

**Surveys,  
Subdivision and Platting,  
and Boundaries**

**Washington State  
Laws and Judicial Decisions**

MUNICIPAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES CENTER  
OF WASHINGTON  
IN COOPERATION WITH  
ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES

**Report No. 1  
(Revision of Report No. 156)**

**July, 1972**

(1) Contain a statement of approval from the city, town or county licensed road engineer or by a licensed engineer acting on behalf of the city, town or county as to the survey data, the layout of streets, alleys and other rights of way, design of bridges, sewage and water systems, and other structures;

(2) Be accompanied by a complete survey of the section or sections in which the plat is located, or as much thereof as is necessary to properly orient the plat, together with complete field and computation notes showing the original or reestablished corners with descriptions of the same and the actual traverse showing error of closure, which shall not exceed one foot in five thousand, and method of balancing. A sketch showing all distances, angles, and calculations required to determine corners and distances of the plat is to accompany this data.

(3) Be acknowledged by the person filing the plat before the county auditor, and a certificate of said acknowledgment is to be filed with the plat.

(4) Contain a certification from the proper tax collection officers that all taxes and delinquent assessments for which the property may be liable as of the date of certification have been paid or discharged.<sup>47</sup> Also, every plat filed for record must contain a certificate giving a full and correct description of the lands divided as they appear on the plat (or short plat). If the plat includes a dedication, the certificate, which is to be signed and acknowledged before a notary public by all parties having any interest in the lands subdivided, is also to contain the dedication of streets and other areas to the public, as well as a waiver of all claims for damages against any governmental authority which may be occasioned to the adjacent property by the established construction, drainage, and maintenance of said road.<sup>48</sup> If the plat contains a dedication, it must be accompanied by a title report confirming that the title of lands shown on the plat is in the name of the owners signing the certificate. An offer of dedication may include a waiver of the right of direct access to any street from any property, and if accepted, such waiver is effective. Such a waiver may be required as a condition of approval.<sup>49</sup>

The survey of the proposed subdivision and preparation of the plat is to be made by or under the supervision of a registered land surveyor who is to certify on the plat that it is a true and correct representation of the lands actually surveyed.<sup>50</sup> Permanent control monuments are to be established at every controlling corner on the boundaries of the land being subdivided. The number and location of permanent control monuments within the plat, if any, are to be determined by the local authority.<sup>51</sup>

Joint Committee on Survey Monumentation - Recommendations for Surveys, Monumentations, and Plat Drawings

In order that there be a degree of uniformity of survey monumentation throughout the state, RCW 58.17.260 (1971 Supp.) provided for the creation of a joint committee and directed that it cooperate with the Department of Natural Resources to establish recommendations pertaining to requirements of survey, monumentation, and plat drawings for subdivisions and dedications throughout the state. Pursuant to this statute, the Department of Natural Resources issued the following recommendations pertaining to requirements of survey monumentation and plat drawings

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<sup>47</sup> RCW 58.17.160 (1971 Supp.). No engineer who is connected in any way with the subdividing and platting of the land for which approval is sought is to examine or approve such plats on behalf of any city, town, or county.

<sup>48</sup> As indicated above, in an Attorney General's Opinion, dated January 13, 1970 (AGO 1970 No. 1), it was concluded that only those persons having an interest in the lands subdivided are required by RCW 58.17.165 (1971 Supp.) to file drainage releases or waivers of other claims for damages, and the legislative body of a city, town, or county is without authority to require that a plat secure "drainage releases" from third-party owners of land situated outside the area proposed to be platted.

<sup>49</sup> RCW 58.17.165 (1971 Supp.).

<sup>50</sup> RCW 58.17.250 (1971 Supp.).

<sup>51</sup> RCW 58.17.240 (1971 Supp.).

for subdivisions and dedications:

- "(1) Minimum plat scale of 1" = 200' conditioned upon producing legible plat maps, and that each governing agency review its own requirements as to minimum lot size and the possibility of photo reducing which may permit a smaller scale ratio, in which case 1" = 100' or 1" = 50' are recommended as drafting scales.
- (2) 18" x 24" plat dimension.
- (3) All control and lot corner monuments set should be identified on the face of the plat by a legend.
- (4) All concrete monuments used must contain reinforcing steel or other magnetic material, except those enclosed in monument cases.
- (5) Control monuments on the exterior boundary line of the plat, not set in paved streets, should be concrete monuments.
- (6) A minimum of 2" iron pipe should be used for monuments in unpaved streets.
- (7) Monument cases shall be used in paved streets. Minimum monument in cases shall be 2" concrete filled iron pipe."

#### Submission of Local Subdivision Regulations to Planning and Community Affairs Agency

In order that there may be current and readily available information concerning subdivision regulations, all city, town and county legislative bodies are to submit proposed platting and subdivision ordinances and amendments to the state Planning and Community Affairs Agency 30 days prior to final adoption for agency review and comparison.<sup>52</sup>

#### Legal Status of Platting and Subdivision Ordinances and Resolutions Enacted Prior to 1969 Platting and Subdivision Act

Ordinances and resolutions enacted prior to the passage of the 1969 platting and subdivision act (Ch. 58.17 RCW (1971 Supp.)) by the legislative bodies of cities, towns, and counties, which are in substantial compliance with the provisions of the 1969 act, are to be construed as valid and may be further amended to include new provisions and standards as are authorized in general law.<sup>53</sup>

#### B. Illustrations of Platting and Subdividing

A number of illustrations are set forth below to point up certain aspects of platting and subdividing and what results from a lack of knowledge with respect thereto.

Illustrations given show:

- Fig. 3. Wrong Type of Plat - Property lines cannot be located. If lake is lowered, extension of lot lines are subject to theoretical methods and some unhappy results.
- Fig. 4. Shore Lands Location Unknown - When wharves are to be built, especially in cove marked Site No. 2, owner does not know how his boundaries extend over into water, and conflict with neighbor's. No line of navigation has been established.
- Fig. 5. Complete Land Plat.
- Fig. 6. Complete Plat - Property staked out on shore line can be located and lake is definitely dedicated to public use. If water vanishes land under water becomes public recreation area.

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<sup>52</sup> RCW 58.17.270 (1971 Supp.).

<sup>53</sup> RCW 58.17.900 (1971 Supp.).