

# Short Subdivision FAQs

## **What is a Short Subdivision?**

A short subdivision, often called a “Short Plat,” is used when property owners want to subdivide their property into four or fewer lots.

## **What if I want more than 4 lots?**

To subdivide more than 4 lots you will need to use the Long Subdivision or “Long Plat” process.

## **Can I just sell a piece of property without subdividing it?**

If a parcel of land is bought without first being subdivided, civil suit and/or criminal prosecution against both the seller and agent may result. A person who knowingly buys a lot that was not legally created will not be able to get building and other permits for the property. Lots may be advertised, and earnest money may even be paid, but it is against State Law to transfer Title until the parcel is legally subdivided and the documents recorded.

## **Who Approves a Short Plat?**

Normally a short plat is reviewed and approved by the Planning Director, after being referred to the appropriate agencies.

## **How small can I make the lots?**

If there is no zoning, a new subdivision of land is limited to the following minimum lot sizes:

- 12,500 square feet (.286961 acre) for a residential lot that is to be served by community water and community sewer systems.
- One acre for a lot to be served by community water and individual sewer system.
- 2.5 acres for a lot to be served by individual water supply and individual sewer system.

## **Are there any other zoning type restrictions in Ferry County?**

Yes. We do have some portions of land that have been classified as Agriculture Land and/or Forest Land of Long-Term Significance.

## **How does Agriculture Land of Long-Term Significance affect a subdivision of my property?**

Parcels classified as Agriculture Land of Long-Term Significance cannot be divided into parcels less than 20 acres and shall be limited to residential development at a density of no more than 1 unit per 20 acres other than additional residential units for extended family or full-time employees of a farm upon which they work and live.

## **How does Forest Land of Long-Term Significance affect a subdivision of my property?**

Forest Land of Long-Term Significance has the following limitations on development:

Class I (more than 640 acres) and Class II (more than 320 acres) Forest Lands:

- 1) No more than one single or multiple family dwelling per 20 acres.
- 2) Shall not be divided into parcels less than 20 acres.

Class III (more than 80 acres) and Class IV (greater than or equal to 20 acres) Forest Lands:

- 1) Class III lands shall have no more than one single or multiple family dwelling per 10 acres.
- 2) Lots will be designed to ensure that the residences or other occupied structures are constructed and controlled by the residents.
- 3) Lands within Class III Forest Lands shall not be divided into parcels less than 10 acres.

## **How do I know if my property has been designated as Agriculture Land and/or Forest Land of Long-Term Significance?**

Call us or go to this [link](#) and enter your parcel number, address or last name. If your parcel has been classified look for green (Agriculture) or brown (Forest) shading over your parcel. Note some parcels may have both classifications. If you need further assistance or have more questions contact the Ferry County Planning Department at (509) 775-5225 ext 3101.

## **What if my property is next to a lake or river?**

If the property to be divided contains or is adjacent to any surface water OR if the property to be divided is a subdivision of a previously subdivided property, submit a SEPA Checklist with appropriate fees. This will require newspaper advertising paid by the subdivider.

## **When can I sell my new lots?**

Only when the subdivision has been completed, and the final plat recorded, can a lot be sold or transferred. Lots may be advertised for sale before the subdivision is complete, but is strongly discouraged due to the speculative nature of land developing and subdividing. Please be aware that complications can arise during the process, and may not correspond with the anticipated availability dates for the new lots or contractual obligations to prospective buyers.

## **Do I need to provide a water source for my Short Subdivision?**

Ferry County does not require the subdivider to provide water. If water is not provided to each individual lot, then the county makes no guarantee of its existence or quality.

**Do I need to build a private road?**

For a short plat, the subdivider does not have to build a road but each lot requires access. All roads need to follow the minimum standards as described in the Minimum Road Standards, as found in Section 9 of the Short Subdivision Ordinance

**When is SEPA compliance required?**

SEPA, the State Environmental Policy Act, is a State requirement for consideration of the likely environmental consequences of a proposal. SEPA compliance is required for short subdivisions anytime there is surface water onsite or bordering a property line. Other situations may trigger SEPA compliance, including further division of land that was previously divided.

**What is a Land Use Review and why is it needed?**

A Land Use Review is the uniform process that the Planning Department uses to examine land division and development proposals in relationship to the physical properties of the subject parcel(s). This review includes items such as; archeological areas, wetland categories, fish & wildlife habitats, hazards, etc

**How long does the short plat process take?**

The longest part of the process is the work that the surveyor performs. If there are no significant issues, the typical short plat could be completed in approx. 3 to 4 months.

**Who do I talk to if I have questions?**

Do not hesitate to contact the Ferry County Planning office at (509) 775-5225 extension 3101