
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

Subdivision Policy Review
A Historical Review of
Subdivision 2003 - 2015

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Introduction

The municipal Council of the MD of Willow Creek No. 26 (M.D.) has undertaken a review of the existing Municipal Development Plan (MDP). This report was created to assist Council as they consider subdivision policies to be included in the updated MDP. The following data was collected with respect to subdivision applications that have been processed and presented to the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC).

Division	Political division where the subject lands being subdivided is located
Subdivision Type	Subdivision classified as either a farmstead, VCR, GCR, fragmented, enlargement, boundary realignment, RI, RR, RC, CIA or other
Application Size	The number of acres being requested for subdivision
Approved Size	The number of acres approved for subdivision
Waiver Requested	Whether the application required a waiver of the M.D.'s subdivision policy
Parcel Reduced	Whether or not the MPC (or appeal board) reduced the parcel size upon approval

RI – Rural Industrial, RR – Rural Recreational, RC – Rural Commercial, CIA – Claresholm Industrial Area

The report provides a historical look at subdivision applications with particular interest given to single lot residential subdivision. Where single lot residential subdivision are considered parcel created for single (as oppose to grouped) acreage type development. The data was examined and the following areas reported on:

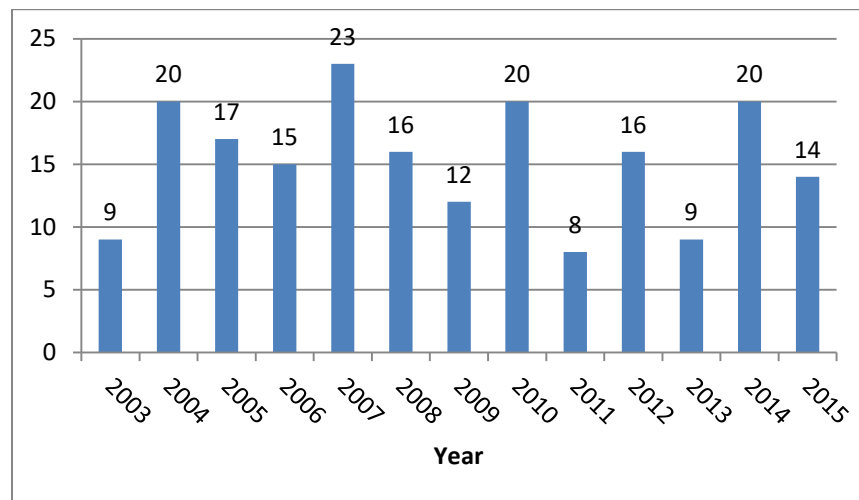
1. Frequency of subdivision applications;
2. Types of subdivision applications;
3. Average Parcel Size Requested;
4. Average Parcel Size Approved; and
5. Frequency in which the 5.0 acre maximum parcel size policy is applied for and waived

Divisional breakdown is provided for frequency of subdivision applications only. The evaluation period for this report is 2003 – 2015 which corresponds with the adoption of the current MDP.

FREQUENCY OF SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS

Over the period 2003-2015 the number of single lot residential subdivision applications processed and presented to the MPC has varied. The total number of applications per year ranged from a high of 24 applications in 2007 to a low of 8 applications in 2011. It should be noted that there were high number of applications in 2004, 2010 and 2014 with 20 applications in each of the three years. Figure 1 below shows the number of single lot residential subdivision applications for each year during the evaluation period. On average there were 15 applications per year for single lot residential subdivision over the evaluation period.

Figure 1: Number of Single Lot Residential Subdivision by Year



Over the evaluation period there were a total of 276 subdivision applications. Approximately 1/5 of these applications were in division 4 and more than half of the total number of subdivisions occurs in divisions 4, 7 and 6 collectively. Table 1 below shows the distribution of single lot residential subdivision by division.

