

6a. Staff Report - Subdivision Vacation Dev. Code Amendments

Planning Commission Meeting Date: May 20, 2021

Agenda Item: 6a.

**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON**

AGENDA TITLE: Subdivision Vacation Development Code Amendments
DEPARTMENT: Planning & Community Development
PRESENTED BY: Cate Lee, AICP, Associate Planner
Andrew Bauer, AICP, Planning Manager

Public Hearing
 Discussion

Study Session
 Update

Recommendation Only
 Other

Introduction

The purpose of this study session is to:

- Review the draft Subdivision Vacation Development Code Amendments;
- Respond to questions regarding the proposed development regulations; and
- Gather public comment.

While the City recently adopted regulations for processing plat alterations (Ordinance No. 857, effective April 9, 2019) there are no provisions to vacate a subdivision. Plat alterations change one or more aspects of the plat, but subdivision vacations extinguish the plat in its entirety. The proposed amendments would establish regulations for subdivision vacation (Attachment A).

The Planning and Community Development Department holds weekly pre-application meetings with applicants to discuss their proposals and receive feedback from City staff subject matter experts. In one such meeting in 2020 it was discovered that one multifamily redevelopment proposal in the 145th Street Light Rail Station Area with MUR-70' zoning requires a subdivision vacation to develop the property as allowed by the City's current zoning.

Background

Since the 1900s, much of the City of Shoreline has been subdivided. These subdivisions are memorialized by a final drawing and depiction of the subdivision (the "Plat") that is filed in the King County land records office. This statutory procedure related to subdivision and Plats is set out in State law, RCW 58.17.

Many subdivisions contain dedication of roads for public use, easements of various nature, and restrictions. If a property owner desires to seek approval for something that is otherwise allowed by zoning, but restricted by the plat, the owner must receive a plat alteration before submitting an application with the City. The plat alteration process is governed by RCW 58.17.215 to RCW 58.17.218 and SMC 20.30.425.

Approved By: **Project Manager** _____

Planning Director _____

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However, there are circumstances where a plat alteration may not be the best tool to remove restrictions. There could be instances when a developer owns all the lots in a subdivision and the subdivision contains numerous easements that no longer serve any function. In this example, a subdivision vacation, which can simultaneously extinguish both the restrictions and the easements, is the most streamlined process. The subdivision vacation process is governed by RCW 58.17.212 (Attachment B).

Public Engagement

Notice of the Public Hearing (scheduled for June 17, 2021) will take place no less than 15 days prior to the hearing by publishing the notice in the newspaper (Seattle Times) and on the City's land use notices [webpage](#).

Review Process

Amendments to Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) Title 20 (Development Code) are processed as legislative decisions. Legislative decisions are non-project decisions made by the City Council under its authority to establish policies and regulations. The Planning Commission is the reviewing authority for legislative decisions and is responsible for holding an open record Public Hearing on the proposed Development Code amendments and making a recommendation to the City Council on each amendment.

SMC 20.30.350 states, "An amendment to the Development Code is a mechanism by which the City may bring its land use and development regulations into conformity with the Comprehensive Plan or respond to changing conditions or needs of the City." The proposed amendments would establish provisions for subdivision vacations and would be consistent with provisions in RCW 58.17.212.

The decision criteria for a Development Code amendment in SMC 20.30.350 (B) states the City Council may approve or approve with modifications a proposal for a change to the text of the land use code when all of the following are satisfied:

1. The amendment is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan; and
2. The amendment will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or general welfare; and
3. The amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Shoreline.

Attachment A contains the proposed Subdivision Vacation Development Code amendments. Because this meeting is a discussion of the amendments, staff has not made any recommendations at this time.

