



Land Development Services

Technical Bulletin

**Subject: Subdivision Grading Plans (SDGPs)
Submission Procedure and Requirements**

Date: 4/26/23

No.: 23-01

Summary: This technical bulletin clarifies the county's policies and procedures associated with Subdivision Grading Plans (SDGPs).

Effective Date: Immediately

Background: Subdivisions in Fairfax County are regulated by County Code Chapter 101. Subdivision construction plans are required by 101-2-4 prior to subdivision approval. This plan is commonly called a "Subdivision Plan" and submitted as plan type "SD." After SD approval, the final plat may be approved and recorded.

Individual lot grading plans are required after overall subdivision plan approval and prior to the start of construction on the building lots. Subdivision Lot Grading Plans, or "SDGP," demonstrate compliance of each building lot with the SD. SDGP submissions propose detailed designs for single family homes associated with active, bonded, Subdivision Plans.

This technical bulletin documents the submission procedure and requirements for SDGPs. Submitting a quality plan fulfilling all requirements creates an opportunity for expeditious approval by staff. To this end, LDS has published an [SDGP Checklist](#) to facilitate consistency in plan preparation and review. The checklist is not required to be submitted with SDGPs. This bulletin also discusses common issues experienced at building permit application, occupancy, and bond release.

Policy: An SD is used to demonstrate compliance with the [Subdivision Ordinance](#) and leads to approval of a subsequent subdivision plat. SDGPs must be submitted after approval of SDs to approve layout and grading associated with each lot. While more than one lot can be shown on a single SDGP drawing set, a unique SDGP record must be logged in, reviewed, and approved separately for each lot.

SDGPs can be submitted and reviewed any time after SD approval, including before the bond has been posted and plat recorded for the SD. However, before any building permit can be issued following the SDGP for a specific lot, the associated SD bond must be posted, and the plat recorded. Model homes may be approved for construction in advance of SD approval following existing Infill Lot Grading plan processes described below. Alterations to completed SDGP lots while the SD is still active must be proposed with SDGP plans or deferred until after the SD is completed and all bonds released.

Conservation escrow will be collected for SDGPs submitted by a different owner from the one shown on the associated SD.

SDGPs must include the following information:

1. Detailed lot layout: Information should include limit of disturbance, house configuration, (window wells, doors, other openings, overhangs, etc.) driveways, setbacks, utilities, (water meter, sanitary lateral, drain fields, water well, foundation drain, sump pump drain, downspouts, etc.) easements, retaining walls, fence, deck, patio, pools and any other proposed improvements to the lot. Please note that driveway locations should be generally consistent with what is shown on the SD. If the SDGP proposes a relocated driveway, further coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) would be required to check intersection spacing and maximization of on-street parking spaces.
2. Detailed lot grading: Grading should include existing topography and proposed topography with adequate spot elevations on the lot and adjacent areas to demonstrate grading intent and direction of flow. Minor grade changes to the grading approved in the SD are allowed with SDGP. However, the proposed grading should not impact the drainage pattern, drainage easements, or overland relief path as approved in the SD. In those situations, a Subdivision Plan Revision (SDV) may need to be submitted and approved prior to approval of the SDGP showing changes to the overall stormwater management plan.
3. Yard coverage computation should be prepared to demonstrate compliance with maximum coverage requirements in the minimum required rear yard and front yard.
4. Building height computation should be prepared in accordance with [Technical Bulletin \(TB\) 19-01](#) on Determining and Certifying Residential Building Height. TB 19-01 requires “both pre-existing and proposed finished grade elevations” be presented in tabular form on the SDGP. The pre-existing grade is the grade proposed with the approved SD, and the proposed grade would be the finished grade based on the final house footprint that is shown on the SDGP for the lot. The lower of the two calculated average grades will be used to establish building height in accordance with TB 19-01.
5. Plan-specific notes and details should be provided with the SDGP and it should include general notes, vicinity and soils map, sanitary lateral details, sump pump and discharge details, driveway entrance details, and foundation drain details.
6. Stormwater management plan:
 - a. For SDGPs that have an approved stormwater management plan in the SD, narrative and computation should be provided to clearly demonstrate the design assumption of the SD has not been exceeded with the total proposed impervious area of the lot. Otherwise, an SDV is required, unless individual Best Management Practices (BMPs) are proposed for the lot. We recommend the stormwater management plan of the SD be prepared with maximized imperviousness listed separately for each lot to avoid future SDVs.
 - b. For SDGPs that use BMPs on individual lots, a complete stormwater management plan should be provided with the SDGP showing all facility design, construction and maintenance requirements.
7. An erosion and sediment control plan for the disturbed area on the lot, including lot-specific erosion and sediment narrative and details. A separate construction entrance is required for all SDGPs.
8. Detailed landscape plan for the lot. All easements should be clearly shown.
9. The approved grading plan, drainage divides plan, and landscape plan from the SD should be included and labeled as “for information only.” Copies of the proffers and/or development conditions do not have to be included in the SDGP. The compliance responses in the Proffer/Development Condition Matrix in Smartsheet must be updated if there are proffers/development conditions associated with individual lots.

