

UNDERSTANDING THE SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This "Understanding the Subdivision and Land Development Process" section is provided for general informational purposes, and is **not** part of any City Ordinance or Resolution.

Generally, every activity which involves the division of land into two or more parcels, or changes in lot lines or the development of one or more new principal non-residential buildings requires approval under the City **Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)**.

Creation of a new land use, changes in the use of buildings, construction or enlargement of structures, and alteration of natural features in preparation for development also require approval under the City **Zoning Ordinance**. Both the SALDO process and the Zoning process are controlled by State law - the **Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code**.

Careful pre-planning by an applicant is essential to ensure that the development process occurs in fashion that is as timely and as cost-efficient to the applicant as possible. The City only controls portions of the development process - many other aspects are controlled by **Federal, State and County** agencies and regulations. To avoid delays and to save expenses in the long-run, an applicant should hire a well-qualified professional who is very experienced in completing all of the development approval processes.

To avoid delays, an applicant shall work with his/her professionals to determine all of the Federal, State and City permits and approvals that may be needed - as soon as possible. By starting the City, State and Federal approval processes as early as possible, an applicant has the best chance of receiving needed approvals in time for the desired construction season. Likewise, an applicant should assume that there will be unexpected costs in the approval process - such as costs resulting from State and Federal agencies requiring additional information. If any areas are suspected of being "wetlands", then a qualified wetland consultant should be brought into the process as early as possible to study the site.

It is essential to ensure that **submissions** to the City, the Conservation District and State and Federal agencies and all other agencies are **totally complete** to avoid delays. It is important to confirm that you have the latest and most-up-to-date list of submission requirements and to confirm that you are providing the correct review fees to each agency.

It usually is desirable to seek an informal meeting with applicable City staffpersons early in the process to gain their input and advice. In addition, **sketch plan reviews** by the City of proposed subdivisions and land developments are usually very beneficial to identify issues early in the process - before the applicant has completed detailed engineering. This **sketch plan review often avoids the need for expensive re-engineering of plans and the resulting delays in approval**.

In Scranton, proposed subdivisions and land developments are primarily reviewed by the City Planning Commission, the City Engineer, the City Planning Staff and the Zoning Officer. The plans are also usually reviewed by the County Planning Commission and the County Conservation District. Unlike many other communities where planning commissions are purely advisory, in Scranton the City Planning Commission has the final authority to approve subdivisions and land developments.

In addition, once a development plan is approved but before the plan is recorded, in most cases the City will require that the developer provide **financial security**. This security is intended to ensure that the required improvements are correctly installed. For example, the security often covers the cost of installing streets, curbs, water lines and sewer lines. Often, to lower the amount of security that is required, a large development is divided into phases.

FILE OF CITY COUNCIL NO. ____

1996

TITLE AND ENACTMENT

CITY OF SCRANTON

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

1. TITLE An Ordinance providing for the regulation and control of the subdivision of lots and the development of land; the approval of plans, plots, or replots of land laid out in building lots; standards for the design of streets, lots, easements, blocks and other improvements; certain minimum improvements and construction standards on all streets and required dedications; the administration of this Ordinance by the City of Scranton Planning Commission and the City of Scranton City Council; and penalties for the violation of this Ordinance.
2. SHORT TITLE. This Ordinance shall be known and may be cited as "The City of Scranton Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance" of 1996.
3. SEVERABILITY. If any section, clause, provision or portion of this Ordinance shall be held invalid or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not effect any other section, clause, provision or portion of this Ordinance so long as it remains legally enforceable minus the invalid portion. The City reserves the right to amend this Ordinance or any portion thereof from time to time as it shall deem advisable in the best interests of the promotion of the purposes and intent of this Ordinance, and the effective administration thereof.
4. REPEALER. All other City ordinances or parts thereof that were adopted prior to this Ordinance and are clearly in conflict with this Ordinance, including the pre-existing City of Scranton Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, as amended, are hereby repealed.
5. ENACTMENT AND EFFECTIVE DATE. Under the authority of the Act of the Legislature, April 13, 1972, Act No. 62, known as the "Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law", the City Council of the City of Scranton hereby enacts and ordains into an Ordinance the attached document this date of _____, 1996. This Ordinance shall become effective 5 days after being approved.

Date of City Council Hearing _____, 1996.

City Council, City of Scranton

President

Mayor

Attest, City Clerk