Next Steps

The schedule for the Subdivision Vacation Development Code amendments is as follows:

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June 17	Planning Commission Public Hearing on the Subdivision Vacation Development Code Amendments
July/August	City Council Study Session and Action on Subdivision Vacation Development Code Amendments

Attachments

Attachment A – Proposed Subdivision Vacation Development Code Amendments

Attachment B – RCW 58.17.212

Att. A - Proposed Subdivision Vacation Dev. Code Amendments

20.30.060 Quasi-judicial decisions – Type C.

These decisions are made by the City Council or the Hearing Examiner, as shown in Table 20.30.060, and involve the use of discretionary judgment in the review of each specific application.

Prior to submittal of an application for any Type C permit, the applicant shall conduct a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposal and to receive neighborhood input as specified in SMC 20.30.090.

Type C decisions require findings, conclusions, an open record public hearing and recommendations prepared by the review authority for the final decision made by the City Council or Hearing Examiner. Any administrative appeal of a SEPA threshold determination shall be consolidated with the open record public hearing on the project permit, except a determination of significance, which is appealable under SMC 20.30.050.

There is no administrative appeal of Type C actions.

Table 20.30.060 – Summary of Type C Actions, Notice Requirements, Review Authority, Decision Making Authority, and Target Time Limits for Decisions

Action	Notice Requirements for Application and Decision ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁴⁾	Review Authority, Open Record Public Hearing	Decision Making Authority (Public Meeting)	Target Time Limits for Decisions	Section
Type C:					
1. Preliminary Formal Subdivision	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}	City Council	120 days	20.30.410
2. Rezone of Property and Zoning Map Change	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}	City Council	120 days	20.30.320
3. Site-Specific Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}	City Council		20.30.345

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Action	Notice Requirements for Application and Decision ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁴⁾	Review Authority, Open Record Public Hearing	Decision Making Authority (Public Meeting)	Target Time Limits for Decisions	Section
4. Special Use Permit (SUP)	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.330
5. Critical Areas Special Use Permit	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.333
6. Critical Areas Reasonable Use Permit	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.336
-7. Secure Community Transitional Facility – Special Use Permit	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.40.502
8. Essential Public Facility – Special Use Permit	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.330
9. Master Development Plan	Mail, Post Site, Newspaper	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.353
10. Plat Alteration with Public Hearing ⁽⁵⁾	Mail	HE ^{(1), (2)}		120 days	20.30.425
<u>11. Subdivision Vacation</u>	<u>Mail, Post Site, Newspaper</u>	<u>HE ^{(1), (2)}</u>		<u>120 days</u>	<u>20.30.427</u>

(1) Including consolidated SEPA threshold determination appeal.

(2) HE = Hearing Examiner.

(3) Notice of application requirements are specified in SMC 20.30.120.

(4) Notice of decision requirements are specified in SMC 20.30.150.

(5) A plat alteration does not require a neighborhood meeting.

Att. A - Proposed Subdivision Vacation Dev. Code Amendments

20.30.427 Vacation of recorded subdivisions.

A. Applicability. A subdivision vacation provides a process to vacate a previously recorded subdivision, short subdivision, binding site plan, or any portion thereof, or any area designated or dedicated for public use. The subdivision vacation results in the nullification of the recorded subdivision or portion thereof.

1. Any person seeking a subdivision vacation shall comply with the applicable requirements set forth in Chapter 58.17 RCW and this section in effect at the time a complete application is submitted to the City.
2. If the application is for the vacation of a subdivision together with the public rights-of-way, the procedures of this section shall apply except as prohibited by RCW 35.79.035, as amended, or other applicable law.
3. This section shall not apply to the:
 - a. Vacation of any plat of State-granted tide- or shorelands.
 - b. Vacation specifically of public rights-of-way which shall adhere to SMC 12.17.

B. Application. A request to vacate a recorded subdivision shall be submitted on official forms prescribed and provided by the Department along with the applicable fees.

