

FACT SHEET: DRAFT SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Background

The Borough Planning Commission has been working with Montgomery County Planning Commission (our planning consultant) to draft a new Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to replace the existing ordinance, which was last updated in 2012. The Borough's Comprehensive Plan, North Wales Borough 2040, included guidance for many additions and revisions to the ordinance. For example, the plan recommends that the Borough "amend the SALDO to strengthen tree protection and tree replacement standards." This and many other recommendations were addressed in the draft ordinance.

What is Subdivision? What is a Land Development?

A subdivision involves altering the property lines of a parcel of land. This may include adding new property lines to create new lots, removing property lines to consolidate two or more lots, or moving a property line to change the area of abutting lots.

A land development involves the construction of one or more nonresidential buildings, or two or more residential buildings. The construction of one single-family home is not considered a development for the purposes of the SALDO.

What's in a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance?

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968) authorizes municipalities to enact SALDO regulations and sets the specific items that must be included in a SALDO. Some of the key aspects include submission and process requirements, design guidelines, and engineering standards.

Review of SALDO applications generally involves the Zoning Officer, Borough Engineer, Borough Solicitor, and Borough Manager. Most SALDO applications initially come in as "preliminary plans," which require engineered detail on numerous topics, ranging from a landscaping plan to engineered utilities. Final plans follow preliminary plan approval, and essentially require that the applicant provide final details on all items proposed in the preliminary plan. Each process must be accomplished within 90 days of the Borough Planning Commission's first review of the application. Preliminary plans require review by the Montgomery County Planning Commission, in compliance with the Municipalities Planning Code. Please refer to the back of this document for a details flowchart on the application process.

Design standards and engineering specifications are two of the most important aspects of the SALDO. Design standards guide the overall layout of a development by prescribing standards related to the size, orientation, or material of certain items. For example, the proposed design standards include provisions related to minimum sidewalk width, the provision of street trees, and requirements for certain "streetscaping" features (e.g., benches, trash receptacles, streetlamps, etc.).

The engineering and construction standards get into more detail on the materials used and the specifications for certain items, such as the size and material of pipes used for stormwater conveyance. Many engineering standards relate to the standards of an outside agency, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. These types of authoritative specifications are referenced where possible.

What's Next?

Borough Council is considering adoption of the new SALDO by repealing and replacing the existing ordinance. The adoption process will include a public notice and a public hearing— be on the lookout for updates on northwalesborough.org or Savvy Citizen (visit savvycitizenapp.org/signup to join).

North Wales Borough

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SUBDIVISION AND/OR LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESS FLOWCHART

PRELIMINARY PLAN SUBMISSION

Reviewed by staff for completeness



REVIEW BY STAFF & BOROUGH ENGINEER

Review comments provided to the applicant and the Borough Planning Commission.



PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY PLAN

Applicant attends a meeting of the Borough Planning Commission to present their proposal and receive a recommendation. The Planning Commission provides an advisory recommendation to Borough Council to aid in their review.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

The Municipalities Planning Code requires that the County Planning Commission review applications for preliminary plan approval. Review comments are provided to the Borough.



BOROUGH COUNCIL REVIEW

Applicant attends a meeting of the Borough Council to present their proposal. Borough Council discusses any requested waivers from regulations, discusses any necessary modifications, and ultimately votes for approval, conditional approval, or denial of the plan. If the application is denied, the process ends here.



ONCE APPROVED, THE APPLICANT MAY PROCEED WITH A FINAL PLAN

Once a preliminary plan is approved, the applicant may follow the same process as described above for final plan approval. However, a second county review is not required.



ONCE A FINAL PLAN IS APPROVED, THE APPLICANT MAY PROCEED WITH RECORDING

If a final plan is approved, the applicant may proceed with recording the final plan with the Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds.



**SUBDIVISION MAY PROCEED, AND LOTS MAY BE CONVEYED;
DEVELOPMENT MAY PROCEED**