

Technical Zoning Assistance Summary Report

Child Care Readiness Consultant Services
July 16, 2024 – August 31, 2024

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A partnership between Pulse and McKenna, funded by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.



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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to highlight the zoning services delivered through Pulse’s partnership with McKenna. Included is a summary of the provided deliverables, outreach efforts, and an overview of the results from the zoning audits. The report provides valuable information on common zoning barriers to child care readiness within Michigan communities’ zoning ordinances, as well as insights into the most effective ways to engage with these communities.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Pulse, funded by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, partnered with McKenna to provide zoning technical services to communities across Southwest Michigan. These services enabled communities to identify barriers to child care business development within their zoning ordinances and provided recommendations for removing these obstacles and incentivizing child care development. McKenna conducted the reviews and met with communities to discuss the findings and recommendations.

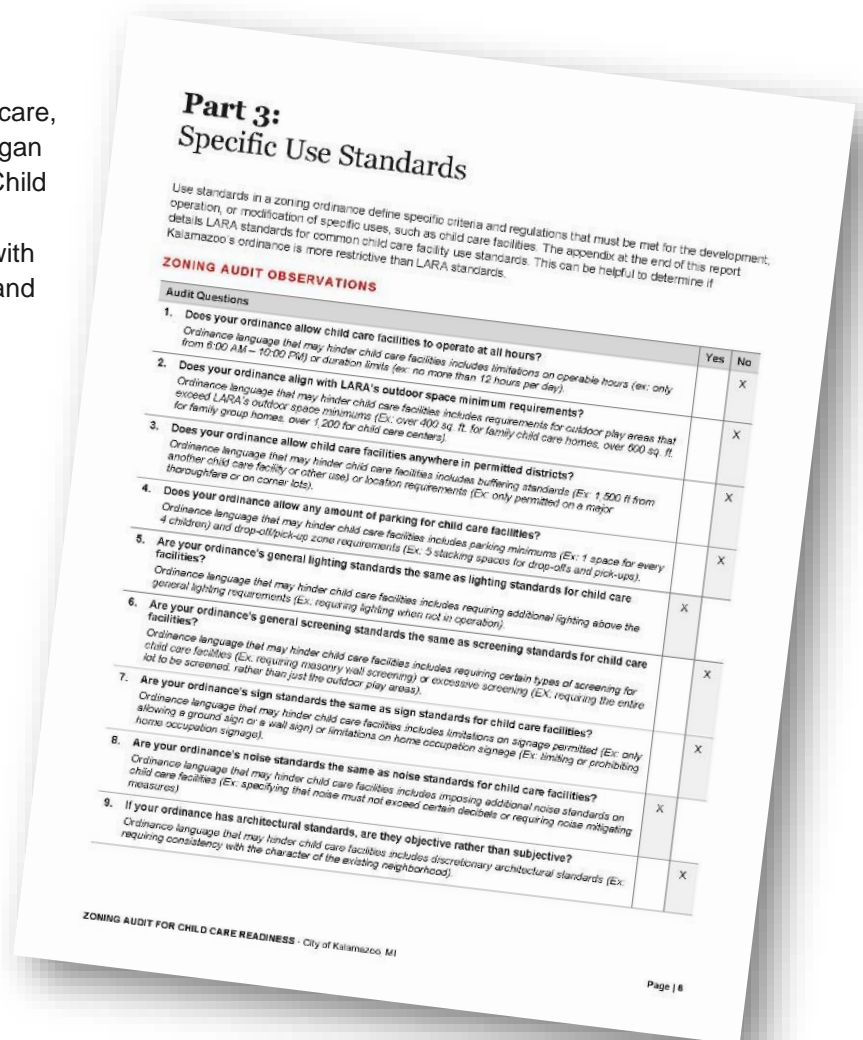
The project ran from July 16, 2024, to August 31, 2024, and included three targeted email campaigns sent to Pulse’s entire Southwest Michigan contact list on July 16, July 25, and August 12. Initially, the focus area for the zoning services was the Southwest Michigan Region (Region 8). However, due to interest from other communities, we expanded the focus area to allow broader participation, while still prioritizing communities within the Southwest Michigan Region.

