

THE MINOR SUBDIVISION PROCESS

WHAT IS A MINOR SUBDIVISION?

A minor subdivision is the division of a residential or agricultural parcel of land that has not been part of a previously recorded subdivision into four or fewer residential lots (including buildable preservation parcels but excluding open space lots and non-buildable preservation parcels) either all at one time or lot by lot.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DURING THE DESIGN OF A MINOR SUBDIVISION?

Design:

The subdivision plan should be designed to reflect the unique character of the property by responding to its topography, wetlands, streams and forests and its relationship to adjoining properties and roads. Any division of land within the County must be in accordance with the procedures and standards set forth in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

Zoning:

Permitted density, minimum lot size and building setback requirements are regulated by the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

Water and Sewer:

If a private sewage system is to be used for lots within the subdivision, the Health Department must conduct a soil percolation test on the property. If the property is located within the metropolitan district, the proposed lots must (in most instances) be connected to public water and sewer systems.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTING A MINOR SUBDIVISION PLAN?

Prior to submitting plans to the County, the property owner must consult with and hire a Maryland registered land surveyor or engineer (consultant). The consultant will survey the property and prepare a proposed subdivision plan, along with any supplemental reports, plans or studies required to process the minor subdivision. Some of the supplemental documents that are often required are:

- Soils Map with topography
- Forest Stand Delineation and Forest Conservation Plan
- Wetland Analysis

- Floodplain Study
- Noise Study
- Landscape Plan
- Sight Distance Analysis
- Percolation Plat
- Property Deeds

HOW IS THE PLAN PROCESSED?

The seven basic steps for processing a minor subdivision plan are:

Step 1 - Pre-Submission Community Meeting:

The property owner or developer must schedule and hold a meeting with community residents for all new residential projects prior to submitting subdivision plans to the County. This is an opportunity for community residents to learn about, ask questions and express any concerns regarding the proposed residential development. Contact the DPZ for additional information about the pre-submission community meeting process and procedures or visit DPZ's web site at: [Development & Zoning: Development & Zoning](#)

Step 1a - Historic District Commission (HDC) Meeting, if applicable:

A pre-submission advisory meeting with the Historic District Commission is required for new development located within a Historic District or if the site is listed in the Historic Sites Inventory. Contact the DPZ, Resource Conservation Division for information about the HDC meeting process.

Step 1b - Environmental Concept Plan (ECP), if applicable:

The pre-submission of an ECP to the Department of Planning and Zoning is required for proposed storm water management facilities to demonstrate how the environmental site design is achieved to the maximum extent practicable. An ECP is the first of three required plan approvals that includes the information necessary to allow an initial evaluation of a proposed project. The ECP includes a conceptual design for storm water management, erosion and sediment control and the delineation of environmental features. The ECP must be submitted through the "Project Dox" electronic process. "Project Dox" is a tool for plan submission, review, approval and tracking using a paperless online web-based system. Contact the DPZ, Development Engineering Division for information about the ECP Process.

Step 2 - Submission of the Plan to the County:

The property owner or consultant shall submit the completed subdivision plans accompanied by the required Final Plan applications, checklists and fees by appointment only to the DPZ, Division of Land Development customer service desk located on the second floor of the George Howard Building. There are two separate applications and checklists required for Final Plan processing, one for the Division of Land Development and one for the Development Engineering Division. The applications and checklists assist applicants in understanding the plan preparation requirements. Filing fees are based on a Schedule of Fees adopted each year by Resolution of the

County Council. The current applications and filing fees for a final subdivision plan may be obtained from the DPZ Public Service Center. Applications and checklists are also available on DPZ's web site at: <http://www.co.ho.md.us/DPZ/formsfeesapplications.htm>

Step 3 - Review of the Subdivision Plan:

Regulatory Compliance Review –

The DPZ is responsible for processing and approving minor subdivision plans with assistance from the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC). The SRC will review the subdivision plan to verify compliance with County and State regulations. The SRC is composed of the following County and State Departments:

- Planning and Zoning
- Health Department
- Recreation and Parks
- Inspections, Licenses and Permits
- Public School System
- State Highway Administration
- Soil Conservation District
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Public Works

Step 4 - Decision is Made on the Subdivision Plan:

The DPZ compiles comments from the SRC, and within 60 days from submission of the plan, a written decision is provided to the property owner and consultant indicating whether the plan is approved, approved with modifications or in need of revisions.

▪ Adequate Public Facilities Allocation and School Tests:

Prior to granting approval, the DPZ tests the subdivision for the availability of housing unit allocations and for adequate public school facilities based on charts adopted each year by the County Council. If the tentative housing unit allocations are not available, or school capacity does not exist, the proposed subdivision will be placed on hold awaiting a change in status.

Step 5 - Submission of Water and Sewer Construction Drawing Originals (Mylars), if applicable and/or Submission of Supplemental Plan Originals, if applicable:

The property owner or consultant must submit a mylar original for any required water and sewer drawings, if applicable and/or supplemental plans (landscaping, forest conservation, soils, topography, SWM, roads, etc.), if applicable to the DPZ for signatures within 60 days of receiving plan approval.

Step 6 - Completion of Developer's Agreement and Payment of Fees, if applicable:

The property owner shall submit and execute a Developer's Agreement associated with the subdivision plan to the DPW, Real Estate Services Division for installation of public water and sewerage, forest conservation and a Declaration of Covenants and Maintenance and Right of Entry Agreement for private storm water management, if applicable within 120 days of receiving plan approval.

Step 7 - Submission of Final Plat Originals (Mylars) and Payment of Fees:

The property owner or consultant must submit the final plat original to the DPZ for signatures and recordation within 180 days of receiving approval. If the deadline date is missed the plan will be considered withdrawn, and the approval will be voided. Additional processing and recording fees are required with submission of the final plat mylar originals.

The Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Howard County Health Officer and the Chief of the Development Engineering Division must sign the final plat mylar originals.

The DPZ will record the final plat in the Land Records Office of Howard County and assign permanent housing unit allocations to complete the process. Signature approval and recordation of the final plat originals are completed usually within two to three weeks from the date of their submission to the County.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PLAT IS RECORDED?

Once the plat is recorded, the owner is entitled to transfer ownership of the recorded lots or apply for building permits to initiate house construction. If the lots are located in the Planned Service Area for both public water and sewer, a site development plan must be approved prior to obtaining a building permit.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE . . .

Howard County land use regulations are intended to promote the health, safety and general welfare of County residents. This brochure is meant to provide a basic understanding of the minor subdivision and land development process in Howard County. It is not intended as a substitute for the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

For more information contact:

The Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning at:

(410) 313-2350, TTY (410) 313-2323

View the DPZ web site at: [HCG Home Page: Department of Planning & Zoning Home](#)

or visit the Public Service Center of DPZ on the first floor of the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD. 21043

Office Hours are:

Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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