

# **Subdivision and Plat Approval Guide**

## **For Dillingham Planning Commission Members**

This guide provides a simple, step-by-step explanation of how to review and approve subdivisions and plats as a Planning Commission member.

### **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUTHORITY**

As the Planning Commission, you serve as the Platting Board for the City of Dillingham. This means you have the authority to:

- Review and approve subdivision plats
- Grant exceptions to certain requirements
- Set conditions on approvals
- Deny subdivision applications that don't meet requirements

The Planning Director can approve abbreviated plats administratively (4 or fewer lots).

### **PART 2: TYPES OF SUBDIVISIONS**

#### **Standard Subdivision**

- Creates 5 or more lots, OR
- Requires dedication of streets or public areas, OR
- Requires significant public improvements

#### **Abbreviated Subdivision**

- Creates 4 or fewer lots
- Each lot has legal access to a public street
- No new streets or public areas required
- No variances needed

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## PART 3: THE REVIEW PROCESS

### Step 1: Preliminary Consultation (Already Done Before It Reaches You)

The subdivider meets with the Planning Director to discuss the general concept.

### Step 2: Preliminary Plat Review

#### What You'll Receive Before the Meeting:

- Copies of the preliminary plat
- Staff report with analysis and recommendation
- Any public comments received

#### What to Look For:

##### 1. Legal Requirements:

- Does it follow the rules in Title 17?
- Are lot sizes and dimensions adequate?
- Is there proper access to all lots?

##### 2. Public Safety:

- Are streets designed safely?
- Is drainage adequately addressed?
- Are there any environmental hazards?

##### 3. Compatibility:

- Does it align with the Comprehensive Plan?
- Is it compatible with surrounding development?
- Will it overburden public facilities?

#### Your Decision Options:

- Approve the preliminary plat as submitted
- Approve with conditions
- Deny (must state specific reasons)

**Time Limit:** Decision must be made within 60 days of filing date.

### Step 3: Final Plat Review (After Improvements are Made)

#### What to Verify:

1. Does the final plat match the approved preliminary plat?
2. Have all conditions of preliminary approval been met?
3. Have required improvements been:
  - Installed and inspected? OR
  - Guaranteed with proper financial security?
4. Are all required certificates and signatures included?
5. Does it meet all technical requirements in Section 17.11.060?

#### Your Decision Options:

- Approve the final plat
- Deny (must state specific reasons)

**Time Limit:** Decision must be made within 60 days of request for approval.

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## PART 4: SPECIAL SITUATIONS

### Exceptions to Road Standards (Section 17.07.090)

You may grant exceptions to road standards ONLY if:

- The subdivision creates 4 or fewer lots
- No previous road exceptions have been granted for this property
- You make specific findings that:
  1. It won't harm public welfare or nearby properties
  2. The road isn't needed for future access to adjacent properties
  3. Strict application would cause undue hardship

### Variances

These must go through the variance process outlined in Chapter 18.52 and must not:

- Be caused by the subdivider
- Permit a prohibited land use
- Be solely for financial reasons

### Vacations, Alterations, or Replats (Chapter 17.15)

Existing plats may be altered or vacated through petition by:

- The State
- The City
- A public utility
- Owners of the majority of affected land

## PART 5: DECISION-MAKING CHECKLIST

### For Preliminary Plats

- Is the application complete?
- Has proper public notice been given?
- Does it conform to the Comprehensive Plan?
- Does it meet all requirements of Title 17?
- Are all lots accessible from a public or approved private street?
- Are road and utility standards met?
- Is drainage adequately addressed?
- Have environmental concerns been considered?
- Has the State DEC approved water/sewer provisions (if applicable)?
- Have all agencies been properly notified and their comments addressed?

### For Final Plats

- Does it match the approved preliminary plat?
- Have all conditions been satisfied?
- Have improvements been installed or guaranteed?
- Are all required signatures and certificates included?
- Are all technical requirements met?

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## PART 6: SAMPLE MOTIONS

### **To Approve a Preliminary Plat:**

"I move to approve the preliminary plat for [name of subdivision] as presented, finding that it complies with all requirements of Title 17 of the City Code."

### **To Approve with Conditions:**

"I move to approve the preliminary plat for [name of subdivision], subject to the following conditions: [list specific conditions], finding that with these conditions, it will comply with all requirements of Title 17 of the City Code."

### **To Deny:**

"I move to deny the preliminary plat for [name of subdivision], finding that it does not comply with Title 17 of the City Code because [state specific reasons]."

### **To Approve a Final Plat:**

"I move to approve the final plat for [name of subdivision], finding that it conforms to the approved preliminary plat and satisfies all conditions of preliminary approval."

## **REMEMBER:**

1. **Be Consistent** - Apply the same standards to all applications
2. **Document Your Findings** - State clear reasons for your decisions
3. **Focus on Code Requirements** - Base decisions on what the law requires
4. **Ask Questions** - If unsure, ask staff for clarification
5. **Consider the Record** - Make decisions based only on the information presented

*If you need clarification on any part of the subdivision process, don't hesitate to ask the Planning Director or City Attorney for guidance.*