



Land Development Services

Technical Bulletin

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

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Revised: 12/17/25

Summary: This technical bulletin supersedes Technical Bulletin 24-03 issued on March 19, 2024, to clarify the county’s policies and procedures associated with Subdivision Grading Plans (SDGPs). This amendment updates the policy related to home improvement projects on lots that are fully stabilized, sold, and occupied, providing revised guidance on how such improvements are reviewed and permitted under the SDGP process.

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 is 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 before the start of construction on the building lots. Subdivision Lot Grading Plans, or “SDGP,” demonstrate compliance of each building lot within 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 that fulfills all requirements creates an opportunity for expeditious approval by staff. LDS has published an [SDGP Checklist](#) to promote consistency in plan preparation and review. Though strongly encouraged, use of the checklist is optional and may be used at the discretion of the submitter. This bulletin also discusses common issues experienced at building permit application, occupancy, and bond release.

State regulations allow a project to be considered separately from the original common plan of development once the initial land-disturbing activity associated with the common plan has been completed for a specific parcel. Any subsequent development or redevelopment on that parcel is then considered a new plan of development subject to applicable regulations. For example, once a dwelling has been constructed and occupied, and the land has been stabilized, any future construction on that lot—such as additions, accessory structures, or redevelopment—will be evaluated independently when calculating land disturbance.

We recognize the challenges in enforcing development restrictions once a project is no longer under the control of the original developer. Accordingly, we have updated this publication to provide revised guidance on how home improvement projects will be reviewed and permitted after a lot has been fully stabilized, sold, and occupied.

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 separate SDGP record must be applied for, reviewed, and approved for each individual lot.

SDGPs can be submitted for review any time after SD technical approval, including before the bond has been posted and plat recorded for the SD. However, before a 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 the existing Infill Lot Grading Plan processes described below.

For lots within an active subdivision where initial SDGP work has been completed, there are several paths for proposing additional site modifications. Applicants may submit revised SDGP plans reflecting the proposed changes, choose to postpone the work until the subdivision is finalized and all bonds/escrows have been released, or, if the lot has been stabilized, sold, and occupied, the improvements may be reviewed as a separate plan of development with independently calculated land disturbance.

SDGPs Submission Requirements

1. Detailed lot layout: Information should include limits of disturbance, house configuration, (window wells, doors, other openings, overhangs, etc.) driveways, setbacks, utilities, (water meter, sanitary laterals, drain fields, water wells, foundation drains, sump pump drains, downspouts, etc.) easements, retaining walls, fences, decks, patios, 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) may 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 approved grading in the SD are allowed under the SDGP. However, the proposed grading should not impact the drainage pattern, drainage easements, or overland relief path approved in the SD. In those situations, a Subdivision Plan Revision may be required prior to approval of the SDGP showing changes to the overall stormwater management plan.
3. Yard coverage computations should be prepared to demonstrate compliance with maximum coverage requirements in the minimum required rear yard and front yard.
4. Building height computations 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. For SDGPs, only the proposed finished grade needs to be calculated.
5. Plan-specific notes and details should be provided with the SDGP. These 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 computations should be provided to clearly demonstrate that the design

assumptions of the SD have not been exceeded with the total proposed impervious area of the lot. Otherwise, an SDGP Revision is required, unless individual Best Management Practices (BMPs) are proposed for the lot. To avoid future SDGP Revisions, we recommend the stormwater management plan of the SD be prepared with maximized imperviousness listed separately for each lot.

- 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 if applicable.
9. All easements should be clearly shown.

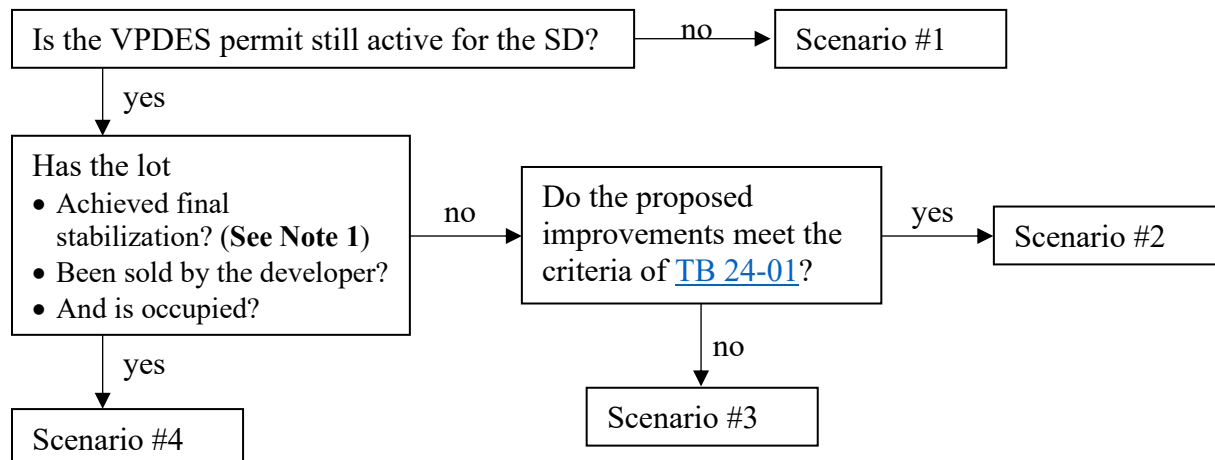
Procedure for Model Home Construction Prior to Subdivision Approval

