



Planning Division
CLIENT ASSISTANCE MEMO

Preliminary & Final Plat FAQ

What type of subdivision approval is required?

In the City of Gig Harbor, single-family Short Subdivision approval is required for residential subdivisions of up to four parcels (See Short Subdivision Memo and GHMC 16.04).

Binding Site Plans are subdivisions for commercial or multi-family residential condominium projects (See GHMC 16.11 and the Nonresidential and Multiple-Family FAQ Memo).

All other single-family residential subdivisions are Preliminary Plats subject to Type III project approval by the City's Hearing Examiner after a public hearing (See GHMC 16.05). After you have met all of the requirements of preliminary plat approval and constructed the required civil improvements, you may apply for Final Plat Approval (See GHMC 16.06).

How many lots can I have?

Depending on the zone, Gig Harbor permits minimum and maximum residential densities. Some individual zones allow increases in density using the bonus density options within the individual zone. Density may also be increased using the Planned Residential Development Zone process (See GHMC 17.89).

The allowed density is based on net buildable land (GHMC 17.05). The net buildable land is determined by subtracting un-buildable areas (sensitive areas, public right of way, streets and roads, and tidelands) from the gross land area. Steep slopes are not included in the calculation, though you may need approval of a variance with an engineered design to demonstrate your lots are safe to build on.

Medium Density Residential Zone (R-2)	
Min. Density	= 4 du/ac
Max. Density	= 6 du/ac
Gross Site Area	Net Buildable Area
10 acres	8.99 acres
Streets/ROW	Min. # of Lots
0.89 acres	35.96 Rounded to 36
Wetland exclusive of buffers	Max. # of Lots
0.12 acres	53.94 Rounded to 54

Some things may not be deducted from the gross lot area when calculating net buildable land including required setbacks, buffers, landscape areas, required screening, shoreline setbacks, alleys and critical areas buffers.

Once you know the net buildable area, multiply it by the minimum and maximum number of permitted dwelling units/acre. The result is the number of permitted new lots.

What can I do to ensure my Permit Approval Process runs smoothly?

While not all of these are required, they are highly encouraged.

- Schedule a **Pre-Application Conference**. (See Pre-Application Assistance Memo.)
- Hire a **Project Lead** that will follow your project from pre-application through construction.
- Provide a complete, written **Scope of Work** that covers all of the elements of the project (i.e. utility providers, type of road (public/private), density analysis, buildable area, critical areas, landscape layout, tree retention) and includes all the parcels necessary to accomplish the work. (Required)
- Provide a **Code Analysis** to demonstrate how you intend to meet the code (including the zoning code, development standards and the Design Manual).
- Provide a written response to the **Criteria for Approval** (for variances, design alternatives, alternative landscape plans, etc.). (Required)
- Show the **Areas of Disturbance** around trees identified for retention and show the full area of grading, clearing and construction with the required 10 foot no construction zone around tree retention areas and landscape buffers. (Required)
- Consult with **Outside Agencies** before submitting your application (including Peninsula Light/PSE, Murrays Disposal and Pierce Transit).
- Have the Project Lead **review the submittal for consistency and accuracy** across all the plan sets before submitting the application.
- Schedule an **Intake Appointment** and, if necessary, a **resubmittal appointment**. If resubmitting, provide a written response to each staff comment/correction. (See Intake Appointment FAQ Memo.)

When can I expect approval of my project?

Determining Completeness of the Application

When an application is submitted, the City has 28 days to determine whether the application is “complete,” or whether all the required submittal information listed on each application has been made available to City staff (RCW 36.70B.070). Applications are submitted at the Intake Appointment. (Please see the Intake Appointment FAQ memo for more information.)

Once the application is “complete,” the City will issue a Notice of Complete Application. At this point, the application becomes active and formal City review begins. The City will also post notice on the site, publish notification of the application in the newspaper and mail notification to surrounding property owners. The City will open a public comment period for two weeks. During the public comment period, the City will receive initial comments from outside agencies (Department of Ecology, local Tribes, etc.).

