



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES GROUP
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POLICY MEMORANDUM

TO: DSG STAFF

FROM: RICHARD HART, DSG DIRECTOR *Richard Hart*

DATE: MAY 15, 2000

RE: SHORT PLAT VACATIONS

We have recently been asked for permission to vacate a short plat. A short plat is the subdivision of an existing parcel of land into two, three or four smaller parcels. A short plat is vacated when the lot lines created by that subdivision are removed and the lots created by the short plat become one larger lot – as it existed prior to the short plat. A short plat vacation is distinguished from a lot consolidation by the fact that a lot consolidation does not involve multiple lots that once existed as a larger lot: it is simply the consolidation of two or more lots that have always existed independently. A short plat is distinguished from a long plat (often called a “subdivision”) by the number of lots created. A short plat divides one parcel into two, three or four lots; a long plat or subdivision divides one parcel into five or more lots.

Although the RCW provides detailed rules for how local governments should proceed with subdivision vacations, it leaves the process for short plat vacations largely to local governments. It states only that “the legislative body for a city . . . shall adopt regulations and procedures and appoint administrative personnel for the summary approval of short plats . . . and the alteration or vacation thereof.” § 58.17.060. The Mercer Island Unified Land Development Code states only that “[a]pplications for short subdivisions and lot line revisions or alteration or vacation thereof shall be reviewed by the code official.” MICC § 19.08.020. In anticipation of a growing number of requests to vacate short plats, this memo establishes a procedure for handling such a request.

Application – An owner requesting permission to vacate a short plat must submit the following:

1. a current title report on all the lots subject to the vacation;
2. a legal description of the subject property;
3. a drawing showing all lot lines and the location of any easements or improvements (a survey may be required by the code official if necessary); and
4. a letter describing the need for the vacation.

Short Plats That Involve Public Dedications - The RCW requires that if any public dedications (e.g. an easement or right-of-way granted to the public) were made as part of the short plat, the short plat vacation must proceed according to the long plat vacation rules. § 58.17.060. The procedure for long plat is described in RCW § 58.17.212 and the Mercer Island Unified Land Development Code, § 19.08.020 and requires public notice and a public hearing. A short plat vacation that does not involve public dedications does not require notice and a hearing.

Findings – After receiving an application to vacate a short plat that does not involve public dedications, DSG staff will produce a notice of decision that contains findings of fact. A short plat vacation is subject to the following findings of fact:

1. no public interest will be adversely affected by the vacation;
2. the resulting lot and any structures will conform to all zoning and other land use regulations; and
3. no public dedications were made with the original short plat.

Recording – The short plat vacation must be recorded with the King County Assessor's Office. A blank recording form for short plat vacations titled *Vacation* can be found in the DSG file under Forms. It is the applicant's responsibility to:

1. complete three original copies of the recording document;
2. bring all three copies to DSG for review and signatures
3. leave an original with DSG;
4. take the document to the Assessor's Office and pay the recording fee; and
5. bring a copy of the recorded document back to DSG.