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](#) for 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, associated site 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 must 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 occupancy (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 and the conservation escrow was released prior to SD approval, the SD should show the model home as existing. If no additional changes are proposed, an SDGP is not required.

Policy for Home Improvement Projects

Home improvement projects—such as decks, patios, screened porches, pools, and other features—proposed before the release of SD bonds will follow different review and permitting procedures depending on the stage of development. Please refer to the flowchart below to determine the appropriate process for your project.

Note: These scenarios do not address situations where the Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) permit has expired but construction remains incomplete. Additional review and coordination is required in such cases to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and bond release procedures.



Note 1:

Final stabilization must meet the criteria as outlined in 9VAC25-880-1.

All soil-disturbing activities at the construction site have been completed and a permanent vegetative cover has been established on denuded areas not otherwise permanently stabilized. Permanent vegetation shall not be considered established until a ground cover is achieved that is uniform (e.g., evenly distributed), provides 75% or more vegetative cover with no significant bare areas, is mature enough to survive, and will inhibit erosion.

And for the purpose of this publication, final stabilization is further conditioned upon:

1. Completion of **all required inspections**, including site and landscaping final.
2. Completion of **all necessary documentation** for the features proposed on the lot, including Private Maintenance Agreement and 3rd party certification for BMPs located on individual lots.
3. In accordance with 9VAC25-880-60.A.4, the developer must provide written notification of final stabilization to the homeowner and include a copy of the notification in Section 12 of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The notification should confirm that final stabilization has been completed, and the homeowner is now responsible for maintaining this condition and ensuring that any future soil disturbance or construction complies with all applicable federal, state, and county regulations. The developer may reserve the right to access the property if necessary to complete any remaining items required for project release or compliance.

Scenario #1:

Once the SD is complete and the Notice of Termination (NOT) has been submitted for the associated VPDES permit, individual lots may propose land-disturbing activities under an Infill Lot Grading Plan (INF), Rough Grading Plan (RGP), or a Conservation Plan (CON), when and as applicable. At this stage, lots are no longer bound to the original subdivision plan, and proposed improvements will be reviewed independently and subject to applicable site development requirements and regulations.

Scenario #2:

Uncovered decks may be permitted without an SDGP in accordance with [Technical Bulletin 24-01](#), if no impervious features are included, no changes to grade or environmentally protected areas are proposed, and no nearby stormwater facilities are impacted.

Scenario #3:

In this scenario, all proposed home improvement projects are considered part of the [common plan of development](#) associated with the SD. An SDGP must be submitted for any changes to building footprint, or for the addition of features that increase impervious areas, such as patios, covered decks/porches, pools, basketball courts, outdoor kitchens, gazebos, pool houses, etc. This policy is to ensure that home improvements comply with all subdivision requirements (e.g., tree save area, conservation area, drainage path, stormwater management, overland relief, etc.).

1. If any BMPs are proposed on the lot with SDGP to treat additional impervious improvements, a Private Maintenance Agreement (PMA) is required before a land disturbance permit for the SDGP will be issued, and a 3rd party BMP Certification is required before a certificate of occupancy will be issued.
2. If a homeowner/builder of the SDGP is different from the developer of the SD, a separate Conservation Escrow Deposit, Conservation Agreement, and Responsible Land Disturber and Land Disturbance Permits will be required, and the lot will be evaluated independently, outside any changes to items proposed and bonded under the SD plan.
3. A Subdivision Plan Revision may be required before approval of the SDGP if features proposed with the subdivision, such as drainage pattern, easements, overland relief paths, or stormwater management strategies, are impacted by the proposed SDGP.

Scenario #4:

In this scenario, the lots are no longer bound to the original subdivision plan, and proposed improvements will be reviewed independently and subject to applicable site development requirements and regulations.

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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