



SUBDIVISION BASICS: GETTING STARTED

This advisory provides basic information for someone wants to subdivide property, but hasn't ever done a subdivision before.

What is a plan of subdivision?

- It is a plan that shows how property is proposed to be subdivided, resubdivided, or consolidated.
- Subdivisions are based on a property survey, but contain much more information than a plan of survey alone.
- Allegheny County requires specific information to be included on the record plan of subdivision.
- The municipality will also have specific requirements that must be met.

Who can subdivide property?

- Property can only be subdivided by the landowner or "beneficial landowner". A beneficial landowner is a person who has been granted the right to subdivide by the actual owner.
 - A legal document authorizing the beneficial landowner to subdivide the property must be recorded with the County, and the recording information provided on the plan of subdivision.

Who prepares a plan of subdivision?

- In Pennsylvania, subdivisions may only be prepared and sealed by a registered and licensed PA land surveyor.
- Look for a surveyor who has experience preparing subdivisions to Allegheny County standards.
- Surveyors can help with other steps in the process; for example, taking the plan through the municipal approval process, getting signatures on the approved plan, and recording the plan.
 - Be sure to discuss the services you need with your surveyor at the beginning of the process.
- You should also ask your surveyor if any deeds will need to be prepared and recorded as a result of the subdivision. The services of a real estate attorney may also be required.

How is the municipality involved?

- Subdivisions must be submitted to the municipality in which the property is located for review and approval. Municipalities typically charge fees for this.

- The municipality’s subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) has procedures for review and approval of plans. It also specifies information that must be provided with the application.
 - If a municipality doesn’t have a SALDO, the Allegheny County SALDO applies. ACED, which is the county planning agency, is responsible for reviewing and approving subdivisions and land developments on behalf of the municipality¹.
- The lot or lots created by the subdivision must meet the applicable requirements of the municipality’s zoning ordinance.
 - If the proposed lots don’t meet a requirement of the municipality’s zoning ordinance, a variance may be required. Contact the municipal zoning officer for more information.

How is the county involved?

- The municipality is required to submit a copy of the preliminary subdivision plan to ACED for an advisory review. ACED’s comments are provided to the municipality and surveyor who prepared the plan.
- After the plan is approved by the municipality, all of the clauses on the plan must be signed, dated, notarized and sealed as required. The only exceptions are the two County clauses (ACED and ACDRE).
- The plan may then submitted to ACED for a final review and signing.
- After ACED has signed the plan, either you or your representative can record it at the Department of Real Estate (ACDRE).

Does recording the plan transfer ownership of property?

- **No!** Recording a plan of subdivision alone does not transfer title to property.
- If you are selling or purchasing a lot created by the subdivision, you must be sure to follow up by recording the necessary deeds as soon after the plan is recorded as possible.

Helpful links:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/re/index.aspx> General information about the Allegheny County Department of Real Estate, including various recording fees and requirements.

http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/planning_division.aspx Helpful information about subdivisions and other matters.

¹ For more information visit www.alleghenyplaces.com . click the Planning Division tab and select County Approvals from the side menu.