



# Skamania County

## Community Development Department

**Building/Fire Marshal • Environmental Health • Planning**

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## SUBDIVISION APPLICATION & INFORMATIONAL PACKET

### WHAT IS A SUBDIVISION?

A subdivision is a division of land into five or more individual lots. Divisions of four or fewer lots should be approved through the short plat process. Minimum lot size is determined by the zoning classification and water and on-site septic requirements.

### WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS?

Submit a **complete** subdivision application, along with the required Land Division Water and Septic Applications, Drainage Report, and SEPA checklist. Some projects will also require a Critical Areas Review. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Once the application is considered complete, the following will take place:

- All subdivisions require a State Environmental Policy Act Checklist (SEPA) review, which is the first step in the Subdivision review process. A SEPA threshold determination will be issued by this department to adjacent property owners, local and state agencies, and published in the newspaper which includes all environmental factors for the project and any report requirements that must be completed before the Subdivision map review may begin.
- A Notice of Subdivision/Public Hearing Application is issued to all adjacent property owners and local and state agencies. During this time, the Environmental Health Specialist, Planner, and County Engineer will review the maps and any other related applications. Staff will review the proposal and prepare a staff report and recommendation for the Skamania County Hearing Examiner.
- A public hearing date is set before the Skamania County Hearing Examiner and the applicant will be notified of the date, time and place of the hearing. When the hearing occurs, the applicant or representative must be present at the hearing for the petition to be heard and is required to give testimony to the Hearing Examiner.
- The Hearing Examiner will issue a decision within 10 business days of the close of the record, which could be approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the preliminary plat.
- Applicants have five years to complete any conditions of approval or improvements prior to submitting the final plat for approval. Final plat requires approval by the Board of County Commissioners at a public meeting. Once the Board has approved and signed the final plat, it is recorded with the Auditor's Office.

### WATER AND ON-SITE SEPTIC REQUIREMENTS

- **Water:** All proposed lots must have a completed and approved water source prior to subdivision recording. The Land Division – Water application, which must come in as part of the subdivision packet, is used for this process. Water will be reviewed at the time of complete application determination and any outstanding requirements will be included in the preliminary plat approval.
  - A water availability study completed by a Washington State Licensed Hydrogeologist may be submitted in lieu of the Land Division – Water application. This report must be submitted at the time of your subdivision application.
- **On-Site Septic:** All proposed lots must have approved soil test holes dug and evaluated prior to subdivision recording. The Land Division – On-site Septic application, which must come in as part of the subdivision packet, is

used for this process. On-site septic will be reviewed at the time of complete application determination and any outstanding requirements will be included in the preliminary plat approval.

## **HOW WILL CRITICAL AREAS REGULATIONS AFFECT MY SUBDIVISION?**

There are different requirements for developing in or near each type of critical area. The following information is not intended as a substitute for all the requirements in the county's critical area regulations in Title 19.

- **Wetlands:** Wetlands are protected by buffers, undisturbed areas of native vegetation where development is prohibited. If your project is located within 300 ft. of a wetland then you will need to obtain a wetland delineation or wetland letter and show that your project is located outside any required wetland buffers or that there is sufficient buildable area outside wetland buffers. Buffer widths range in size based on the wetland category (see SCC 19.03.040(C)): Category I: 50 ft. to 300 ft., Category II: 100 ft., Category III: 50 ft., Category IV: 25 ft.
- **Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas:** CARAs are areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water. Some developments will require the submission of a hydrogeological report showing that the development will not degrade groundwater sources. Residential development is generally exempted from these requirements.
- **Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas:** These include both riparian habitats (such as streams) and non-riparian habitats (such as deer wintering range). If your development is located within one of these areas, then a critical areas review will be required to ensure that your proposal will not negatively affect a habitat area. Streams are protected by buffers, determined by the type of stream: Type F: 100 ft., Type Np: 50 ft., Type Ns: 25 ft. As with wetlands, you will need to show that your project is located outside any required buffers or that there is sufficient buildable area outside any stream buffers. Road and utility crossings must comply with the development standards in SCC 19.05.040(C)(10).
- **Frequently Flooded Areas:** All development within the 100-year floodplain shall comply with standards established in Washington Administrative Code 173-158 for construction within a floodplain or floodway in addition to complying with the development standards identified in SCC 15.18.
- **Geologically Hazardous Areas:**
  - Erosion Hazards: Erosion control plan required.
  - Landslide Hazards: Geotechnical assessment or report required to establish buffers, buildable areas with a plat, or additional mitigations.
  - Seismic Hazards: Development must conform to seismic code.
  - Volcanic Hazards: Evacuation and emergency management plan required.
- **Density Transfer for Subdivisions:** If your property includes critical areas, you may transfer density for residential uses from lands containing critical areas. In order to accommodate the density transfer, the county may allow reductions in setbacks and lot dimensions and sizes. The critical area will need to be permanently protected as undeveloped land. See SCC 19.01.080(D)(7).

## **MINIMUM LOT SIZE**

Minimum lot sizes and dimensions must comply with the requirements of the zone in which the subdivision is located. Lot size averaging may be used to satisfy the minimum lot size. The individual lots in a subdivision are considered in compliance with minimum lot size requirements if the average area of all the lots in the plat meets the minimum requirement for the zone. See SCC 17.36.030.

## **PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a pre-application conference, which includes meeting with a Planner, an Environmental Health Specialist, and the County Engineer. Each department representative will discuss their requirements for subdivision completion, and answer any questions the applicant may have. It is helpful to bring a proposed project layout and to have your surveyor attend the meeting.