

Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)

900 Oakesdale Avenue Southwest • Renton, Washington 98057-5212 • 206-296-6600 • TTY 206-296-7217

Legal Lot

• FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

*Visit the DDES Web site at
www.kingcounty.gov/permits
for more information*

**DDES Customer
Information Bulletin #****2**

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

How Does One Determine the Legal Status of a Lot?

A "lot" is a parcel of land that has been considered a lot in accordance with the subdivision, short subdivision, or other land segregation laws in existence at the time that the lot was created. See Chapter 19A.08.070 of the King County Code (KCC), which became effective on January 3, 2000. The requirements for legal lots are organized according to the way the lots were created or divided, by the date, and by other relevant criteria.

This bulletin is not intended to replace legal or other professional services. Rather, it is designed to help customers decide if legal or other professional assistance may be needed, and to help anticipate problems that may be encountered in determining or maintaining the legal status of a lot.

Why Is It Important To Know If a Customer Has a Legal Lot?

Before a property owner can build or subdivide, a lot must meet the requirements of a legal lot, as defined in Title 19A.08.070 of the King County Code, in order for an application to be deemed complete. Although a parcel may be determined to be a legal lot, other requirements must be met before it can be subdivided or built upon. These requirements include, but are not limited to, applicable zoning, health, and building site criteria, as well as compliance with all land use ordinances. **Note:** Building site criteria (KCC 19A.04.060) was amended in 2004 by Ordinance 15031.

Proving That an Owner Has a Legal Lot

The burden of proving that a lot had been legally established, and still exists as a legal lot, is the responsibility of the person claiming legal lot status. Acceptable proof presented to the King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- a recording document for plats or short plats
- a copy of the King County approval for unrecorded subdivisions of four or fewer lots prior to July 1, 1974
- a deed, real estate contract, or historical tax records dated prior to October 1, 1972
- a letter or notice from King County previously recognizing a parcel as a legal lot
- other reliable documentation that clearly demonstrates that a parcel satisfies the requirements of Chapter 19A.08.070 of the King County Code.

A request for legal lot status for the separation of multiple lots created in a plat recorded prior to June 9, 1937 will also require submittal of proof that indicates that each individual lot was either conveyed or taxed separately prior to October 1, 1972 and that they have been provided with approved sewage disposal, water, or roads.

Current tax statements and records, assessor maps, survey maps or other historical records alone typically are *not* sufficient proof of a legal lot, except where these records satisfy the requirements of KCC Title 19A.08.070 for the recognition of a legally created lot.

If customers have questions that are not answered by the information in this bulletin, contact Land Use Services Division staff at 206-296-6600.

Locating the Evidence Needed To Prove Legal Lot Status

The information that property owners need to prove legal lot status generally is not available through DDES. Assessor's records before 1973 are located in the Puget Sound Regional Archives Office in Bellevue (425-564-3940). Older deeds or real estate contracts are available either from a title company or from the self-help section of the King County Records and Elections Division, which is located in the King County Administration Building, 500 Fourth Avenue, in Seattle (206-296-1570).

What if the Evidence Shows That the Lot Was Not Created Legally?

If research for evidence of a legal lot proves that a lot was not created legally, customers should see Title 19A.08.090 of the King County Code, "Determining Innocent Purchaser Status." Please contact the DDES staff at 206-296-6600 for further assistance.

Other Bulletins and Telephone Numbers That May Be Helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 7	Obtaining a Mobile Home Permit
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits
Bulletin 9	Obtaining a Residential Building Permit
Bulletin 12	The Residential Building Permit Process
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 21	Critical Areas Review
Bulletin 25	Short Subdivisions
Bulletin 26	The SEPA Process

These bulletins are all available via the DDES Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits.

206-296-6600	DDES Information
206-296-6600	DDES Land Use Services Division
425-564-3940	State Archives Office in Bellevue
206-296-1570	King County Records and Elections Division



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King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.