DELIVERABLES

Communities that engaged with this opportunity were provided with two separate reports: an *Audit Report* and a *Recommendations Report*.

- The Zoning Audit Report** highlighted sections of the community’s zoning ordinance that created barriers to child care, identified noncompliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) and The Child Care Organizations Act (1973 PA 116), and noted areas that were misaligned with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Additionally, the Audit provided general recommendations for changes and provided rationale for these recommendations.
- The Zoning Recommendations Report** proposed specific text amendments and ordinance changes directly addressing the barriers identified in the Audit. It also outlined best practices for incorporating zoning and procedural incentives to encourage child care development. Additionally, the report reviewed each community’s fee schedule and provided recommendations to further incentivize child care.

Due to timing constraints, a handful of communities in Branch County received only Zoning Audit Reports, however, these communities were all provided with a generalized zoning recommendations report to help with implementing the Zoning Audit Report’s recommended changes.



Sample report from the Kalamazoo Zoning Audit.

OUTREACH OVERVIEW

Throughout July and August, McKenna engaged with 18 communities throughout Michigan. Of these 18 communities, 14 were located in the Southwest Michigan Region (Region 8), and 4 were located elsewhere in Michigan. See the map below for an overview of the communities that participated in the project.

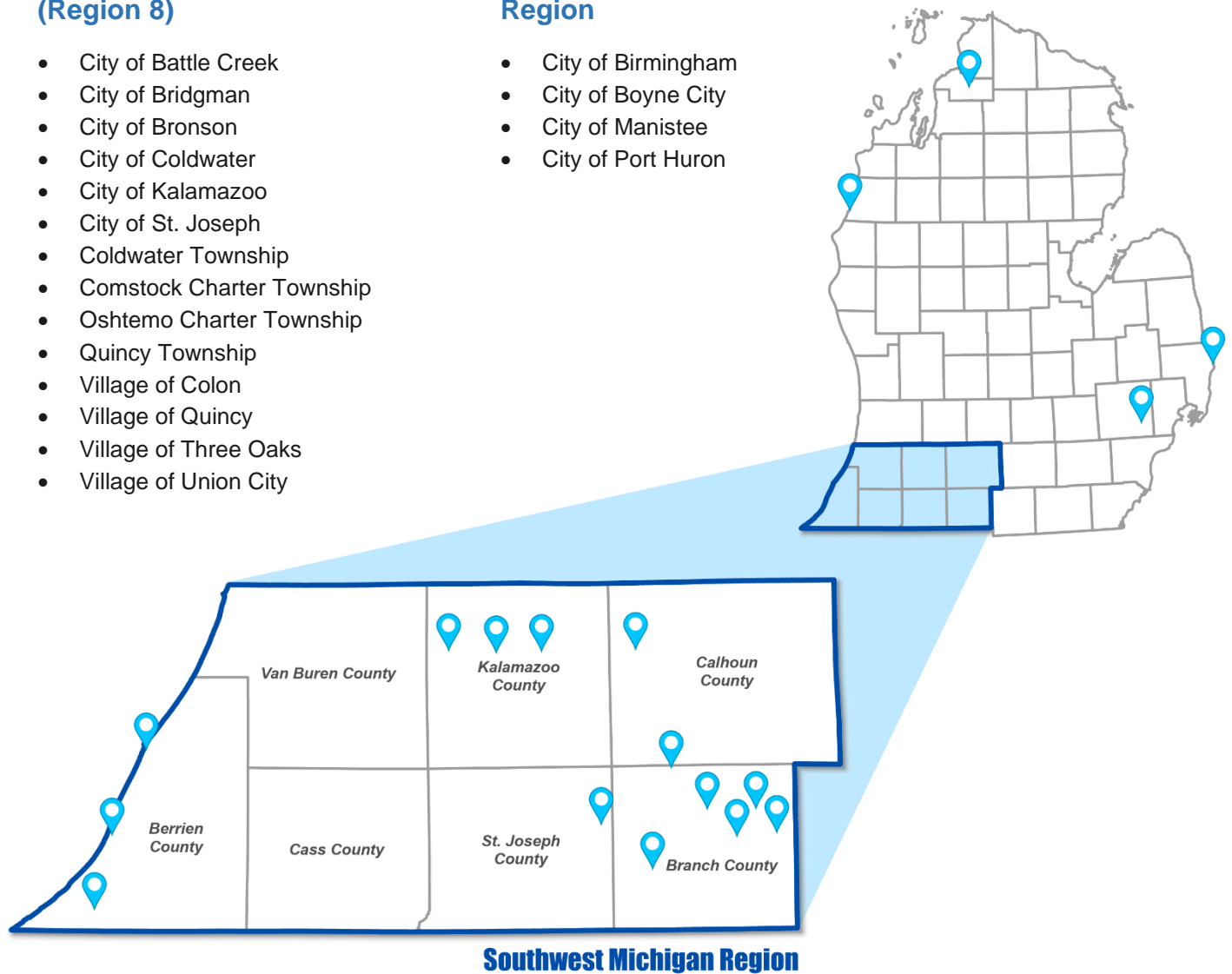
The following page also includes a detailed table of the participating communities.

