

# LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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## Guidebook

### DEKALB COUNTY PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

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DeKalb County  
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# What is Land Development?

The Land Development Unit manages the review and approval of Land Development Permits, Land Disturbance Permits, Final Plats, Stream Buffer Variances, and other related activities. Land Development staff serves as the primary point of contact with applicants throughout this process, though staff from other Departments, Divisions, and Units plays a role in the approval of these permits and activities. For example, the Transportation Division of Public Works reviews plans to ensure streets comply with state, local, and federal codes and standards. The specific reviewers involved vary depending on the permit type.



# Land Development Process



## LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION TYPES

The Land Development process ensures that infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) that would support a property or development are properly installed, that erosion, sediment and pollution control BMPs are in place and that environmental impacts during and after construction are mitigated. The process include a Land Development permit, Lot combination/Division/Boundary Line adjustment, Variances, Flood studies and Floodplain Assessment/ Trees, Final Plat and City civil plans.

Land Development Staff are the primary point of contact with applicants, and they coordinate the review process with other staff from other Departments, Divisions and Units who plays a role in the permitting process.

## **LAND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

The Land Development Unit in Development Services undertake reviews of plans that seek to alter landforms from their natural or semi-natural state for compliance with erosion, sediment and pollution control, engineering, and tree –related codes and standards. All plans must be consistent with the provisions of Chapter 14 of the DeKalb County Code of Ordinances, and must address and/or comply with all the items on the respective checklists of the different permit applications as may be applicable.

### **Pre-Submittal Meeting**

The first step in Land Development or Land Disturbance Permit process is usually a Pre-Application/Submittal meeting. The meeting is made available for developers who are interested in meeting with staff of the Planning and Sustainability Department who are required to provide information and guidance on the entire process; application documents, checklists, review turnaround, timelines, and other necessary and required items relating to Standards and codes as may be specific to the proposed project. It is therefore, in the best interest of Developers to avail themselves of this opportunity.

### **Application Submission**

Land Development or Land Disturbance applications are currently being submitted at the Land Development intake in the Planning and Sustainability Department. However, the required plans and documents can be submitted in two ways.

1. Paper Plan Submission (Hard form)
2. Electronic Plan Submission (ProjectDox)

It is the goal of the Department to advance all Land Development and Land Disturbance plan submissions to electronic form which will no doubt engender smooth and hassle-free process.

## Review Process

All plans and documents submitted in support of Land Development and Land Disturbance applications are reviewed for conformance with applicable Standards and Codes. Specifically, Sections 14, 27 etc of the County Code of Ordinances are usually referenced in the review process among others. Review comments and redlines are made available to customers at roundtable meetings in order for necessary corrections be made before a re-submittal by the applicant.

## Roundtable Meeting

Roundtable meetings are usually held two weeks after an applicant submits complete application documents and plans. The meeting is usually attended by the reviewers from various units that conducted reviews of the plans and documents for their discipline (e.g. GIS, Fire Site, Trees Transportation etc.)

## Approval and Permitting

Once all reviews are complete and applicant provided the necessary documentations as may be required, the plans are approved and stamped. The following are the steps that follow

1. A Land Development or Land Disturbance Permit is then generated which must be signed by the Owner of the property or an Authorized Agent acting on their behalf.
2. The Permit **MUST** be signed in Three (3) ORIGINAL copies and returned to our office.
3. A Pre-Construction Meeting is then scheduled

## Pre-Construction Meeting

The Pre-Construction meeting affords the Developer to meet with County Inspectors for the District in which the project is located and during which the all the inspection requirements will be highlighted to the Developers team and relevant milestones and documentation requirements be fully and thoroughly explained. The inspectors include the following;

1. Land Development Inspector
2. Environmental Inspector
3. Watershed Inspector(s)

It is therefore, highly important that the Developer, Design Professional (Engineer, Land Surveyor or Landscape Architect), Contractors and other personnel that will be directly involved in the project attend the Pre-Construction meeting.

# Flood and Floodplain

In order to promote public health, safety, and to drastically reduce public and private losses due to flood conditions in and around the County floodplain, Land Development shall provide adequate information on flood , floodplains and development standards per County, state and federal regulations especially in the special flood hazard areas. Therefore, a development review is required before any development activity begins within the area.

## FLOOD STUDIES

Flood studies of the County watersheds would be made available with additional information as may be necessary and required by anyone. Some of the information that could be made available includes

- Flood Insurance Study
- Flood data and
- Flood hazard maps

## FLOOD PLAIN ASSESSMENT/ANALYSIS

Floodplain Assessment/analysis is required for all development projects within the flood plain. This review for compliance with the regulatory requirements is mandatory to identify where encroachment into the floodplain will increase flood elevations significantly and worsen existing flood conditions. These are categorized into the following:

1. Residential Assessment
  - a. Improvements
  - b. Repairs
2. Commercial Assessment
  - a. Improvements
  - b. Repairs



## FLOODPLAIN DETERMINATION

Determination of whether or not a proposed project is within the regulatory floodplain is carried out through a Floodplain determination process. The requirement for this process is as follows.

1. A floodplain determination application.
2. A site survey showing existing site conditions and contour elevations- signed sealed and dated by a Design Professional registered in the state of Georgia.

