ST. ON TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023, BEGINNING AT 6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Public Hearing
  - A. Amendment to zoning ordinance
- V. Additions to the Agenda
- VI. Public Comment – Agenda Items Only – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- VII. Approval of Minutes from May 9, 2023
- VIII. Site Plan review
- IX. Sign Permit
  - A. Richard Spies-West Branch Pharmacy
- X. Unfinished Business
- XI. New Business
  - A. Annual review of Masterplan
- XII. Communications
- XIII. Reports and/or comments
  - A. Chairperson Report
  - B. Member Reports
  - C. Zoning Administrator Report
- XIV. Public Comment – Any Topic – 3 Minute Limit (general rule)
- XV. Adjournment

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 6:00 pm



**Call to Order**

**Roll Call**

**Pledge of  
Allegiance**



# Public Hearings



**Public Hearing Notice**  
**City of West Branch - Rezoning**

The City of West Branch Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on July 25 at 6 pm to recommend adoption of Ordinance 23-01 of 2023 (ordinance to amend the zoning ordinance) to the City Council. The public hearing will be held at the West Branch City Hall at 121 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St., West Branch, MI 48661. The full text of the amending ordinance is available at City Hall, online at [www.westbranch.com](http://www.westbranch.com), or by contacting John Dantzer at 989-345-0500 or by email at [citymanager@westbranch.com](mailto:citymanager@westbranch.com). Written comments may be sent to the address above prior to the meeting. The public may appear at the public hearing in person or by counsel. The amending ordinance rezones parcel #'s 052-625-002-01, 052-625-002-02, and 052-625-002-03 from R-M (Multiple Family District) to IND (Industrial District).



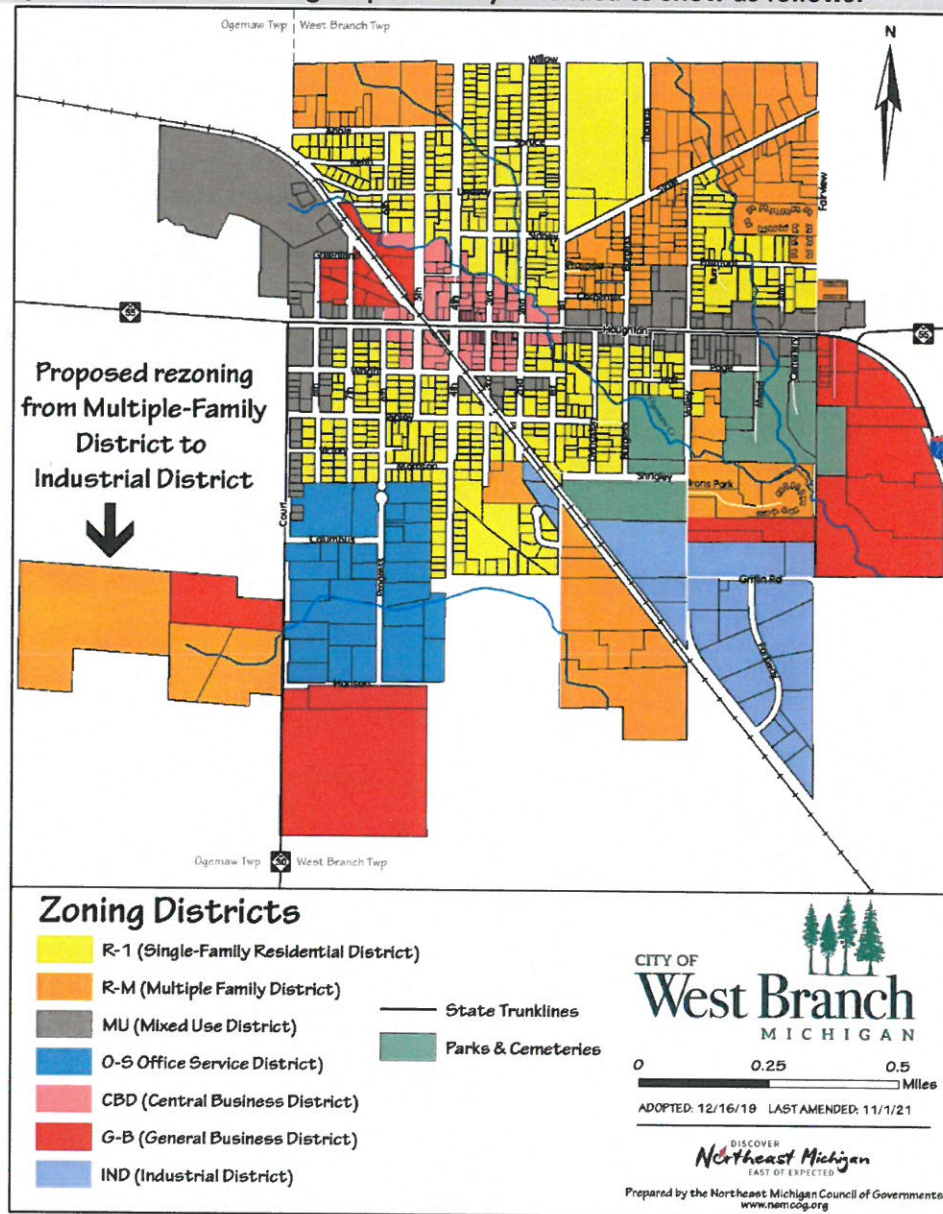
**City of West Branch  
Ordinance No. 23-01 of 2023**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH ZONING MAP TO REZONE PARCELS 052-625-002-01, 052-625-002-02, and 052-625-002-03 FROM MULTIPLE FAMILY DISTRICT TO INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT.**