Southwest Michigan Region (Region 8)

- City of Battle Creek
- City of Bridgman
- City of Bronson
- City of Coldwater
- City of Kalamazoo
- City of St. Joseph
- Coldwater Township
- Comstock Charter Township
- Oshtemo Charter Township
- Quincy Township
- Village of Colon
- Village of Quincy
- Village of Three Oaks
- Village of Union City

Non-Southwest Michigan Region

- City of Birmingham
- City of Boyne City
- City of Manistee
- City of Port Huron



PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES

The table below details the participating communities, as well as the technical services provided to each community and how they heard about the opportunity. Understanding how communities heard about these consultant services provides valuable insight into the most effective ways to engage communities in the future. Overall, the existing child care and community development networks were the most effective in getting communities to engage, highlighting the importance of these organizations in outreach efforts.

Community		A	R	GR	Source
Southwest Michigan Region (Region 8)	City of Battle Creek	✓	✓		Pulse outreach
	City of Bridgman	✓	✓		Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber outreach
	City of Bronson	✓	✓		Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	City of Coldwater	✓	✓		Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	City of Kalamazoo	✓	✓		Pulse outreach
	City of St. Joseph	✓	✓		Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber outreach
	Coldwater Township*	✓		✓	Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	Comstock Charter Township	✓	✓		McKenna 3 rd email push
	Oshtemo Charter Township	✓	✓		McKenna initial email push
	Quincy Township*	✓		✓	Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	Village of Colon*	✓		✓	Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	Village of Quincy	✓	✓		Branch County Community Foundation outreach
	Village of Three Oaks	✓	✓		Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber outreach
Village of Union City*	✓		✓	Branch County Community Foundation outreach	
Non-Southwest Michigan Region	City of Birmingham	✓	✓		Pulse outreach at the Michigan Municipal Executives Conference (MME)
	City of Boyne City	✓	✓		Laura Lam's outreach
	City of Manistee	✓	✓		Pulse outreach at the Michigan Municipal Executives Conference (MME)
	City of Port Huron	✓	✓		Michigan Municipal Executive listserv

A = Zoning Audit Report, R = Recommendations Report, GR = General Recommendations Report

*Branch County Community Foundation (BCCF) agreed to act as intermediaries for these communities. McKenna met with BCCF to explain the results of the audit and how to use the general recommendation sheet, and BCCF will meet individually each community to share the results. McKenna will be available to BCCF for any questions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section highlights frequent observations of barriers identified in the audited zoning ordinances. It offers a high-level overview of the areas that typically create obstacles or are not in compliance with State regulations. Recognizing these common barriers will be valuable for future efforts to improve child care readiness in zoning ordinances.

Definitions

- Misalignment with capacity increases included in The Child Care Organizations Act (1973 PA 116) as amended (up to 7 children for family child care homes and up to 14 children for group child care homes).

Permitted Uses

- Not permitting family child care homes by right in every residential district, which is required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. This includes permitting the use by right but imposing additional conditions on the use.

Specific Use Standards

- Requiring outdoor space in excess of LARA minimums.
- Requiring additional parking requirements compared to similar uses or the principal permitted use and in excess of LARA requirements.
- Requiring fencing above the general ordinance requirements and in excess of LARA requirements.
- Limiting hours of operation.