## FLOODPLAIN ENCROACHMENT VARIANCE

Administrative Variance for floodplain encroachment into the regulatory floodplain shall be submitted to Land Development and the application package must include the following:

1. Flood Encroachment Variance Application
2. Three sets of site plans
3. Application fees



# Lot Modification

Lot modification entails changes to the metes and bounds of a parcel or parcels of land and is categorized into the following types

1. Lot Combination - Combination of two or more parcels of land into one.
2. The Lot Division – Division of one parcel into two parcels. Any subdivision to three parcels and more must be processed through Sketch plat (under Planning division)
3. Boundary Line Adjustment - This is an ordinary change to the metes and bounds of a parcel of land or property.

The submitted Plat must show all necessary information on the cover sheet, existing and proposed condition sheet.

## Lot Modification Steps

The steps involved is as follows:

1. Application form - completed and signed by the current property owner.
2. Four (4) sets of Plat - consistent with DeKalb County requirements on Plat submission
3. Certificate of Conformity - signed and dated by the Design Professional
4. Payment of Applicable fees.
5. Lot modification checklist
6. Other supporting documents (as may be necessary or required)

## Modification Types

**Lot Combination:** This is the combination of two or more parcels of land/property into one.

The Applicant must use the County approved checklists for lot combination and the submitted Plat must show among other things, all necessary information on the cover sheet, existing and proposed condition sheet. Complete application document must at a minimum include the following:

1. Application form - completed and signed by the current property owner.

2. Four (4) sets of Plat - consistent with DeKalb County requirements on Plat submission
3. Certificate of Conformity - signed and dated by the Design Professional
4. Payment of Applicable fees.
5. Lot modification checklist
6. Other supporting documents (e.g. proof of ownership of lots to be divided, etc.)

**Lot Division:** This is the division of one parcel of land or property into two. Divisions into more than two parcels must by DeKalb county ordinance must be processed through Sketch plat (contact Planning division)

The Applicant must use the County approved checklists for lot division and the submitted Plat must show among other things, all necessary information on the cover sheet, existing and proposed condition sheet. Complete application document must at a minimum include the following:

1. Application form - completed and signed by the current property owner.
2. Four (4) sets of Plat - consistent with DeKalb County requirements on Plat submission
3. Certificate of Conformity - signed and dated by the Design Professional
4. Payment of Applicable fees.
5. Lot modification checklist
6. Other supporting documents (e.g. proof of ownership of lots to be combined, etc.)

**Boundary Line Adjustment:** This entails a change to the metes and bounds of a parcel of land or property.

The Applicant must use the County approved checklists for lot division and the submitted Plat must show among other things, all necessary information on the cover sheet, existing and proposed condition sheet. Complete application document must at a minimum include the following:

1. Application form - completed and signed by the current property owner.
2. Four (4) sets of Plat - consistent with DeKalb County requirements on Plat submission
3. Certificate of Conformity - signed and dated by the Design Professional
4. Payment of Applicable fees.
5. Lot modification checklist
6. Other supporting documents (e.g. proof of ownership of lots to be combined, etc.)

# Variations and Determinations

Variations to the regulations or requirements of DeKalb County can be obtained where compliance with such would result in practical difficulty or undue hardship for particular property owner or surrounding property owners.

## Types of Variations

1. **Stream Buffer Variance** – Encroachments within the seventy-five (75) feet stream buffer shall require a variance in accordance with sec. 14-44.1 of the County codes of ordinances. Required steps for a stream buffer variance include:
  - a. Stream Buffer Variance Applications
  - b. Two (2) sets of plans
  - c. Application fee
  - d. Checklist
  
2. **Tree Administrative Variance** – This is required when a person desire to permit the growth or otherwise of any tree not in accordance with the provisions of the County’s tree ordinance. The process entails the following:
  - a. Tree Administration Variance Application
  - b. Two (2) sets of Tree plans
  - c. Application fee
  - d. Checklist
  
3. **Floodplain Encroachment Variance** – This variance is required for any Land development activity within the Floodplain that will not be in full compliance with Article IV of the County codes ordinances.
  - a. Floodplain Encroachment Variance Application
  - b. Two (2) sets of Tree plans
  - c. Application fee
  - d. Checklist

# Final Plat

This is the final step in a subdivision process after construction of all required critical infrastructure is complete to ascertain their locations and consistency with County codes and standards, and to verify that they would maximally function in support of the subdivision. An approved Final Plat must be recorded at the Superior Court.

## Types of Final Plat

New Final Plat

Revised Final Plat

# City Civil Design Review and Services

City Civil design reviews and services are provided to incorporated cities and municipalities within the County. Customer are required to first apply to their respective cities/ municipalities where a routing sheet showing the reviews/services being requested will be given to them for onward transmission to the County with their plans and other documents as may be required.

## Review Type:

1. Infrastructure:
  - a. Residential
  - b. Non-Residential
2. Lot Modification:
  - a. Lot combination
  - b. Lot division
  - c. Boundary line adjustment
3. Final Plat:
  - a. New Final Plat
  - b. Revised Final Plat.
4. Addressing Plant

**Required Documents:** The following documents are required for all types of City Civil Design Reviews and Services.

1. City Routing Letter
2. City Civil Design Review Application
3. Set of Plans
4. Applicable Fees
5. Applicable checklist