Table 1: Total Number of Single Lot Residential Subdivision (2003 - 2015)

Division	No. of Subdivision	Percentage of Subdivision
Div 1	30	12%
Div 2	22	7%
Div 3	38	14%
Div 4	58	21%
Div 5	33	11%
Div 6	45	17%
Div 7	51	19%
Total	276	100%

TYPE OF SUBDIVISION

The vast majority of subdivision applications have been for single lot residential subdivisions. Single lot residential subdivisions generally consist of either an existing farmstead or a vacant country residential parcel. However, it should be noted that outside of an existing farmstead or a VCR parcel, a single lot residential subdivision may occur as a fragmented parcel or through a parcel boundary re-alignment.

Table 2 below shows the type of subdivision that have been applied for and presented to the MPC for a decision.

Table 2: Type of Subdivision Applications

Type of Subdivision	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Farmstead	9	20	17	16	23	16	9	17	7	14	7	17	10	182
VCR	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	2	2	3	4	17
GCR	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	10
Hamlet	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Fragmented	2	0	4	2	2	3	0	5	2	0	0	1	0	21
Re-alignment	1	3	0	1	4	1	0	3	4	1	8	2	5	33
Enlargement	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
RI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
RR	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
RC	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CIA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Total	12	24	24	19	32	22	15	29	15	18	18	26	20	277

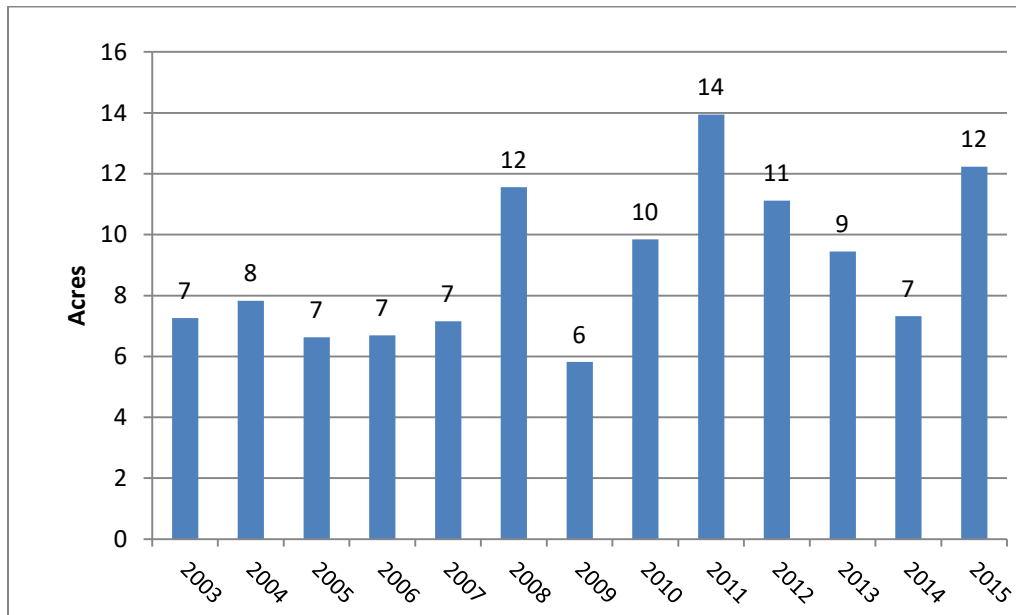
WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED

Average Parcel Size Requested

Despite the fact that the MD's single lot residential subdivision policy sets the maximum parcel size at 5 acres, the average parcel size requested for these types of subdivisions over the evaluation period was 9 acres.

In 2011 the average parcels size requested reached a high of 14 acres. Double digits for average parcel size requested was also recorded in 2008 and 2015, when the average parcel size reached 12 acres in each of those years. Figure 2 below shows the average parcel size requested for single lot residential subdivision over the period 2003 - 2015.

