



**STAFF REPORT**

DATE: October 6, 2016  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Eric Mendenhall, Senior Planner  
RE: **Subdivision Code Text Amendment—Short Subdivisions and Pipestem Lots**

**I. BACKGROUND**

On June 6, 2016 the City Council adopted interim development regulations (Ordinance No. 2566) related to short subdivisions, pipestem and panhandle lots, and private streets. The interim development regulations were enacted to prevent further development of short plats and pipestem lots that could be contrary to and/or jeopardize the City’s vision and Comprehensive Plan. Continued development poses potential negative effects upon the long-term livability and character of the City. The interim development regulations are in effect for a period of six months (December 6, 2016). The ordinance was adopted as an emergency measure and a public hearing was set and noticed for August 1, 2016.

After last month’s meeting staff has taken comments received into account and modified the language of the proposed ordinance.

**II. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

The specific amendments are summarized as follows:

**A. Staff is proposing a change to the definition of “Piggyback or accumulative short subdivision.”**

The new definition provides more clarity and better limits situations that would circumvent the preliminary plat process.

**B. Staff is proposing amendments to the subdivision standards for pipestem lots and private streets.**

Chapter 17.28 regulates standards for subdivision developments. The proposed amendments will add development standards for pipestem lots that will reestablish the access to 15 feet instead of the 30 feet that was passed in the IDR. Additionally, it establishes a limit of lots accessed from the street on a pipestem lot to one lot, tract, or parcel.

Prior to the IDR two lots could be accessed from a pipestem lot, provided one of those lots had street frontage. This was creating an undesirable situation for lots to be stacked three

deep, two of them being pipestem lots. Staff therefore recommended modification to the subdivision code that limits stacking of pipestem lots. The proposed amendment meets the Comprehensive Plan and desired outcome for pipestem lot configurations.

### **III. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The following pertinent sections and policies related to the amendment are presented below:

#### **LAND USE ELEMENT**

- 1.1 Encourage development which enhances the human, pedestrian scale, creating a sense of community and place.
- 1.1.2 Maintain zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure adequate setbacks, landscaping, and buffering are required where land use conflicts and impacts may occur.
- 1.2 Endeavor to maintain a complete community, consistent and compatible in character and design, containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks, civic facilities, and community services essential to the daily life of residents.
- 1.4 Implement and maintain a Zoning Code which implements the comprehensive plan and community vision.
- 1.5 Integrate existing neighborhood plans and design strategies into the Comprehensive Plan.
- 1.7 Ensure new development is consistent with the policies of this Plan through implementation of regulations, programs, and project specific review.

#### **COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT**

- 1.1 Encourage development which enhances the human, pedestrian scale, creating a sense of community and place.
- 1.4 Implement and maintain a Zoning Code which implements the comprehensive plan and community vision.
- 1.5 Encourage in the community a continuous commitment to maintaining Sumner's character and quality of place, including land conservation and stewardship, wise management of streetscapes and public viewsheds, property maintenance, and historic preservation.
- 1.7 Preserve the single-family residential scale and historic character of existing residential streetscapes through various means such as floor area ratio and setback requirements.

- 2.2 Plan for an adequate supply of land in appropriate land use designations and zoning categories to accommodate projected household growth.
  - 2.2.1 Through the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, and Subdivision code, and Design Guidelines allow for a variety of housing types and lot configurations including multi-family housing, mixed use development, cluster development, zero-lot line and similar subdivisions, planned unit development, and non-traditional housing forms such as adult family homes.
  - 2.2.2 Allow for a variety of lot sizes in low density residential districts including a percentage of lots larger and smaller than the minimum lot size.
  - 2.2.5 Incorporate reasonable measures as necessary to accommodate the projected population growth.
- 2.3 Encourage a variety of housing available to all economic segments of the community.
  - 2.3.1 Review the Zoning Code, Subdivision Code, Building Codes, and other development-control ordinances to identify and remove excessive, duplicative, or unnecessary regulations. The analysis shall consider in particular lot width, access widths, street improvement standards, parking, common service lines as well as other issues.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS**

The proposed amendments are consistent with the City of Sumner’s Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendments further those goals and policies by protecting existing residentially zoned property to limit pipestem lots.

The proposed clarifying amendments also helps staff better review and apply the development code and is clearer for applicants that are looking to develop infill lots in Sumner.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

Given that development of short subdivisions that circumvent the full subdivision requirements may have long term impacts on the overall development of the City, and that pipestem/panhandle lots, as allowed, may not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the proposed ordinance addresses these concerns.

#### **VI. RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the amendments as presented in Exhibit A.

## **VII. NEXT STEPS**

City Council will consider adoption of these amendments in October 2016.

## **VIII. EXHIBITS**

Exhibit A: Draft Ordinance