The City of West Branch, Ogemaw County, Michigan ordains:

**Section 1: Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.**

**That the City of West Branch Zoning Map is hereby amended to show as follows:**





## **Section 2: Severability**

If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of this Ordinance shall for any reason be finally adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of this Ordinance but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment is rendered.

## **Section 3: Saving Clause**

The Village of Hillman Zoning Ordinance, except as herein or heretofore amended, shall remain in full force and effect. The amendments provided herein shall not abrogate or affect any offense or act committed or done, or any penalty or forfeiture incurred, or any pending fee, assessments, litigation, or prosecution of any right established, occurring prior to the effective date hereof.

## **Section 4: Effective Date**

The ordinance changes shall take effect upon the expiration of seven days after the publication of the notice of adoption.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, City of West Branch

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, City of West Branch

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk for the City of West Branch, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_ of 2023 of the City of West Branch, adopted by at a meeting of the City Council held on \_\_\_\_\_.

A copy of the complete ordinance text may be inspected or purchased at the West Branch City Hall at 121 N. Fourth St. West Branch, MI.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_ Published: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective: \_\_\_\_\_, subject to PA 110 of 2006 as amended.



# **Additions to the Agenda**



# **Public Comment -Agenda Items**



# **Approval of Minutes**



REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ON TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023.

Chairperson Lucynski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Bob David, Yvonne DeRoso, Mike Jackson, Cori Lucynski, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: Josh Erickson and Kara Fachting

Others officers in attendance: Acting secretary/zoning administrator, John Dantzer

\* \* \* \* \*

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

\* \* \* \* \*

**MOTION BY DAVID, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING  
HELD APRIL 14, 2023.**

**Yes — David, DeRoso, Jackson, Lucynski, Showalter**

**No – None**

**Absent –Erickson, Fachting**

**Motion carried**

\* \* \* \* \*

The Commission listened to the second series of a training on the Planning Enabling Act hosted by the Michigan Association of Planners.

\* \* \* \* \*

Chairperson Lucynski noted she would not be able to make the next meeting, noted the handicap ramp repairs look great, and gave an update on the B3 event.

Member David gave an update on the Riverwalk cleanup and wished all mothers a Happy Mother's Day.

Member DeRoso gave an update on the recent MTA meeting she attended.

\* \* \* \* \*

Chairperson Lucynski closed the meeting at 7:53 pm



# **Site Plan Review**



# Sign Permit





121 N Fourth St., West Branch, MI 48661 Telephone: 989-345-0500

Email: [clerk@westbranch.com](mailto:clerk@westbranch.com)

## Sign Permit Application

Applicant Name RICHARD SPIES Phone # 989-387-6005  
Address PO BOX 1150 AU GRES, MI 48703  
Address Location of Sign 508 E. HOUGHTON AVE WEST BRANCH  
Property Owners Name WEST BRANCH PROPERTIES LLC  
Property Owners Signature *Richard A. Spies*  
Name of Business for Sign WEST BRANCH PHARMACY  
Location of Sign: Building \_\_\_\_\_ Free Standing X  
Type of Sign: Wall \_\_\_\_\_ Canopy \_\_\_\_\_ Projecting \_\_\_\_\_ Free Standing X Sandwich \_\_\_\_\_  
Dimensions of Sign: 8' X 7' INC Total Sq Ft 56 Total Hgt 8.41 FT

\* note: 58' sign included  
3'x7' Deventer  
pole  
shroud  
N

The following information MUST be attached for all signs:

1. A Scale drawing (2"=1') showing:
  - a. Dimensions of sign
  - b. Information to be on sign
  - c. Size & Style of letters
  - d. Color of sign & letters
  - e. If Free Standing Sign, include sign dimensions & construction material description
2. For Signs attached to buildings, provide a drawing showing the building, location of windows, doorways & location on building where sign will be erected.
3. For Free Standing Signs, attach a lot plan drawing showing size of lot, location of building(s) on property, location of driveways, sidewalks, roadways and proposed location of sign.
4. If the Sign is to be illuminated, describe the type of lighting.