Review for Compliance

The City is required to make a final decision on an application within 90 calendar days of “active” application processing (RCW 58.17.140). Active processing means that review of the application is proceeding normally and has not been put “on-hold” by a request for additional information.

The City will send you a complete review letter with comments from City departments, outside agencies and any issues raised by the public during the comment period. The comment letter will be sent to you about 6-8 weeks after you submit a complete application.

Additional Information/Revisions

Even if your application is complete enough to begin review, the City may still seek additional information or studies. If the City asks you for revisions or additional information or studies, the 90-day review clock stops and does not start up again until you have submitted the required information. You have 90 days to resubmit your application materials based on the initial review. You may apply for an extension if needed.

The City will review resubmittal materials within about four weeks. When staff determines that your response satisfies the City's information request, the 90-day clock will start running again.

If there are substantial changes in your resubmittal materials from the original proposal, the City may require a resubmittal intake meeting and may require a new Notice of Application and a restart of the 90-day clock.

Critical Area Review

If your site contains critical areas or buffers, the City will send the application out to a third party consultant for review. The consultant will provide an estimated cost for the review and you will need to pay that estimate prior to the review.

Where Can I find Application Materials for Land Use Permits?

You can find a list of the application materials you need to bring by project type at:

<https://www.gigarborwa.gov/234/Checklists-Applications-Fees>

This webpage contains general application information (fees, application information, environmental checklists, the general permit application form, etc.), project specific checklists, and information about design review. Scroll down to the Subdivision Forms section.

Required documents include:

- A complete preliminary plat application including the requirements of GHMC 16.05.001;
- an environmental checklist for SEPA review;
- general information about the proposed development including the name and location;
- the names and contact information for the land owners, applicant and the applicant's agents;
- a project description and vicinity map;
- a landscape plan (See GHMC 17.78.030 and Where Do I Need to Protect Trees? Memo); and
- a design review application (See GHMC 17.98.040).

During preliminary plat review, the City will review the project against all land use, emergency access, SEPA and design standards. The City will also conduct preliminary civil review. You will need to provide the items described in the City's **Public Works Land Use Intake Checklist** in the format(s) described in the City's **Preliminary Civil Plan Checklist**.

After preliminary plat approval, you will schedule an intake appointment to submit a civil permit application using the **Private Development Civil Plan Checklist**. The civil permit submittal will need to be consistent with the preliminary civil review.

The civil plan documents are available on the City's website at:

<http://www.gigarborwa.gov/checklists-forms-fees>.

What are the Conditions for Final Plat Approval?

All civil improvements must be complete prior to Final Plat Approval. Alternately, the City Engineer may allow the posting of a bond in lieu of construction, provided you have an approved civil permit.

The final plat must demonstrate that you have met all of the preliminary plat conditions of approval. You may also need to demonstrate final approval by the local health department and/or relevant water district depending on your service provider.

The Community Development Director and City Engineer must recommend Final Plat approval to the City Council. Final Plats are approved by the City Council as a Type IV approval with a closed record decision. The Council will make a decision within 30 days of your complete application for Final Plat approval unless the final plat needs to be returned for corrections.

You must apply for Final Plat approval or request a time extension within five years of receiving preliminary plat approval (GHMC 16.06.003).

May I Build Model Homes Prior to Final Plat Approval?

Yes. Depending on the number of finished lots, you may construct model homes before Final Plat approval. However, you must provide or obtain:

- approval of all required permits of the Preliminary Plat approval and a building permit;
- civil permit approval of all retention and detention facilities serving the model homes;
- protection of all critical areas;
- approval of access and fire protection requirements;
- all frontage improvements serving the model homes;
- street signs for all roadways serving the model homes;
- all utilities and fire protection features in place for the model homes; and
- an approved survey. (See GHMC 16.05.007.)

The City will not grant a certificate of occupancy for any model home until the Final Plat has been recorded.

Client Assistance Memos are not intended to replace the Gig Harbor Municipal Code. Should you have any questions regarding this information please call the Planner of the Day at (253) 851-6170.