

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Application Requirements for Short Subdivisions and Unit Lot Short Subdivisions

Updated July 26, 2022

A short subdivision or short plat is a process that divides land into nine or fewer parcels of land (see Chapter 23.24 of the Seattle Municipal Code). The short subdivision process is less complicated than the more formal subdivision process. There is not a specific limit on the number of parcels that can be created through a subdivision (see Tip 213C, *Subdivision Process and Requirements*).

You can do a typical short subdivision to create separate legal building lots, but not a unit lot subdivision. A unit lot subdivision divides a specific development proposal on a parent lot into separate unit lots that allow for separate ownership. SDCI will evaluate the development standards for any future changes for the entire parent lot.

SDCI administers short plat applications and processes them as Master Use Permits, which allows for public comments and appeals. Your short plat application may also have other Master Use Permit components, such as environmental review (SEPA) and/or variances.

A Washington state licensed land surveyor must prepare or supervise a survey of the land that you are subdividing. The licensed surveyor can also certify on the plat that it is a true and correct representation of the lands actually surveyed. You must submit the completed, stamped, and signed survey with your application (see attached sample template).

Application Instructions

- Getting help:** For assistance with fees and procedural requirements relating to your application, contact staff at the Public Resource Center (PRC), (206) 684-8467.
- Scheduling an appointment:** To schedule an intake appointment you must:
 - Receive a project number by:
 - Submitting a Preliminary Application Form (PAF)
 - Submitting a Pre-Application Site Visit Request (PASV Request) (This requirement is waived if we have conducted a site visit on the development site within the last 18 months.
 - Pay the PASV fee
 - Calculate the "75/80 Rule" using the methods in SMC 23.44.010(B)(3) if your proposed parcels are smaller than the minimum lot size for the neighborhood residential zone.
 - Have a Preliminary Assessment Report (PAR). This multi-departmental report identifies any major problems or requirements that may prevent or delay your project.
- Scheduling your application appointment:** All plat applications must now be submitted electronically. You need to submit your short plat application via an appointment using the Seattle Services Portal at <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/welcome.aspx>.
- Completing your survey:** The surveyor may wish to download a short plat template in AutoCAD format from our tip summary page <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/cams/CamDetail.aspx?cn=213A>. The survey must include: a surveyed plat, legal descriptions, owner's name(s), and contact person. The surveyed plat should accurately show the existing structures, eaves, fences, accessory structures, easements and other site improvements to illustrate that the proposed new parcels will meet all required



development standards. Please use the attached checklist and sample as guides to accurately complete the survey. Your survey does not need to be notarized to be submitted with your application.