**The above and attached statement is true in all particulars to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree that the City Ordinances, building and electrical codes will be strictly compiled within the erection of this sign.**

Applicant Signature *Richard A. Spies* Date 7-19-23

Application Fee \$25.00

PAID ✓ NOT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Action: Date 7/20/23 Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Denied ✓

Variance Request Planning Commission Action: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_\_\_

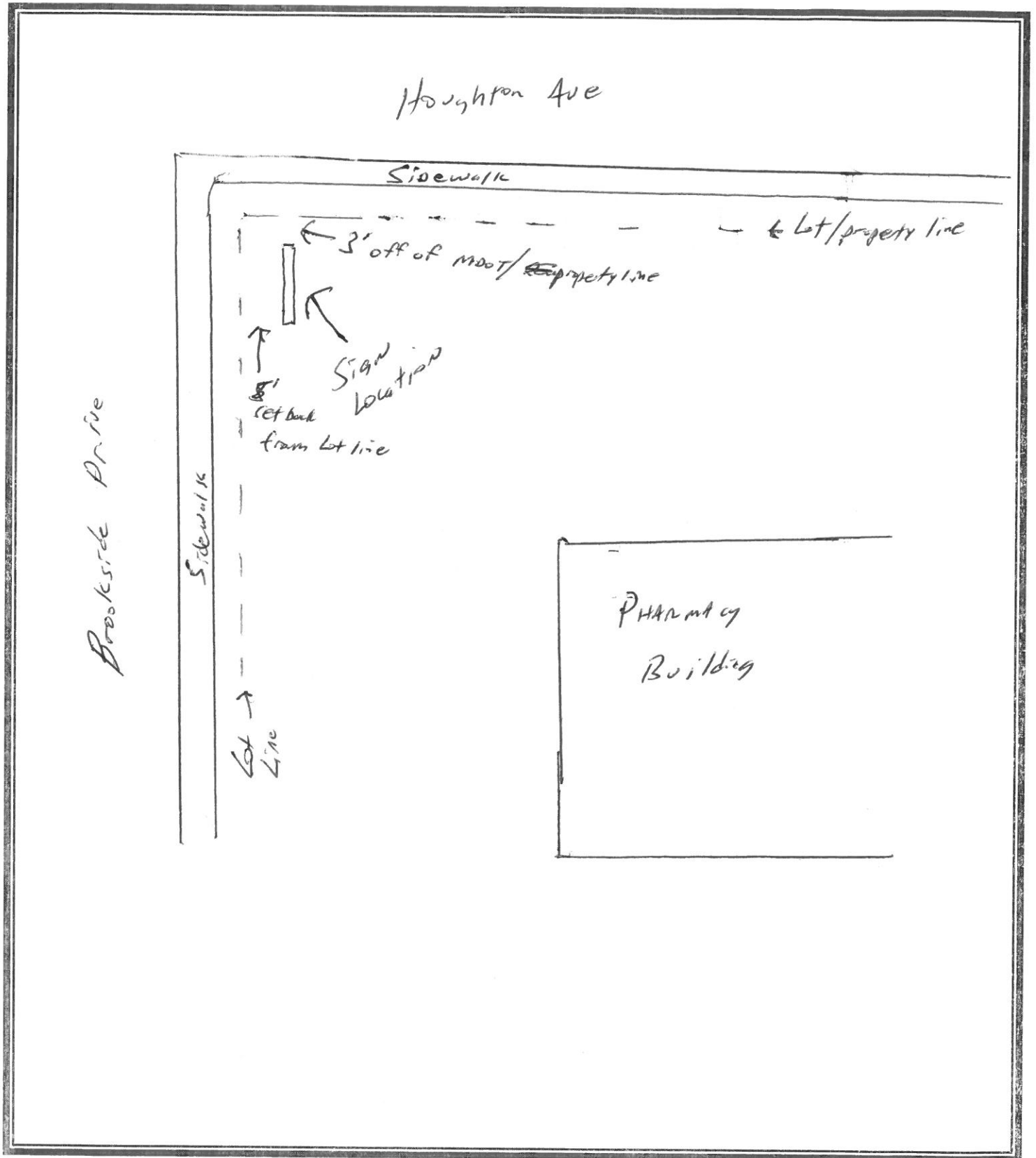
PERMIT NO. SP 23-02



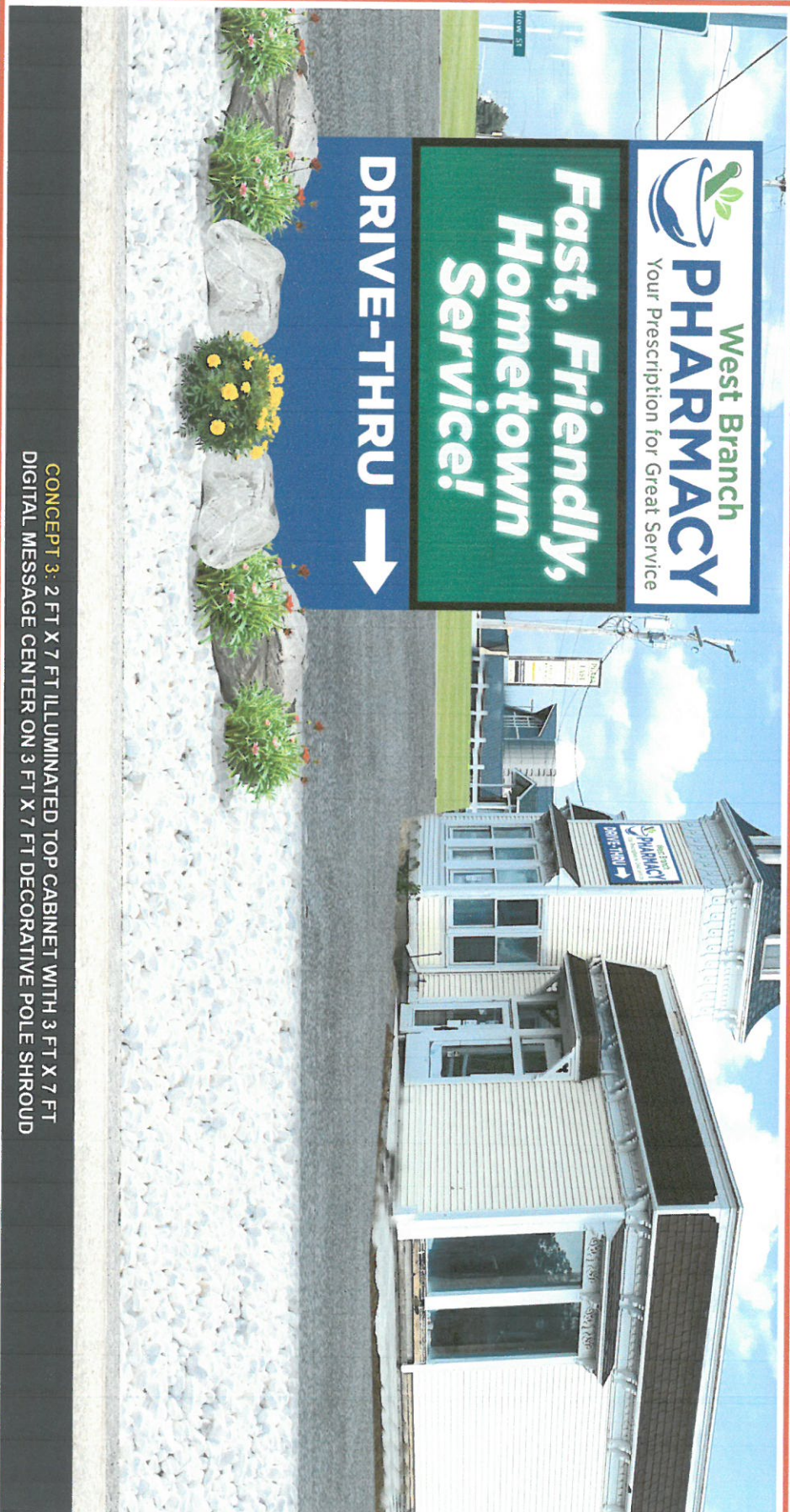
Please include: Roads, Sidewalks and Setbacks

\*\*\*Applicant is required to contact Miss Dig at 811

Richard Spies Sign Perm. & App







CONCEPT 3: 2 FT X 7 FT ILLUMINATED TOP CABINET WITH 3 FT X 7 FT  
DIGITAL MESSAGE CENTER ON 3 FT X 7 FT DECORATIVE POLE SHROUD

CUSTOMER: WEST BRANCH PHARMACY  
ADDRESS: WEST BRANCH, MICHIGAN  
SIGN TYPE: ROAD SIGN  
SALES REP: JOHN EGGERS  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER: KIM BOLDT

