

TOWNSHIP OF ATLAS
COUNTY OF GENESEE, STATE OF MICHIGAN

ORDINANCE NO. 25-02

BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

July 7, 2025 DRAFT

As Recommended for Adoption by the Atlas Township Planning Commission on June 18, 2025

Prepared by Wade Trim

Based on the MTA Model Battery Energy Storage Systems Ordinance

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, ERECTION, PLACEMENT, LOCATION, MAINTENANCE, MODIFICATION, OPERATION, AND DECOMMISSIONING OF BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS IN THE TOWNSHIP IN A MANNER THAT PROMOTES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURES THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE WHILE ALSO AVOIDING ADVERSE IMPACTS TO IMPORTANT AREAS SUCH AS AGRICULTURAL LANDS, RESIDENTIAL AREAS, ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITATS, CONSERVATION LANDS, AND OTHER SENSITIVE LANDS.

THE TOWNSHIP OF ATLAS, GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN ORDAINS:

SECTION 1 – ADD NEW DEFINITIONS TO ARTICLE II, SECTION 2.20 (DEFINITIONS):

The following definitions shall be added to Section 2.20 of the Township Zoning Ordinance, and shall be inserted into said Zoning Ordinance so that all definitions are in alphabetical order:

Battery Energy Storage System. One or more devices, assembled, capable of storing energy to supply electrical energy at a future time, not to include a stand-alone 12-volt car battery, an electric motor vehicle, or small store-bought batteries designed and used purely for household electronic items.

Battery Energy Storage System, On-Site. A Battery Energy Storage System that is an accessory use that is intended to primarily serve the needs of the consumer on-site.

Battery Energy Storage System, Off-Site. A Battery Energy Storage System that is a principal use (or co-located with a second principal use) and that is designed and built to connect into the distribution or transmission grid.

Non-Participating Property. Any property that is adjacent to a participating property, but is not part of the battery storage project.

Participating Property. A battery energy storage system host property or any real property that is the subject of an agreement that provides for the payment of monetary compensation to the landowner from the system owner (or affiliate) regardless of whether any part of a system is constructed on the property.

SECTION 2 - ADD A NEW SECTION 3.360, TITLED "OFF-SITE BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS"

A new Section 3.360, entitled "Off-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems" is hereby added to Article III of the Township Zoning Ordinance to read as follows:

Section 3.360 Off-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems.

The following requirements shall apply to all off-site battery energy storage systems:

1. **Location.** Off-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems shall be allowed as a conditional land use only within the C-2, C-3, M-1, and M-2 districts.
2. **Setbacks.** The following minimum setbacks shall be required. Setbacks are measured from the nearest facility structure to the nearest point on the associated item:
 - a. 100 feet from any property line of a non-participating property
 - b. 300 feet from the nearest point on the outer wall of a dwelling on nonparticipating property
 - c. 50 feet measured from the nearest edge of a public road right-of-way
3. **Height.** The height of battery energy storage system structures, except for electric distribution and transmission poles, shall not exceed a height of twenty (20) feet as measured from the natural grade of the property beneath the structure. Stacking of battery storage system components is prohibited.
4. **Fencing.** The system shall be completely enclosed with fencing in compliance with the latest version of the National Electrical Safety Code or any applicable successor standard approved by the Michigan Public Service Commission.
5. **Sound.** The system may not generate a maximum sound in excess of 55 average hourly decibels as measured at the property line of an adjacent non-participating property. Decibel modeling shall use the A- weighted scale designed by the American National Standards Institute. The Planning Commission may require the applicant to provide a sounds study as part of the special land use review process.
6. **Lighting.** The system must implement dark sky-friendly lighting solutions.
7. **Additional Requirements to Address System Impacts.** The following requirements shall apply to the entire system, or to designated components of the system, as indicated:
 - a. **Safety Signage.** The system shall post signs in compliance with NFPA 70/70E or any applicable successor code in place at the time of application for approval. Additionally, signage shall be provided per NFPA 855 7.4.4, or any applicable successor code in place at the time of application for approval, including information on the system type and technology, special hazards, fire suppression system and 24-hour emergency contact information, including reach-back phone number. A clearly visible warning sign concerning voltage shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations.