6. **Paying your fees:** You must pay all fees at your intake appointment. Once we have begun our analysis or research on an application, none of our fee is refundable. Depending on the scope of your proposal, we may charge you additional fees if other Master Use Permit components, such as SEPA or a variance, are involved. You also need to pay King County recording fees at your intake. The recording fee is refundable if your project is not approved. Your project may also accrue charges during our review that will be due at the end of the application process. Examples of those fees include drainage, geotechnical, Land Use, and/or ordinance or structural reviews.
7. **Complying with environmentally critical areas rules:** If your proposed short plat is located within an environmentally critical area, we will require that you submit additional information, including a SEPA checklist, a topographic survey (as defined in Tip 103B, *Environmentally Critical Area Site Plan Requirements*), a geo-technical report, and **Steep slope Environmentally Critical Area Covenant** (as specified in the Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, Section 25.09.060). Short Plats in riparian corridor buffers, wetlands, wetland buffers, and steep slopes have specific requirements for building sites, access, and development credit for lot area (as defined in the Seattle Municipal Code, Section (SMC) 25.09.240). You should provide a separate site plan showing the environmentally critical area, or buffer, and your building footprint.
8. **Complying with shoreline rules:** If your proposed short subdivision, full subdivision, or long plat is located near a shoreline, you must comply with the shoreline rules unless you are proposing a unit lot subdivision (SMC 23.60A.168).
 - Each of your lots must have an area for the principal and accessory structures, necessary walkways, and access that is outside the shoreline setback for the applicable environment and outside priority habitat. For short and long plats, you must comply with 23.60A.156K.
 - You must divide your lots to prevent the need for shoreline stabilization for the life of the development. Your development must allow natural processes, such as erosion, to occur without threatening the stability of the development.
9. **Preparing your application:** If all the information that we require to be shown on your site plan (lot lines, structures, distance of structure to lot lines, topographic lines, utilities, etc.) cannot be clearly read, you may split the information into two or more site plans. Prepare your site plan as explained in Tip 103, *Site Plan Requirements*, and Tip 106, *General Standards for Plans and Drawings*. You need to include:
 1. A survey drawing that:
 - a. Identifies the parent lot and shows existing lot lines
 - b. Identifies the new unit lot lines
 - c. Shows all existing improvements on the site
 - d. Notes structures and features to be removed
 - e. Identifies any critical areas on the site
 - f. Provides a legal description of the parent lot and new unit lot lines
 - g. Indicates any easements, covenants or deed restrictions that may affect development
 - h. Bears the licensed surveyors stamp/signature
 2. A separate site plan (does not need to bear a surveyor's stamp/signature) for the proposed structure(s) that shows:
 - a. Parent lot boundary lines with dimensions
 - b. Unit lot lines with dimensions
 - c. Proposed structure footprint(s) with the dimensions of roof overhangs, bay windows, chimneys, etc.
 - d. Required private open space/private amenity space
 - e. Dimensions of any parking spaces located

outside of a structure

- f. Existing curb cuts to be altered or removed

7. **Applying for a building permit:** If your application is for a unit lot subdivision, you must submit a building permit application, or a Master Use Permit application to develop the residential project, before we accept your unit lot subdivision application.

Review Process

After we accept your short plat application, we will install a small land use sign on the property. Once we have determined that your application is complete (which may take up to 28 days), we will publish a notice of application in our Land Use Information Bulletin (available online at <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/welcome.aspx>) within 14 days of when we determine your application is complete. We will also prepare and send a notice to all properties within 300 feet of the property that will be subdivided.

A 14-day public comment period begins on the date we publish the notice. We may extend the comment period an additional 14 days if we receive a written request to do so on or before the last day of the initial 14-day comment period.

We will review your application for conformity to land use, zoning, addressing, drainage, ordinance/structural, and environmentally critical areas regulations. During this review you will receive corrections from all review units. You must address each correction. We will also send your application to other City departments for their comments (if applicable).

When reviewing your application, we will decide to grant, condition, or deny your short plat based on whether it:

1. Conforms to the applicable land use policies and Land Use Code provisions.
2. Provides adequate access for vehicles, utilities, and fire protection as provided in SMC 23.53.005.
3. Provides adequate drainage, water supply, and sanitary sewage disposal.
4. Serves the public use and interests
5. Conforms to the applicable provisions of Seattle Municipal Code Section 25.09.240, Short subdivisions and subdivisions, in environmentally critical areas.
6. Maximizes the retention of existing trees.
7. Conforms to the provisions of SMC Section 23.24.045, Unit lot subdivision, when the short subdivision is for the purpose of creating separate lots

of record for the construction and/or transfer of title of townhouses, cottage housing, clustered housing, or single-family housing.

Unless your short plat is a unit lot subdivision or for individual live-work units, every lot must conform to the following standards for lot configuration. There are some special exceptions authorized under SMC 23.24.040.B:

- If one of your lots is proposed with street frontage, then one lot line shall abut the street for at least 10 feet.
- None of your lots shall be less than 10 feet wide for a distance of more than 10 feet at any point.
- None of your proposed lots may have more than six separate lot lines. The lot lines shall be straight lines, unless the irregularly shaped lot line is caused by an existing right-of-way or an existing lot line.
- If the property you are proposing to subdivide is adjacent to an alley, and the adjacent alley is either improved or required to be improved according to SMC Section 23.53.030, then all new proposed lots must provide alley access. However, you are not required to change a street access to an existing use or structure to an alley access. Your proposed new lots must have sufficient alley frontage to meet access standards.