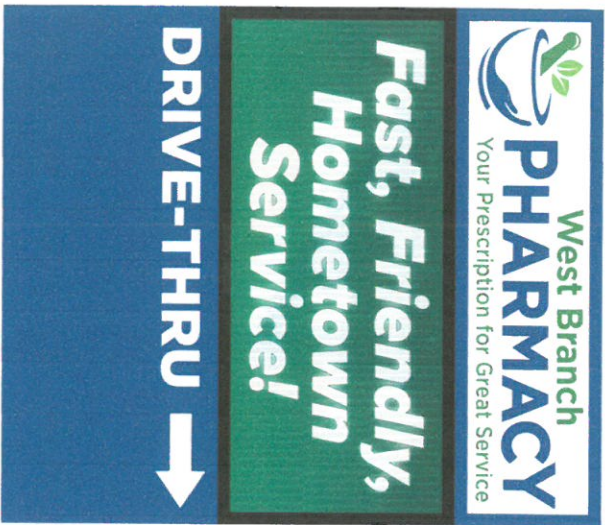
DESCRIPTION:  
  
APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_



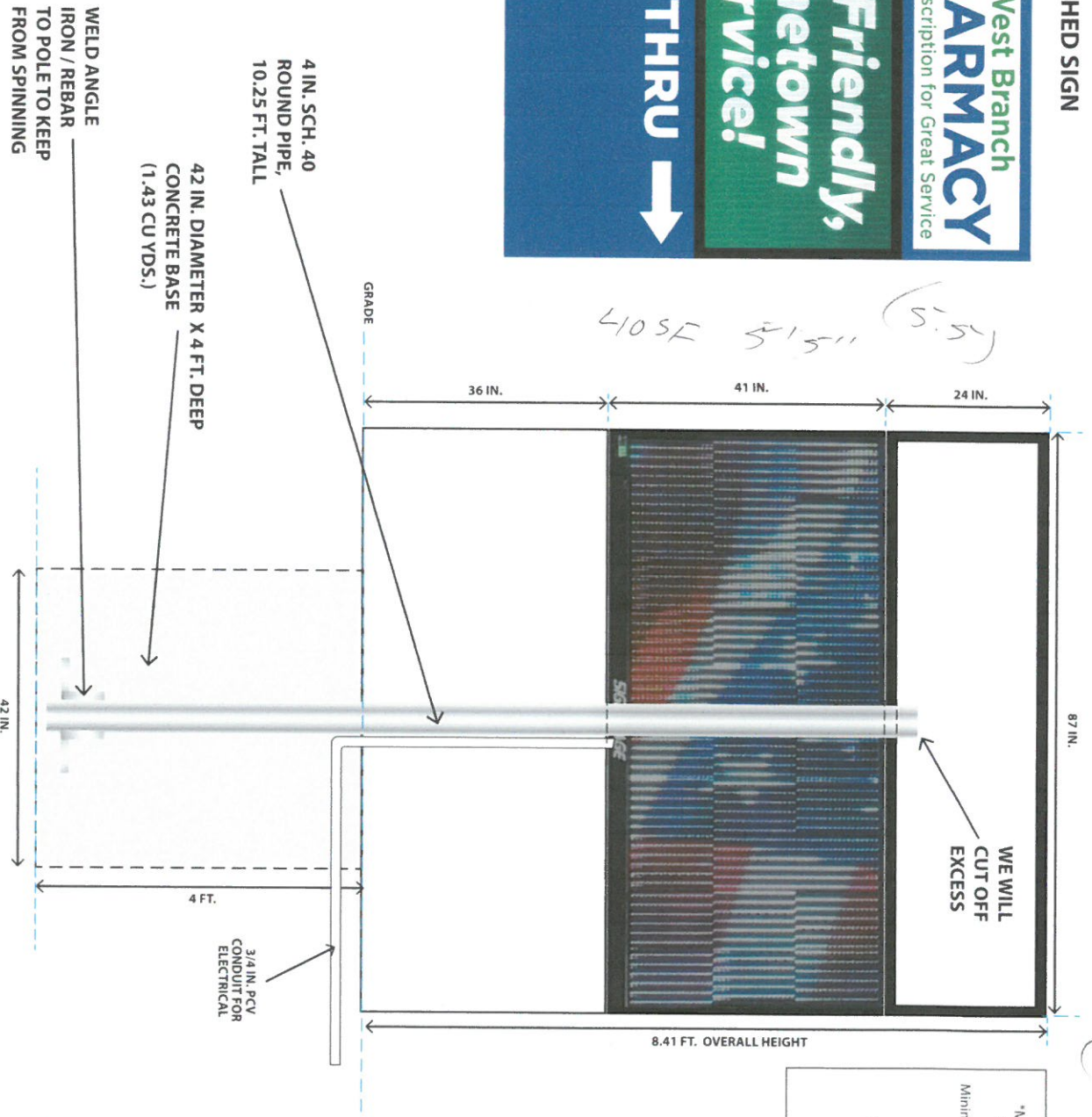
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# FINISHED SIGN



# POLE SPECIFICATIONS\*



\*Michigan windload specifications require structure sustain 80 mph winds minimum. Minimal concrete base needed to meet requirements.

