



City of Lakewood

PRO TIP DIVIDE MY PROPERTY

What is a subdivision?

A subdivision is dividing a property into more lots, tracts or parcels for the purpose of sale, lease or transfer of ownership. These are several types of subdivisions allowed in Washington State are governed by [Chapter 58.17 RCW](#) and [Lakewood Municipal Code \(LMC\) Title 17 Subdivision](#). Depending on the type of subdivision requested, there are different application, public notification and decision authority procedures set forth in [LMC 18A.20](#).

The different types of subdivisions include:

Preliminary Plat

A preliminary plat is a division of land into ten (10) or more residential lots, tracts, or parcels. Preliminary plats are regulated under LMC Chapters [17.06](#), [17.10](#) and [17.14](#). A preliminary plat is a Type III process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Hearings Examiner.

Short Plat

A short plat or short subdivision is dividing land into nine (9) or fewer residential lots, tracts, or parcels. Short subdivisions are regulated under [LMC Chapter 17.22](#). A short plat is a Type II process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Planning and Public Works Department.

Final Plat

A Final Plat is a final, approved site plan of the subdivision and dedication prepared for filing for record with the Pierce County Auditor. This creates legal lots of record. The final plat shall include all the elements and requirements required as part of the subdivision process such as density, road standards, tree preservation, critical areas and shoreline protections, drainage, utilities, etc. The procedure for reviewing a final plat is regulated in [LMC Chapter 17.16](#) and is a Type I process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Planning and Public Works Department.

Plat Alterations

A plat alteration modifies a previously recorded final subdivision, plat, short plat, or BSP that results in modifications to conditions of approval, adds new lots or more land or removes existing lots, restrictions or dedications. The application submittal to request a plat alteration is covered in [LMC Chapter 17.17](#) and is a Type III process with final approval by the City of Lakewood Hearings Examiner.



Unit Lot Subdivision

The Unit Lot Subdivision is a tool for the creation of townhouses, cottage housing, attached housing, and similar developments. This process allows for fee-simple ownership while applying development standards primarily to a parent site, rather than to the individual lots resulting from a subdivision. These regulations ensure that development on individual unit lots need not conform to minimum lot area or dimensional standards, provided the overall development of the parent lot meets applicable standards. Development standards, approvals, recording, and procedures are outlined in LMC Chapter 17.24. Unit lot subdivisions is a Type II process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Planning and Public Works Department.

Binding Site Plan

A Binding Site Plan or BSP is a division of land for commercial and industrial development or for establishing residential condominiums. BSPs are regulated under [LMC Chapter 17.30](#) for commercial and industrial lands. Using a BSP for a residential condominium project is covered in [LMC Chapter 17.34](#). A BSP is a Type II process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Planning and Public Works Department.

What is a Boundary Line Adjustment?

Boundary Line Adjustments (BLAs) are a legal mechanism for two lots of record to change property lines where no new lots, tract or parcels area created. A BLA must conform to current zoning such as density, minimum lot area, setbacks, utility, access, environmental protections and other development standards. BLAs also cannot alter an existing plat or short subdivision (see plat alterations). [LMC Chapter 17.38](#) regulates BLAs and is a Type I process with final decision by the City of Lakewood Planning and Public Works Department. In the City of Lakewood, lot combinations are processed as a BLA.

How do I know I have a legally created lot?

A legal lot of record is a lot with specific fixed boundaries which was created consistent with applicable state law and remains consistent with applicable state law. [LMC Chapter 17.04](#) and [LMC 18A.60.090](#) identifies the application process and general standards for determining a legal lot of record.



City of Lakewood

More information

- Contact our planning team at planning@cityoflakewood.us or 253-512-2261.
- Stop by for Planner of the Day at City Hall, Tuesday-Thursday between 9am-12pm.
- Review LMC Title 17 Subdivisions on the City's land division rules and procedures.