- b. Other Signage: Additional signage may be permitted or required by the Planning Commission as is necessary to ensure the safe operation of the system.
- c. The facility shall comply with NFPA 855 “Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems” or any applicable successor standard adopted by the Michigan Public Service Commission.
- d. The Planning Commission shall require reasonable measures to minimize visual impacts by preserving existing natural vegetation, requiring new vegetative screening or other appropriate measures. The Planning Commission shall determine such visual screening measures as may be required on a site specific basis pursuant to the standards for conditional uses as specified in Section 22.50, the landscaping standards of Article XX, and/or the standards for site plan approval as specified in Section 22.40, as most applicable to the circumstances. In making this determination, the Planning Commission is specifically authorized to consider whether additional visual screening measures are appropriate where a system is proposed to be located on property adjacent to a residential use and/or a residential district zoning classification. All screening/landscaping shall be properly maintained throughout the life of the project including replacement of any dead landscaping within six months.
- e. If the system includes an access drive(s) for maintenance purposes, the surface of the access drive(s) shall be permeable (unless on brownfield land or on an already paved surface at the time of application for approval, such as a parking lot or former building foundation).
- f. Access drive(s) identified as necessary for fire and emergency service vehicles shall be maintained and cleared year-round to ensure free passage by such vehicles.
- g. Except as otherwise depicted on and subject to approval of the Planning Commission, the area within which the system is located shall not be paved with asphalt/concrete or any other surface material that is impermeable to water other than for slab foundations for structures and equipment. This shall not apply to a system located on brownfield land or on an existing paved area such as a former building slab or in an unused parking area when adequate parking remains for all other uses on the site.
- h. All surface water runoff created by construction and operation of the project shall be effectively managed on-site.

8. Installation and Operational Safety. The system shall comply with all of the following requirements:

- a. The system shall be designed and constructed for interconnection to a Michigan Public Service Commission or Midcontinent Independent System Operator regulated utility electrical power grid and shall be operated with such interconnection.
- b. The system and all foundation elements shall comply with all applicable building and electrical code requirements, and any applicable federal/state regulations. The manufacturer's engineer or another qualified engineer shall provide written certification that the design, installation (including foundations), and interconnection is compliant with the manufacturer and industry

standards, all applicable local construction and electrical codes, and any applicable federal/state regulations.

- c. Other than transmission or distribution lines for interconnection to the electric power grid, all electrical wiring shall be buried underground; except where the manufacturer's engineer or a qualified engineer employed by the utility that owns/operates the electrical power grid to which the system shall be interconnected certifies an underground wiring installation is not permitted by an applicable code and/or applicable federal/state regulation, with attached complete documentation supporting any such certification.
 - d. The system shall be designed, located, and maintained so as to comply with all applicable codes and regulations.
9. **Public Safety.** The Emergency Response Plan and Fire Response Plan shall provide reasonable protection of the public health, welfare and safety including but not limited to an emergency shutdown procedure in place and shall provide the local fire department site safety plans to include electrical, fire, smoke, and hazardous materials release, emergency response protocols and identification of typical hazards related to, electrical, fire, smoke and hazardous materials pertinent to the facility. Upon request, all systems shall provide first responder training at the site.
10. **Repair and Augmentation.** In addition to repairing or replacing facility components to maintain the system, the facility may at any time be augmented without the need to submit a new site plan so long as the augmentation is within the same footprint (e.g., same dedicated use building or on footings/foundations in the same location) as the original permit. If there is a change in the battery chemistry, an updated Hazard Mitigation Analysis and Emergency Operation Plan shall be provided. When a facility is anticipated to be augmented over its lifetime by adding additional components, the applicant should apply for the final/augmented site arrangement. A proposal to increase the size the project footprint may be considered a new application, subject to the ordinance standards at the time of the request.
11. **Decommissioning and Removal.** A decommissioning plan is required at the time of application.
- a. The decommission plan shall include:
 - i. The anticipated manner in which the project will be decommissioned, including a description of which above-grade and below-grade improvements will be removed, retained (e.g., access drive, fencing), or restored for viable reuse of the property consistent with the zoning district. Pursuant to this requirement, the decommissioning plan shall be required to include that any structures up to forty-eight (48) inches below-grade shall be removed for disposal.
 - ii. The projected decommissioning costs shall reflect the actual cost of decommissioning the project. Salvage value shall not be included in the cost to decommission the project.
 - iii. The method of ensuring that funds will be available for site decommissioning and stabilization (in the form of surety bond or cash deposit).

