



City of Medical Lake  
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5/28/2026 Planning Commission Meeting

To: Planning Commission  
From: Elisa Rodriguez, Senior Planner

**TOPIC: Periodic Update: MLMC amendments regarding Subdivisions**

**Requested Action:**

Provide feedback and guidance on potential amendments regarding subdivisions to the Medical Lake Municipal Code (MLMC).

**Key Points:**

Land divisions are governed primarily by RCW 58.17, which establishes the legal framework for dividing land into lots, tracts, or parcels, while delegating substantial regulatory authority to local governments. This means that although state law defines overall requirements and procedures, cities and counties adopt ordinances that control the specific standards for lot size, infrastructure, design, and approval processes.

Land divisions are categorized based on the number of lots created. A "subdivision" (commonly referred to as a long plat) involves the division of land into five or more lots and requires a more extensive review process. A "short subdivision" (also called a short plat) involves four or fewer lots, and is typically subject to a streamlined administrative review. Washington law also authorizes an alternative land division mechanism called a binding site plan. This is often used for commercial, industrial, or multifamily development.

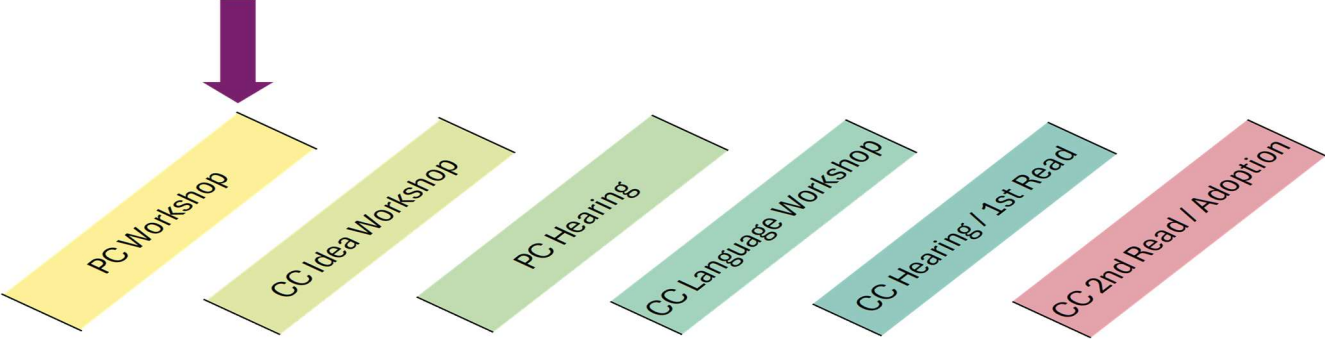
The subdivision process generally requires a two-step approval. Applicants first submit a preliminary plat, which illustrates the proposed layout of lots, streets, and infrastructure. The preliminary proposal requires public notice and a public hearing. The Planning Commission evaluates whether the proposal meets statutory and local requirements related to public health, safety, and welfare, such as adequate access, utilities, drainage, and environmental considerations, and makes a recommendation to City Council. If approved, the applicant must then satisfy any imposed conditions and submit a final plat. This is detailed and legally binding map which must be approved by the City and recorded with the county auditor before lots can be sold or developed.

Short subdivisions follow a similar but simplified process, typically handled administratively without a public hearing. Even so, they must comply with applicable zoning, infrastructure, and planning requirements.

**Background Discussion:**

MLMC Title 15 – Subdivisions, was adopted in 1999 and has not been revisited since. As with much of the municipal code, there is opportunity to streamline subdivision regulations, making them user friendly for both City staff and applicants. In addition, street design regulations are both in Title 15 and in Title 11 – Streets and Sidewalks. Consolidating this information will lead to a clearer code. Furthermore, street classifications are detailed in Title 11 and need to be updated to be consistent with the updated Comprehensive Plan.

This workshop is the first step in a 6-meeting process for adopting amendments to the municipal code.



**Public Involvement:**

A public hearing will be held with both the Planning Commission and the City Council. In addition, language will be provided on the City website for review and comment by the public.

**Next Steps:**

After a workshop with the City Council on June 16, 2026, amendment language will be provided to the Planning Commission prior to the public hearing on June 25, 2026. At that meeting, the Planning Commission will be expected to make a recommendation to the City Council.