In case a **Model Home** is proposed prior to SD approval, the procedure stated below should be followed:

1. Submit an Infill Lot Grading Plan (INF) for the existing lot of record. The INF must propose all required improvements and not rely on improvements proposed in the SD. This may include a private driveway and/or a stormwater management facility. See [Infill Lot Grading Plan Minimum Submission Requirements Checklist](#) on how to prepare an INF plan.
2. The title of the INF plan should include “Model Home on Future Lot X of Y Subdivision.”
3. The Grading Plan sheet of the INF plan should show the existing boundaries and setbacks as well as the future lot lines of the lot proposed on the Subdivision Plat.
4. Once the INF is approved, site permit and building permits can be issued. See [Technical Bulletin \(TB\) 19-01](#) on when an As-Built Height Certification is required.
5. Once the Subdivision Plat is recorded, an SDGP for the lot with the model home must be submitted. Updates to reflect all proposed or existing improvements such as grading, patio, covered porch, bay window, etc. must be shown. The SDGP will show the approved new lot lines and setbacks. The building height computation shall be updated to show the pre-existing condition based on the grade proposed in the SD, or if the model home has been constructed, then the “as-built” condition of the house. The proposed grades will be as shown on the SDGP.
6. If the Residential Use Permit (RUP) was previously issued to the model home, and the address changed with the SDGP, a new occupancy permit may need to be issued.
7. If the RUP was obtained for the model home, complete with conservation escrow released prior to SD approval, the SD should show the model home as an existing house and no SDGP is required if no change to the house is proposed with the SD.

In case **Home Improvements (decks, patios, and pools)** are proposed to increase impervious area prior to bond release of the SD, the following policies should apply:

1. All home improvements prior to SD bond release are considered a [common plan of development](#) with the SD. As such, these improvements are not exempted from stormwater management requirements based on County Code [§124-1-7.3](#) or [§124-1-7.4](#) and the individual lots remain part of the related SD plan until the SD bond is released.
2. An SDGP must be submitted for any changes to building footprint, addition of patios, covered decks/porches, pools, and any other improvements proposing additional impervious areas. Examples of additional impervious improvements include basketball courts, outdoor kitchens, gazebos, pool houses, etc. This policy is to ensure that home improvements proposed by individual homeowners comply to all subdivision requirements (e.g., tree save area, conservation area, drainage path, stormwater management, overland relief, etc.).
3. If any BMPs are proposed on the lot with SDGP to treat additional impervious improvements, a Private Maintenance Agreement (PMA) is required prior to issuance of a construction permit for the SDGP, and a 3rd party BMP Certification is required prior to occupancy.
4. If a homeowner/builder of the SDGP is different from the developer of the SD, a separate Conservation Escrow, Responsible Land Disturber, and Land Disturbance Permit will be required, and the lot will stand on its own outside any changes to items proposed/bonded with the SD plan.
5. As an alternative to the submission of an SDGP, applicants may choose to wait to initiate further improvements after the SD bond is released. After the SD is complete, the lots may propose land disturbance with an Infill Lot Grading Plan (INF) or a Conservation Plan (CON) if required, and not be bound to the SD plan.

6. The developer of the SD should inform buyers that any exterior home improvements prior to SD bond release requires a site permit, and any additional impervious areas (patio, pool, etc.) are subject to the Stormwater Management Ordinance and may require an SDGP or SDV to be permitted.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Site Development and Inspections Division of Land Development Services at LDSSDIDAdmin@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-1720, TTY 711.

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