- b. A review of the amount of the surety bond, based on inflation, and current removal costs shall be completed every 4 years, for the life of the project, and approved by the Planning Commission. A Battery Energy Storage System owner may at any time:
 - i. Proceed with the decommissioning plan approved by the Planning Commission, and remove the system as indicated in the most recent approved plan; or
 - ii. Amend the decommissioning plan with Planning Commission approval and proceed according to the revised plan.
- c. Decommissioning of a Battery Energy Storage System must commence when the soil is dry to prevent soil compaction and must be complete within 18 months after abandonment. A Battery Energy Storage System that has not operated for 12 consecutive months shall prompt an abandonment hearing by the Planning Commission to determine whether decommissioning shall commence.
 - i. Restoration shall include bringing soil and topography of the land to their pre-development composition to ensure permitted uses upon restoration. Soil tests shall be required as part of the decommissioning plan both before development and prior to the decommissioning.

12. Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Application Requirements. Applications for conditional use permit approval shall comply with Section 22.50 of this Ordinance. A formal application for site plan approval for this land use shall comply with Section 22.40 of this Ordinance. An incomplete application will not be accepted. Each such application shall also be subject to the following additional submission requirements:

- a. The complete name, address, and telephone number of the applicant.
- b. The planned date for the start of construction and the expected duration of construction.
- c. A description of the system, including a site plan as described in Section 224 of the Clean and Renewable Energy Waste Reduction Act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1224. The following items must be shown on the site plan:
 - i. A map of all properties upon which any component of a facility or ancillary feature would be located, and all properties within one thousand (1,000) feet. This should indicate the location of all existing structures and shall identify such structures as occupied or vacant.
 - ii. Lot lines and required setbacks shown and dimensioned including horizontal and vertical elevation drawings that show the location and height of the Battery Energy Storage System on the land and dimensions of the Battery Energy Storage System.
 - iii. Size and location of existing and proposed water utilities, including any proposed connections to public, or private community sewer or water supply systems.

- iv. A map of any existing overhead and underground major facilities for electric, gas, telecommunications transmission within the facility and surrounding area
 - v. The location and size of all surface water drainage facilities, including source, volume expected, route, and course to final destination.
 - vi. A map depicting the proposed facilities, adjacent properties, all structures within participating and adjacent properties, property lines, and the projected sound isolines along with the modeled sound isolines including the statutory limit
- d. A description of the expected use of the system.
 - e. Expected public benefits of the proposed system.
 - f. The expected direct impacts of the proposed system on the environment and natural resources and how the applicant intends to address and mitigate these impacts.
 - g. Information on the effects of the proposed system on public health and safety.
 - h. A description of the portion of the community where the system will be located.
 - i. A statement and reasonable evidence that the proposed system will not commence commercial operation until it complies with applicable state and federal environmental laws, including, but not limited to, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.101 to 324.90106.
 - j. Evidence of consultation, before submission of the application, with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and other relevant state and federal agencies before submitting the application, including, but not limited to, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
 - k. The Soil and Economic Survey Report under Section 60303 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.60303, for the county where the proposed system will be located.
 - l. Interconnection queue information for the applicable regional transmission organization.
 - m. If the proposed site of the system is undeveloped land, a description of feasible alternative developed locations, including, but not limited to, vacant industrial property and brownfields, and an explanation of why they were not chosen.
 - n. If the system is reasonably expected to have an impact on television signals, microwave signals, agricultural global position systems, military defense radar, radio reception, or weather and doppler radio, a plan to minimize and mitigate that impact. Information in the plan concerning military defense radar is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246, and shall not be disclosed by the commission or the electric provider or independent power producer except pursuant to court order.