H x W x C x P (+4,000)  
4,000 (x2)

5 ft. x 8 ft. x 4 ft. x 26 lbs. Pressure (+8,000)

1.02 cu yds. of concrete (cylinder 1)



8155 GRATIOT - SAGINAW, MI





121 North Fourth Street, West Branch, Michigan 48661  
Phone 989-345-0500, Fax 989-345-4390, e-mail [citymanager@westbranch.com](mailto:citymanager@westbranch.com)  
The City of West Branch is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender

The sign permit application for Richard Spies for the West Branch Pharmacy will need either one or two variances. One definitely for the height and one possibly for the total square footage (we found a grey area in the sign ordinance). The maximum height allowed in the mixed-use district is 6' from the ground level with his sign proposal being 8'4" in height. The square footage allowed is where the grey area comes in. His proposed sign incorporates a digital sign with his logo/company name on the top of it. Our sign ordinance allows 32 sf of free-standing monument sign and 32sf of message board/digital signs for the mixed-use district. The question is does that allow them 32sf of regular sign and another 32sf for a digital sign or 32sf overall since it is all incorporated into one large monument type sign. I did reach out to Denise Cline to get her opinion. She said the way she reads our ordinance is that digital signs are considered separate from standard monument type signs so they would be allowed 32sf of both. The proposed sign is 65" high and 87" long for a total of 40sf. (the base does not count towards square footage) with the digital portion being approximately 25sf and the logo on top being around 15sf.

While this property is located in the mixed-use district, it is situated in an all commercial area and is abutted by the general business district. The maximum height allowed in our other commercial areas such as the office/service, general business, and industrial district is 12' in height. Because the property is located in a commercial area, is right next to the general business district which already has taller signs, and does not create any safety or visual issues, I would recommend approval of the variance for the height and allow the sign to be 8.5 foot in height.

If we treat the sign as having two separate components of a free-standing sign and a digital sign then they meet the square footage requirements. If we treat the sign as one unit because it is all built together, then they are slightly over so the Commission will need to decide on how they want to view this type of sign. I could see more of these types coming up so we will want to set a precedent on how to handle them. Because it is so close to the maximum allowed and is in a primarily commercial area, I personally don't see any issue with allowing a variance if needed for the square footage as well.



# **Unfinished Business**



**New Business**





# *City of West Branch Master Plan 2019*

**West Branch, Michigan**

Ogemaw County

[www.westbranch.com](http://www.westbranch.com)

**Adopted: March 4, 2019**







## WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL

Paul Frechette	Mayor
John Dantzer	Clerk/Treasurer City Manager (2021)
<del>Dan Weiler</del>	<del>Council Member</del>
<del>Chris Powley</del>	<del>Council Member (2021)</del>
Michael Jackson	Council Member
Joanne Bennett	Council Member
Cathy Zimmerman	Council Member
Ellen Pugh	Council Member
<del>Bill Ehinger</del>	<del>Council Member</del>
<del>Tiffany Schmieder Kups</del>	<del>Council Member (2021)</del>
Rusty Showalter	Council Member (2022)
Carol Adair	Council Member (2022)

## CITY OF WEST BRANCH PLANNING COMMISSION

Robert David	Chairman
Michael Jackson	Member
Kara Fachting	Member
<del>Jan Hasty</del>	<del>Member</del>
Yvonne DeRoso	Member
Corine Lucynski	Member
<del>Lisa Jensen</del>	<del>Member</del>
Rusty Showalter	Member (2021)
<del>Evelyn Schenk</del>	<del>Member</del>
<del>Tiffany Schmieder Kups</del>	<del>Member (2021)</del>
Josh Erickson	Member (2022)

## CONSULTANTS

2014 Master Plan: Lapham Associates

2019 Master Plan Update: NEMCOG (Northeast Michigan Council of Governments)



[www.nemcog.org](http://www.nemcog.org)







# Action Items

The following table contains strategies for implementing the primary goal and objectives found in the six focus areas listed above. It is important to note that, while responsible parties are listed, the City will make every effort to collaborate with partner organizations, other local units of government, and members of the public in order to ensure that the correct mix of stakeholders are involved in each item.