A short plat application may include an application for a special exception to modify some of the standards for lot configuration. This special exception is also subject to public notice, comment, and appeal processes, and may be included as part of the short plat application. See further explanation of appeal processes below.

Approval Process

If your proposed short subdivision meets all the criteria mentioned above, we will approve your application. Our approval may include conditions that must be resolved prior to recording, or may need to be recorded with your plat. We will publish our decision and notify those who had requested copies of our decision.

Appealing Our Decision

Anybody that disagrees with our decision may appeal in writing to the City Hearing Examiner, 40th floor, Seattle Municipal Tower, within 14 days following the date we published our decision. The appeal must state the explicit exceptions and objections to our decision. A filing fee must accompany the appeal. Contact the Office of the Hearing Examiner at (206) 684-0521 for further details of the appeal procedure.

The Hearing Examiner will conduct a public hearing on the appeal and may affirm, modify, or reverse our decision. The Hearing Examiner may also remand the application for reconsideration. The Hearing Examiner will give at least 20 days' notice before the scheduled hearing date.

After the two-week appeal period is over and if no appeal is filed or the appeal is resolved, the applicant is required to submit three prints of the short plat to the Plans Routing desk on the 20th floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Ave. The prints must be signed by the surveyor and clearly show corrections and conditions of approval.

Recording your Plat

Before you can record a short plat for new unit lots, the dwelling units must exist on the parent lot or your permit application for the new structure(s) has to be approved and ready to be issued. Your proposed unit lot must be consistent with the approved permit application in order to record with King County.

For both unit lots and regular short subdivisions, we will send a letter outlining the recording process to the designated contract person with a copy of our Director's decision. When you prepare your documents for recording, check with the King County Recorders' office to ensure the final platting documents meet the King County formatting requirements. See www.kingcounty.gov/depts/records-licensing/Recorders-Office/recording-documents.aspx.

Your short plat and unit lot subdivision "final plat" plan set, which we will record with King County Division of Records and Elections and file it with the King County Assessor's office, will include all the material you prepared for your application.

Once you have addressed any remaining conditions, we will issue your short plat permit. Your short plat permit must be issued before you can request a final inspection to authorize occupation of structures on any of the new lots.

Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of SDCI Tips, Director's Rules and Forms are available on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci.

Department of Construction and Inspections

Checklist for Short Plat Application Intake

Applicant/Surveyor,

Please use the following checklist for your short plat application. Items numbered (1) through (9) are keyed to the attached sample. Note: This list may not include everything required in a particular case. The attached sample must be modified as necessary to show all conditions of plat approval.

(1) SHORT SUBDIVISION NO.

(2) GRANTOR & GRANTEE (if applicable)

Grantor: List all of the owners of the properties to be subdivided. Grantee: City of Seattle, King County, Washington or other partner.

(3) CONTACT PERSON

List the person who will be SDCI's contact for corrections and correspondence. Provide a mailing address and a telephone number.

(4) ABBREVIATED LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Insert the short legal description using either Lots, Block, Subdivision, Vol. and Page, or Section, Township and Range.

(5) ASSESSORS PROPERTY TAX PARCEL NUMBER (ACCOUNT NO.)

Provide the 10 or 12 digit code(s) that identifies the property to be subdivided.

(6) SCALED DRAWING (SURVEY) OF THE SITE(S) TO BE SHORT PLATTED

Use standard cartographic practice. All line lengths should be to scale and dimensioned. Use pen weight and/or lettering style for clear differentiation of lines. The plat survey must include:

North arrow and references

Scale notation (e.g., 1" = 50') and bar scale (see sample)

Existing lot lines (lighter pen weight, dashed)

Proposed lot lines or unit lot lines (heavier pen weight, solid)

Bearings (if metes and bounds) and distances of lot lines

Width of rights-of-way and condition (paved, curb/gutter/sidewalk) of any abutting street/alley and/or easements; if the right-of-way is not improved with a hard surface, show proposed improvements to nearest street within 100 feet of property meeting this requirement)

Existing and proposed lots or unit lots identified and labeled (using Parcel A, Parcel B, etc.): Standard labels for short plats are Parcel A, Parcel B, etc. Standard labels for unit lot subdivisions are Unit Lot A, Unit Lot B, etc.