- o. A stormwater assessment and a plan to minimize, mitigate, and repair any drainage impacts at the expense of the applicant. The applicant shall make reasonable efforts to consult with the county drain commissioner before submitting the application and shall include evidence of those efforts in its application.
- p. A fire response plan and an emergency response plan.
 - i. The fire response plan (FRP) shall include:
 1. Evidence of consultation or a good faith effort to consult with local fire department representatives to ensure that the FRP is in alignment with acceptable operating procedures, capabilities, resources, etc. If consultation with local fire department representatives is not possible, provide evidence of consultation or a good faith effort to consult with the State Fire Marshal or other local emergency manager.
 2. A description of all on-site equipment and systems to be provided to prevent or handle fire emergencies.
 3. A description of all contingency plans to be implemented in response to the occurrence of a fire emergency.
 4. A commitment to review and update the FRP with fire departments, first responders, and county emergency managers at least once every three (3) years.
 5. An analysis of whether plans to be implemented in response to a fire emergency can be fulfilled by existing local emergency response capacity. The analysis should include identification of any specific equipment or training deficiencies in local emergency response capacity and recommendations for measures to mitigate deficiencies.
 6. Other information the applicants finds relevant.
 - ii. The emergency response plan (ERP) shall include:
 1. Evidence of consultation or a good faith effort to consult with local first responders and county emergency managers to ensure that the ERP is in alignment with acceptable operating procedures, capabilities, resources, etc.
 2. An identification of contingencies that would constitute a safety or security emergency (fire emergencies are to be addressed in a separate fire response plan);
 3. Emergency response measures by contingency;
 4. Evacuation control measures by contingency;
 5. Community notification procedures by contingency;

6. An identification of potential approach and departure routes to and from the facility site for police, fire, ambulance, and other emergency vehicles;
 7. A commitment to review and update the ERP with fire departments, first responders, and county emergency managers at least once every three (3) years;
 8. An analysis of whether plans to be implemented in response to an emergency can be fulfilled by existing local emergency response capacity, and identification of any specific equipment or training deficiencies in local emergency response capacity; and
 9. Other information the applicants finds relevant.
- q. A report detailing the sound modeling results along with mitigation plans to ensure that sound emitted from the system will remain below the statutory limit throughout the operational life of the system.
 - r. Any other information regarding compliance with the requirements herein.
13. **Waiver.** Because of the ever-changing technical capabilities of battery storage infrastructure and of new technology in general, the Township Planning Commission shall have the authority to review and consider alternatives in both the dimensional and physical requirements contained in this ordinance as part of the conditional land use review process, and other requirements.
14. **Building Permit.** Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, the following information shall be provided.
- a. Equipment specification sheets.
 - b. Identification and contact information for the installer(s) of the proposed system.
 - c. Augmentation Plan.
 - d. Approved Decommissioning Plan and Decommissioning Agreement in recordable form and acceptable to the Township Attorney.
 - e. Life expectancy of the system components including the anticipated schedule for battery replacement to maintain megawatts over the system's lifetime.
 - f. Hazard Mitigation Analysis.
 - g. Operation and Maintenance Manual.
 - h. Identification and contact information for the installer of the system.
 - i. Electrical schematic plan for the system, including disconnect devices.

- j. An approved FRP and ERP.
- k. Proof of financial guarantee for decommissioning.

15. **Transfers.** No transfer in ownership of the Battery Energy Storage System shall occur prior to providing 60 days’ notice to the Township and upon Township approval verifying that the new owner agrees to carry out the terms of the special land use and site plan approval.

SECTION III - ADD A NEW SECTION 3.370, TITLED “ON-SITE BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS”

A new Section 3.370, entitled “On-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems” is hereby added to Article III of the Township Zoning Ordinance to read as follows:

Section 3.370 On-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems.

1. On-Site Battery Energy Storage Systems shall be allowed as a permitted use in all zoning districts, subject to the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance.
2. A building permit shall be required for all on-site battery energy storage systems.
3. On-site battery energy storage with an aggregate energy capacity of more than 1 megawatt are subject to additional regulations in the applicable fire code, and required documentation shall be submitted along with the building/electrical permit applications.
4. Setbacks. All battery energy storage system structures and related structural apparatus not physically attached to a building shall satisfy the principal building setback requirements of the applicable zoning district.

SECTION IV – SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable. If any clause, sentence, word, section or provision is hereafter declared void or unenforceable for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, it shall not affect the remainder of such ordinance which shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION V – REPEAL

All ordinance or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION VI – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect 7 days after publication.

Supervisor

Clerk

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

I, Toni Yaklin, the duly elected, qualified and acting clerk of the Township of Atlas, Genesee County, Michigan do certify that the above Ordinance was adopted at a special meeting of the Township Board held in the Government Center, 7386 S. Gale Road, Goodrich, Michigan, on the xxx day of xxxxxxxx, 2025 by a majority of the members of the board present and voting.

Clerk