## TIMEFRAMES

**SHORT:** Low cost, easy implementation, directly addressing top priorities, or critical to the advancement of other strategies, and to be implemented within the next 1-5 years.

**MEDIUM:** Important actions that have some level of significant cost and can be implemented within the next 5-10 years.

**LONG:** Actions that often require significant amounts of funding that must be planned for over time or require other strategies to be completed prior to their implementation.

**ON-GOING:** Actions that have no beginning and end period but which are continuously on-going in the City.



## MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>1</b> Citizen Involvement	Involve West Branch citizens in activities of the City that will advance the primary goal of this plan.		
	1. Use the City website to provide meeting agenda and minutes of all council, committee, commission, and other bodies as well as to explicate issues and matters of importance before these boards.	ON-GOING	City Staff
	2. Include as many interested citizens as possible on committees on other boards. Encourage members of various boards to participate with other boards to increase communication among all the City government divisions. These boards may also include county and regional groups.	ON-GOING	City Staff City Council Planning Commission
	3. Follow the West Branch Public Participation Plan to maximize citizen involvement.	ON-GOING	City Staff City Council Planning Commission
<b>2</b> Housing	Maintain the City's high quality residential neighborhoods and encourage new appropriate development.		
	1. Ensure that the City zoning ordinance provides for sufficient areas for the construction of high quality dwellings, multi-family, townhouse, single family, and two-family, of varying densities and types including tiny homes and accessory dwelling units.	SHORT ON-GOING 21	Planning Commission
	2. Enforce the blight ordinances to eliminate conditions that discourage the upkeep of existing housing and the construction of new high-quality developments.	ON-GOING	City Staff
	3. Continue and promote the housing rehabilitation program for improving existing housing stock. Identify funding sources available for residential improvements and make property owners aware of such rehabilitation programs.	SHORT ON-GOING 21	City Staff County Housing Dept
	4. Partner with realtors/builders to attract developers that can construct desired housing developments.	MEDIUM SHORT 21 ON-GOING 22	City Staff and Planning Commission
	5. Ensure the zoning ordinance allows for areas of mixed use development, where appropriate.	SHORT COMPLETE 21	Planning Commission
	6. Consider the necessity of a rental inspection program.	MEDIUM	City Council



MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES			
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>3</b> City Services & Infrastructure	Maintain and improve City services and infrastructure.		
	1. Continue to provide quality police and fire protection service to residents.	ON-GOING	City Council City Staff
	2. Continue to maintain, improve and plan expansion of water, sewage, and stormwater facilities, if needed.		
	3. Provide for adequate streets, and the maintenance thereof, that ensure safety while facilitating orderly growth.		
	4. Continue sound budgeting by departments with a goal toward fiscal responsibility to the residents.		
	5. Ensure infrastructure is in place for desired development.		
	6. Maintain the sidewalk repair/replacement program.		
	7. Explore options (i.e. tax abatements) that would further assist with business recruitment. Encourage City Staff to participate in programs, seminars, and conferences which educate on available opportunities.		
	8. Incorporate Complete Streets design concepts into the City's planning efforts and into the zoning ordinance to ensure all forms of transportation are adequately provided for.	SHORT ONGOING 21	Planning Commission
	9. Revise zoning to require sidewalks and standards for pedestrian connections to all new developments, and work to connect all existing developments along the corridor with sidewalks.	SHORT ONGOING 21	Planning Commission
	10. Designate neighborhood areas and create a neighborhood betterment plan pursuant to the Neighborhood Area Improvements Act (PA 208 or 1949).	LONG	City Council Planning Commission City Staff