Area in square feet of each proposed parcel

Relationship of property to established street monuments

Dimensions of existing/proposed easements/turnaround (use lighter pen weight and different lettering)

Dimensions and location of existing/proposed driveways, curb cuts, turnarounds, and off-street parking

Dimensions of all structures and distances to the property lines

Dimensions of eaves and other architectural features

Indicate proposed removal of structures

- ___ Grading plans if existing/proposed vehicle access to lots exceeds 15 percent grade
- ___ Addresses of existing structures
- ___ Location of water and sewer lines in the street rights-of-way on property
- ___ Location, size, and species (common name) of all trees at least 6 inches in diameter, measured 4-1/2 feet above ground
- ___ For a unit lot subdivision, show designated amenity areas and designate as private or shared with size, dimensions, and location.
- ___ For a unit lot subdivision, notation as required by SMC 23.24.045.F.

(7) LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS

You need to provide full legal descriptions of existing parcels and of each new lot or unit lot. Identify the parcels by letters (A, B, C, etc.). For unit lot subdivisions, label the legal description for the entire parcel "parent lot legal description." If this short plat subdivides a parcel of a previous short plat or lot boundary adjustment (LBA), provide the complete legal description of the original parcel with a reference to the short plat or LBA parcel (AKA Parcel C of Short Subdivision #890-----, recorded under K.C.Recording #89XXXX.) You also need to include recorded easements as part of the legal description, including ingress/egress, pedestrian, and parking easements.

(8) SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE

The surveyor will complete these two boxes with date, certificate number, signature, and surveyor stamp/address.

(9) REFERENCE BOX

Complete the appropriate items in the box.

(10) EVIDENCE OF OWNERSHIP OR AUTHORIZATION FROM THE PROPERTY OWNER TO APPLY

If owner's agent, provide a written authorization from the owner/s to allow the agent to act as representative to apply for this project action.

(11) A SIGNED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BY THE APPLICANT AND/OR OWNER (See SDCI Director's Rule 5-2003)

(12) IF THE SITE IS WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY CRITICAL AREA

If the site is within a known slide area, steep slope, a potential slide area, a riparian corridor buffer, a wetland, or a wetland buffer, you need to provide a topographic survey that complies with code requirements, as summarized in Tip 103B, *Environmentally Critical Area Site Plan Requirements*, as well as a geotechnical (soils) report and a completed, signed environmental checklist (SEPA). In addition, you must show how each of the proposed lots meets minimum requirements in the above environmentally critical areas (see SMC 25.09.240).

For sites in critical areas, you also need to include a separate site plan showing proposed maximum building footprints outside of the environmentally critical areas and any required buffer(s).

(13) SMC 23.44.010(B)(3) [the "75-80 Rule"]

If any of your proposed parcels are smaller than the minimum lot size for the single-family zone, and you intend to rely on the "75-80 Rule" (the proposed lots must be at least 75 percent of the minimum lot size of the single-family zone and also must be at least 80 percent of the average of the area of the lots on the same block front), calculating for the purposes of 75/80 Rule is subject to the following:

- 1) To be counted as a separate lot for the purposes of calculating the mean area of the lots on a block front, a lot must be entirely within a single-family zone. The lot must be currently developed as a separate building site or else currently qualify for separate development based on information filed with SDCI as of the date of a building permit or a full or short subdivision application. Existing structures on property may be removed or demolished under the "75/80" rule. Also existing structures are to be removed on your application and the application will be reviewed with that understanding.
- 2) To be counted as a separate lot on the block front for the purposes of calculating the mean area of the lots on the block front, each lot in the calculation must have at least 10 feet of street frontage.
- 3) Lots developed with institutional uses, parks, or nonconforming nonresidential uses may be excluded from the 75/80 Rule calculation. There must, however, be at least one lot on the block front used for the calculation other than the property that is the subject of the platting, lot boundary adjustment, or building permit application that this exception is being applied to.

