



# Subdivision Update

## Quick Facts

### WHY?

Recent subdivision development built under the City's current subdivision standards have not resulted in residential development that supports or reflects many Comprehensive Plan goals and policies included in the land use, housing, and environmental elements.

### WHAT?

The subdivision update includes:

New review procedures

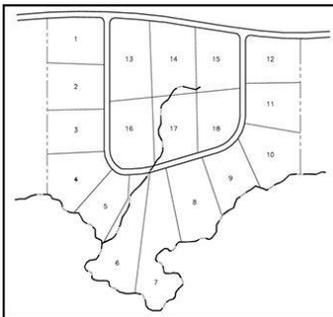
New design guidelines

Revised standards

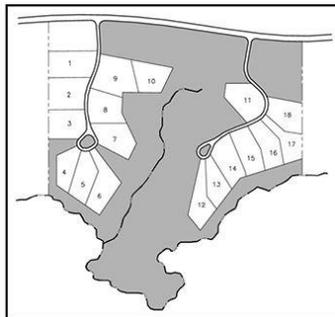
**The subdivision update includes three components:**

- *New review procedures include early conceptual meetings and a review and recommendation role for both the Design Review Board and Planning Commission*
- *New design guidelines focus on site planning to promote compatibility with site and neighborhood*
- *Revised standards include requirements for natural area, community space, and homesites*

## A NEW APPROACH TO SUBDIVISIONS



Conventional design



Conservation design

*The approach borrows key concepts from "conservation subdivisions." Typical subdivision development seeks to maximize the size of the lots and generally disregards the natural areas on site. An alternative approach is to encourage cluster development, which results in the same number of lots but clusters the development onto a smaller, buildable portion of the site. This approach to subdivision design is tailored to the characteristics of each site through a **four-step design process** completed early in the review phase.*

In general, the new approach to subdivisions combines the City's two existing subdivision design options – the "open space option" and the "cluster option" – into a single set of standards. Subdivisions will include both the dedication of open space (renamed natural area) and clustering of homesites.

**The new approach achieves several key goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan:**

- Discourage the land, energy and natural resource consumptive pattern of large single-family homes
- Result in context-sensitive development
- Promote low impact development
- Promote development of a variety of housing types

**Review the draft proposed regulations and background information here:**

<https://www.bainbridgewa.gov/1132/Subdivision-Update>

## FACTS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Do the proposed subdivision regulations require 80% of my property to be dedicated to open space that cannot be used by me and my family?**

**No.** The new subdivision regulations require dedication of what is called “natural area” -- the undeveloped portion of a subdivision that contains natural resource features preserved in perpetuity to achieve identified natural resource objectives. Natural area can be located on individual lots and owned privately by individual homeowners. Land owners may choose to convey the natural area to a third party, such as a land trust, but it is not required.

The amount of natural area required ranges from 5% of the site in the Mixed Use Town Center district to 55% of the site in the R-0.4 district. The natural area requirement in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts is 45% and 30%, respectively.

**Is the natural area a “no-touch” area or area that cannot be used by the owner?**

**No.** This is not a “no-touch” area. There are a number of allowed uses within the natural area. The proposed regulations include a list of 11 expressly allowed uses within the natural area, including utilities, trails, and small structures.

**Do the proposed subdivision regulations apply to development on all properties?**

**No.** The new subdivision regulations apply only when someone is proposing to subdivide their property. If you own a property that you are not subdividing, the new subdivision regulations do not apply.

**Will the new regulations reduce the number of lots I can create?**

**No.** The new subdivision regulations are “density neutral” – the allowed density, or number of allowed lots, will not change.

- The new subdivision regulations support and reflect a number of land use, environment, and housing guiding principles, goals and policies in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Each subdivision will be required to designate a portion of the site as natural area. The amount varies depending on the zoning designation.
- Each subdivision creating more than four lots will be required to designate a portion of the site as community space. The amount varies depending on the zoning designation.
- Individual lots (tax parcel) may contain portions of required natural area and community space.
- There is no requirement to create condominium units or lots.
- Homesites are required in all subdivisions. Homesites are a portion of the lot where you must place typical improvements such as home, garage, ADU, patios, etc.
- Homesites are limited in size based upon zoning designation. They typically get smaller in size as allowable density increases.
- Clustering is intended to minimize the overall disturbance of the site, allow for open space linkages to adjacent sites, facilitate use of natural drainage, and reduce impervious area and offsite stormwater impacts.
- For projects where site conditions make homesite clustering impractical, the review process will allow alternative approaches in lieu of clustering so long as the goals of the standards are satisfied. This will be achieved through a new regulatory tool called an “administrative departure,” which does not include a separate process, application, or fee.

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### QUESTIONS?

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