





Memo

To: City Council and Planning Commission
From: Rebecca Clark, Community Planning and Development Director 
CC: Mark N. Doering, Principal Planner  
Andrea Thompson, Associate Planner 
Date: March 31, 2009
Re: Subdivision Documents Improvements

The Lakewood City Council and Planning Commission are holding a Joint Study Session on April 6, 2009 to review the proposed improvements to the Subdivision Documents. The changes to the documents include those in the Subdivision Ordinance (which is Chapter 16 of the Municipal Code) and the Submittal Requirements document, which will be divided and renamed the User's Guide to Subdivision and the Plat Specifications. Those documents will be administrative documents used in support of the proposed ordinance, and are currently being reviewed. They will be formatted similar to the proposed ordinance. The attached User's Guide to Subdivision contains information on the subdivision process and notification aimed at applicants and any interested citizens, while the Plat Specifications provides surveyors the technical information on how to prepare plats in Lakewood.

The City's Planning Commission, with the help of City Staff, sought to improve upon the existing Subdivision Documents. Using input from the public, from private consultants and from development professionals, staff has modified the documents to make the process easier to understand, more user-friendly, and efficient for those seeking to subdivide property.

The Subdivision Documents ensure that those who seek to transfer property meet minimum requirements to maintain adequate lot size, public access and the availability of public services to each property created. Subdivision plats are recorded with the Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder's Office.

The City involved the public as a part of this process by obtaining feedback on the existing documents and reviewing the proposed changes. Staff conducted interviews with professionals involved with the subdivision process as well as surveyed property owners who have recently completed the subdivision process. Two open houses were held to further engage the community to comment and provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Subdivision Documents. In addition, staff presented information to the public on the proposed improvements at the various business association meetings and at a Ward 1 meeting at the Lakewood Public Library. The City has widely advertised the improvement process in various publications, emails and web-based media to inform all interested parties of the process and the proposed improvements.

The proposed documents include the improvements outlined on the following page:

1. The Subdivision Ordinance and the Submittal Requirements have been reformatted to be easier to understand and use. (See the Table of Contents)
2. The Submittal Requirements were split and renamed to the *User's Guide to Subdivision in Lakewood* for all users and to the *Plat Specifications* for the surveyors preparing plats. These will be separate documents from the Ordinance.
3. Four previous chapters of the Ordinance were consolidated into one for minor and major subdivisions (See the Table of Contents, page 3 and Article 4)
4. To allow a Final Plat for a major subdivision to be administratively approved by the Director, if there are no significant changes from the Preliminary Plat approved by the Planning Commission at a public hearing. (See Section 16-4-8)
5. To allow staff to administratively approve a vacation of an easement that is no longer needed by the City on private property. (See Section 16-7-3)
6. To provide notification requirements in one Article and create a case type summary chart for easy understanding of the subdivision process. (See 16-8 and summary chart)
7. To require applicants to notify nearby neighbors earlier in the process, after a submittal is made. (See Section 16-4-6)
8. To allow comments to be sent to the City before the Director's Review, which will be included in the staff report. (See Sections 16-4-6 and 7)
9. To modify the notice requirements for notice to be sent after the Director's Decision. (See Section 16-4-10)
10. To require notice to be sent for final plats. (See Section 16-4-8)
11. To lengthen appeal periods to be counted in business days. (See Section 16-2-2)
12. To clarify who can file an appeal and appeal procedures. (See Section 16-4-13)
13. To modify appeals of a minor subdivision reviewed by the Director to the Planning Commission and then to Jefferson County District Court. (See Section 16-4-13)
14. To modify design requirements for gated private streets, minimum block length, and flag lots. (See Section 16-2-2)
15. To clarify the relationship of subdivision review to the Comprehensive Plan, as an advisory document only, and is not a basis for approval or denial. (See Section 16-3-1)
16. To allow Preliminary Plats to be waived if required information is shown with other documents. (See Section 16-4-3)
17. To consolidate the two Articles on Vacations and dedications into one Article. (See Article 7)

Attachments:

- Attachment A – List of Public Outreach Efforts
- Attachment B – Subdivision Improvement Tri-fold Flyer
- Attachment C – Annotated Existing Ordinance
- Attachment D – Proposed Formatted Subdivision Ordinance
- Attachment E – Feedback Synopsis and Responses
- Attachment F – List of Professionals Interviewed
- Attachment G – Open House #1 Sign In Sheets
- Attachment H – Open house #2 Sign In Sheets
- Attachment I – Open House Posters
- Attachment J – Proposed Formatted User's Guide to Subdivision