- 4) If property is to be subdivided or its lot lines are modified by a lot boundary adjustment that increases the number of lots that qualify for separate development, the property subject to the subdivision, or the lots modified by the lot boundary adjustment, shall be excluded from the block front mean area calculation.
- 5) For purposes of this SMC subsection 23.44.010.B.1.a, if the platting pattern is irregular, our Director will determine which lots are included within a block front.
- 6) If an existing or proposed lot has frontage on more than one street, the lot may apply 75/80 rule will be calculated on the street on which the lot has at least 30 feet of frontage. If a proposed lot has frontage on multiple streets but does not have 30 feet of frontage on any street, the exception may be applied based on the street on which the lot has the most frontage, provided the lot has at least 10 feet of frontage on that street. If the lot has less than 30 feet of frontage on any one street but equal frontage on multiple streets, the rule may be applied based on the calculation along any one of the streets, provided the lot has at least 10 feet of frontage on that street.

You will need to attach a copy of the King County Assessor's map and include your 75/80 rule calculations with your application to prove that the lots meet the standards.

- (14) WATER AVAILABILITY CERTIFICATE (WAC) REQUEST FORM IS RECEIVED BY THE SEATTLE PUBLIC UTILITIES

SHORT SUBDIVISION NO.

GRANTOR (Owners) _____
CONTACT PERSON _____

GRANTEE: CITY OF SEATTLE
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

7-10 4 HALLERS
LOTS BLOCK ADDITION 2-27
(SECTION) SUBDIVISION VOL. PG.
(TOWNSHIP) (RANGE)

FOR COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS, SEE PAGE 1 OF 3 ASSESSOR'S PROPERTY TAX PARCEL/ACCOUNT #303720-0106

REFERENCE NUMBERS FOR RELATED PROJECTS:

DECLARATION:

We the undersigned, owner(s) in fee simple (and contract purchaser(s)) of the land herein described do hereby make a short subdivision thereof pursuant to RCW 58.17.060 and declare this short plat to be the graphic representation of same, and that said short subdivision is made with free consent and in accordance with the desire of the owner(s).

In Witness whereof we have set our hands and seals.

NAME _____ NAME _____

STATE OF WASHINGTON, _____
County of _____ ss.

On this day personally appeared before me _____

to me known to be the individuals described in and who executed the within and foregoing instrument and acknowledged that signed the same as free and voluntary act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

GIVEN under my hand and official seal this _____ day of 201____.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____
NOTARY PUBLIC in and for the State of
Washington, residing at _____

Commission Expires _____

APPROVAL
CITY OF SEATTLE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION AND INSPECTIONS
NATHAN TORGELSON, DIRECTOR

Examined and approved this day of _____

201____, By: _____ Director

Examined and approved this _____ day of 201____.

Assessor: _____

RECORDING CERTIFICATE
Filed for record this day of _____ 20____ at _____ M in
Book _____ of Surveys at Page _____ Records of KING
County, Washington at the request of _____

Auditor _____ Deputy Auditor _____

Existing Legal Description

THAT PORTION OF LOTS 7 THROUGH 10, BLOCK 4, HALLER'S ADDITION TO SEATTLE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, RECORDED IN VOLUME 2 OF PLATS, PAGE 27, RECORDS OF KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 10;
THENCE S 00°01'13" W, ALONG THE EAST MARGIN OF SAID LOTS, 147.94 FEET;
THENCE N 89°49'15" W, 79.53 FEET;
THENCE N 00°00'37" E, 29.75 FEET;
THENCE N 89°49'15" W, 20.53 FEET TO THE WEST MARGIN OF SAID LOTS;
THENCE N 00°00'37" E ALONG SAID MARGIN, 117.88 FEET TO THE NORTH MARGIN OF SAID LOT 10;
THENCE S 89°59'42" E ALONG SAID MARGIN, 100.09 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;

CONTAINING IN ALL XXXXXXXX SQUARE FEET.