1. The application shall contain the signatures of all persons having an ownership interest in the subject subdivision or portion to be vacated.
2. If the subdivision is subject to restrictive covenants which were recorded at the time of the approval of the subdivision, and the application for vacation would result in the violation of a covenant, the application shall contain an agreement signed by all parties subject to the covenants providing that the parties agree to terminate or alter the relevant covenants to accomplish the purpose of the vacation of the subdivision or portion thereof.

C. Review Procedure and Criteria.

1. The City will provide notice of the application for subdivision vacation and public hearing as provided in SMC 20.30.120 and 20.30.180.
2. The City shall hold a public hearing, review the submittal materials, and may approve or deny after a determination is made whether the public use and interest will be served by the vacation. Such determination shall be in writing and supported by findings of fact.
 - a. If any portion of the land contained in the subdivision to be vacated was dedicated to the public for public use or benefit, such land, if not

Att. A - Proposed Subdivision Vacation Dev. Code Amendments

deeded to the City, shall be deeded to the City unless the decision-making authority sets forth findings that the public use would not be served in retaining title to those lands.

- b. Title to the vacated property shall vest as provided in RCW 58.17.212, as amended.

D. **Recording.** No later than 30 calendar days after approval of the subdivision vacation, the applicant shall file, at their sole cost and expense, the approval of the vacated subdivision with the King County Recorder.

E. **Appeal.** The decision of the Hearing Examiner on the subdivision vacation shall be the final decision of the City; no administrative appeal is provided. Appeals of the final decision may be appealed to superior court pursuant to Chapter 36.70C RCW, Land Use Petition Act.

RCW 58.17.212

Vacation of subdivision—Procedure.

Whenever any person is interested in the vacation of any subdivision or portion thereof, or any area designated or dedicated for public use, that person shall file an application for vacation with the legislative authority of the city, town, or county in which the subdivision is located. The application shall set forth the reasons for vacation and shall contain signatures of all parties having an ownership interest in that portion of the subdivision subject to vacation. If the subdivision is subject to restrictive covenants which were filed at the time of the approval of the subdivision, and the application for vacation would result in the violation of a covenant, the application shall contain an agreement signed by all parties subject to the covenants providing that the parties agree to terminate or alter the relevant covenants to accomplish the purpose of the vacation of the subdivision or portion thereof.

When the vacation application is specifically for a county road or city or town street, the procedures for road vacation or street vacation in chapter 36.87 or 35.79 RCW shall be utilized for the road or street vacation. When the application is for the vacation of the plat together with the roads and/or streets, the procedure for vacation in this section shall be used, but vacations of streets may not be made that are prohibited under *RCW 35.79.030, and vacations of roads may not be made that are prohibited under RCW 36.87.130.

The legislative authority of the city, town, or county shall give notice as provided in RCW 58.17.080 and 58.17.090 and shall conduct a public hearing on the application for a vacation and may approve or deny the application for vacation of the subdivision after determining the public use and interest to be served by the vacation of the subdivision. If any portion of the land contained in the subdivision was dedicated to the public for public use or benefit, such land, if not deeded to the city, town, or county, shall be deeded to the city, town, or county unless the legislative authority shall set forth findings that the public use would not be served in retaining title to those lands.

Title to the vacated property shall vest with the rightful owner as shown in the county records. If the vacated land is land that was dedicated to the public, for public use other than a road or street, and the legislative authority has found that retaining title to the land is not in the public interest, title thereto shall vest with the person or persons owning the property on each side thereof, as determined by the legislative authority. When the road or street that is to be vacated was contained wholly within the subdivision and is part of the boundary of the subdivision, title to the vacated road or street shall vest with the owner or owners of property contained within the vacated subdivision.

This section shall not be construed as applying to the vacation of any plat of state-granted tide or shore lands.

[1987 c 354 § 3.]

NOTES:

***Reviser's note:** After amendment by 1987 c 228 § 1, RCW 35.79.030 no longer prohibited vacations of streets. Limitations on vacations of streets abutting bodies of water are now found in RCW 35.79.035.