	11. Continue to make the downtown area “pedestrian friendly” and attractive by continuing to install streetscaping features including street lights, trees where appropriate, benches, wayfinding signage, parks, and well-maintained sidewalks/paths.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Council/DDA/Planning Commission
	12. Ensure pedestrian connections existing throughout the City to connect residential neighborhoods to commercial and recreational areas.		
	13. Review and revise zoning to ensure that development of property within the City is not unnecessarily burdensome.	<b>SHORT COMPLETE 21</b>	Planning Commission
	14. Continue to negotiate with the Michigan Department of Transportation to re-surface Houghton Avenue and at the same time to replace aged sewer and water infrastructure in the right-of-way.	<del>LONG</del> <b>SHORT 21 COMPLETE 22</b>	
	15. Continue to investigate, with MDOT, an alternative parking strategy in the downtown area. Work with MDOT to determine if a road diet is applicable.	<b>LONG SHORT 21 COMPLETE 22</b>	City Council City Staff Planning Commission MDOT
	16. Have installed traffic controls along the I75 Business Loop (Family Fare and Brian’s area). Include signage for the service drive in this area.	<b>LONG</b>	
	17. Fill the gap between the City and the West Branch Township pedestrian and bicycle trails at the former Kmart property.	<b>LONG SHORT 21</b>	
	18. Consider developing access management standards for M-55 and other high-traffic city streets.	<b>LONG SHORT 21</b>	
	19. Participate in the Community Development Board.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	Community Development Board
<b>4</b> Economic 1 (Sustainability)	20. Incorporate “green” zoning into the Zoning Ordinance, as appropriate.	<b>SHORT COMPLETE 21</b>	Planning Commission
	Promote and support existing businesses in the City and region to thrive and grow.		
	1. Continue to support tax incentives for industrial expansions.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Council
	2. Establish guidelines for landscaping, including screening standards.	<b>SHORT COMPLETE 21</b>	Planning Commission
	3. Develop downtown design standards to achieve a collective identity of the downtown.	<b>SHORT</b>	Planning Commission DDA



	4. Work with the DDA to implement strategies contained within the current downtown plan.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	Planning Comm, DDA City Council City Staff Surrounding Twps
	5. Continue programs to enhance façades and rear entrances of buildings, including potentially the MEDC/CDBG grant program.	<b>MEDIUM ON-GOING22</b>	Planning Commission DDA
	6. Make changes to zoning ordinance and signage regulations to allow for greater flexibility in downtown area – mixed-use CBD district.	<b>SHORT COMPLETE 21</b>	Planning Commission DDA

## MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
	Market the City and the region to attract additional commercial and industrial enterprises.		
	1. Work toward development of the priority redevelopment and infill development areas.	<b>LONG</b>	Planning Commission City Staff
	2. Inventory with local realtor's available buildings and properties and their conditions for sale or lease (utilize City and other websites to portray). Develop a database that contains specific information pertaining to each commercial/industrial property that can be used as a marketing tool for redevelopment.	<b>MEDIUM SHORT 21</b>	City Staff Local Realtors Planning Commission
<b>5</b> Economic 2 (Attraction)	3. Market redevelopment ready properties through the RRC program with assistance from the State.	<b>MEDIUM ONGOING 21</b>	Planning Commission City Staff
	4. Determine the best mix of businesses needed in the downtown and identify needs and market to them.	<b>MEDIUM</b>	City Staff DDA
	5. In the Zoning Ordinance, include allowances for all types of mixed land uses in appropriate areas. Implement buffering and lighting standards where residential abuts non-residential.	<b>SHORT COMPLETE 21</b>	Planning Commission
	6. Support and monitor programs for rehabilitation by the DDA and Ogemaw County (Façade Improvements Program, Brownfields, etc.).	<b>MEDIUM COMPLETE 22</b>	City Staff DDA Ogemaw County
	7. Support and monitor marketing of the downtown with regional partners.	<b>SHORT</b>	City Staff, DDA Planning Commission
	8. Ensure a strong marketing message is		City Council



	created and displayed on the City's website and on other local websites.	<b>SHORT ONGOING 23</b>	Surrounding Townships Ogemaw EDC
	9. Create a marketing pamphlet.	<b>SHORT</b>	Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau Other Partners
	10. Consider the expansion of the industrial park or a second industrial park, if needed.	<b>COMPLETE 22</b>	City Council
	11. Ensure development approval processes are easy to follow, seamless, and predictable.	<b>COMPLETE 22</b>	Planning Commission City Staff
	12. Implement and maintain the practices outlined by the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities Program.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Council Planning Commission City Staff

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES			
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
	Market the City and its environs to draw visitors and tourists to support local businesses and the local economy.		
<b>6</b> Tourism	1. Continue special events that entertain residents and bring visitors to the City.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Council DDA Chamber of Commerce
	2. Continue to work with neighboring townships to market the downtown and adjoining commercial areas with the current brand of the community.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Staff West Branch Chamber of Commerce West Branch Tourism Bureau DDA
	3. Develop and install wayfinding signage that will direct visitors to the West Branch Downtown and to other special sites in the City and elsewhere.	<b>MEDIUM</b>	City Staff City Council MDOT DDA
	4. Continue to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Corp., and neighboring DDA's to promote the City and its attractions	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Staff Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau Ogemaw County EDC Surrounding Townships
	5. Maintain and improve City recreational facilities and expand where needed.	<b>ON-GOING</b>	City Staff City Council Planning Commission



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Next meeting: Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 6:00 pm



# Communications



**Reports**

**Chairman**

**Members**



**Public  
Comment  
-Any  
Topic**



# Adjournment