Proposed Legal Description

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 10;
THENCE S 00°01'13" W, ALONG THE EAST MARGIN OF SAID LOTS, 147.94 FEET;
THENCE N 89°49'15" W, 79.53 FEET;
THENCE N 00°00'37" E, 29.75 FEET;
THENCE N 89°49'15" W, 20.53 FEET TO THE WEST MARGIN OF SAID LOTS;
THENCE N 00°00'37" E ALONG SAID MARGIN, 117.88 FEET TO THE NORTH MARGIN OF SAID LOT 10;
THENCE S 89°59'42" E ALONG SAID MARGIN, 100.09 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;

CONTAINING IN ALL XXXXXXXX SQUARE FEET.

RECORD OF SURVEY



SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE
This map represents a survey made by me or under my direction in conformance with the requirements of the Survey Recording Act at the request of xxxxxxxx, LLC
in OCTOBER, 2013 xxxxxxxx
Certificate Number 2222222

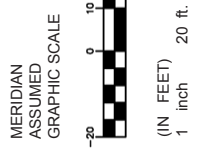
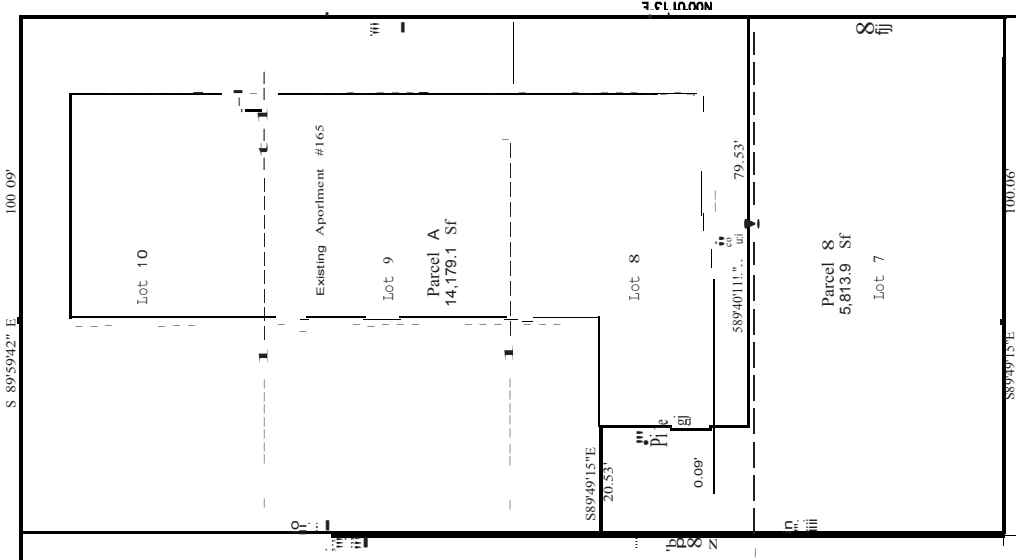
SURVEY IN N.W. 1/4, N.W. 1/4,
SEC. 4, T. 24N., R. 4E.

OWN. BY: _____ DATE: _____ JOB NO. _____

CHK. BY: _____ SCALE: 1" = 20' SHEET 1 OF 2

SHORT SUBDIVISION NO.

East Spruce Street



RECORDING CERTIFICATE
 Filed for record this day of _____ 20__ at _____ M. in
 Book _____ of Surveys at Page _____ Records of KING
 County, Washington at the request of _____
 Auditor _____ Deputy Auditor _____

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE
 This map represents a survey made by me or under my direction
 in conformance with the requirements of the Survey Recording Act
 at the request of xxxxxxxx, LLC
 in OCTOBER, 2013 xxxxxxxx
 Certificate Number 2222222



RECORD OF SURVEY

SURVEY IN N.W. 1/4, N.W. 1/4, SEC. 4, T. 24N., R. 4E.	
OWN. BY:	JOB NO.
DATE:	SCALE:
CHK. BY:	1" = 20'
	SHEET 1 OF 2