Figure 2: Average Parcel Size (in acres) Requested 2003-2015



Further examination shows that for the evaluation period less than half of the applications (45%) were in keeping with the policy i.e. of a maximum of 5.0 acres. However, the majority of the single lot residential subdivision applications, (55%), are for more than the 5 acres prescribed in the MDP (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Number of Subdivision Applications for 5.0 acres or less

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Total No. of single lot residential subdivision	9	20	17	15	23	16	12	20	8	16	9	20	14	
No. of applications requiring a waiver (i.e. more than 5.0 acres)	5	11	10	5	8	11	4	10	6	9	6	10	10	55%
Percentage of applications requiring a waiver (i.e. more than 5.0 acres)	56%	55%	59%	33%	35%	69%	33%	50%	75%	56%	67%	50%	71%	55%
Number of applications for 5 acres or less	4	9	7	10	15	5	8	10	2	7	3	10	4	45%
Percentage of applications for 5 acres or less	44%	45%	41%	67%	65%	31%	67%	50%	25%	44%	33%	50%	29%	45%

Vacant Country Residential Subdivision

In September of 2008 Council amended the MDP to include the vacant country residential subdivision policy (MDP policy 4.6.32). Under subdivision policy 4.6.32 a habitable farmstead is not required before subdivision. Applicants/landowners are required to provide evidence that the site can accommodate a residential development. At a minimum the evidence required included a statement regarding an acceptable source for potable water and a soil test to confirm suitability for septic system.

Since this policy was adopted there have been a total of 17 vacant country residential subdivisions. This represents approximately 24% of all subdivision applications since 2009¹. The policy has been effective in keeping single lot residential subdivision parcels size down to the 5 acre mark. In fact 4 of the 17 applications were for parcels that were less than 5 acre in size.

WHAT IS BEING APPROVED

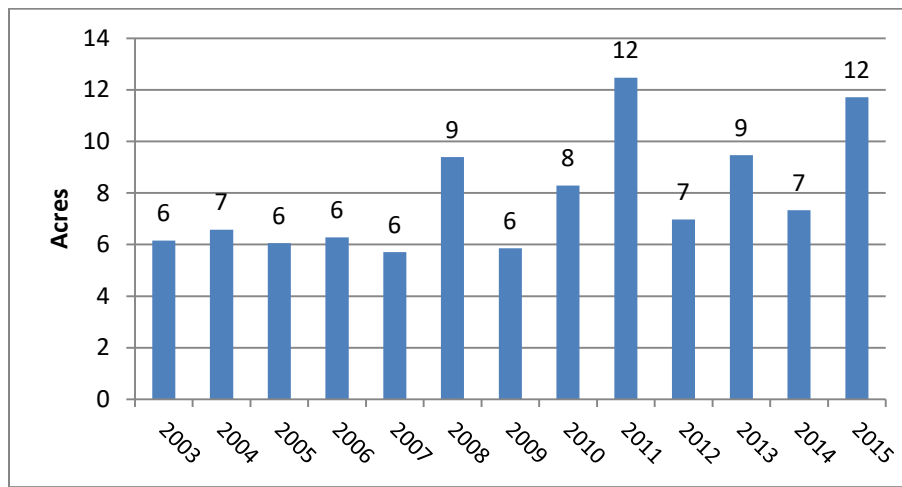
Average Parcels Size Approved

The average parcel size approved over the period was 8 acres (see Table 4 below). In 2011 and 2015 the average parcel size approved for single lot residential subdivision reached a high 12 acres. The lowest average parcel size approved was 6 acres in the years 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009. At no point over the evaluation period did the average parcel size approved was for 5 acre as prescribed in the existing MDP.

Figure 3 below shows the average parcel size approved for single lot residential subdivision in each year during the evaluation period.

¹ Subdivision policy 4.6.32 was adopted in September 2008, the first application did not occur until 2019

Figure 3: Average Parcel Size (in acres) Approved 2003-2015



Over the last five years (2010-2015) there has been a notable increase in the average parcel size requested for single lot residential subdivision. The average parcel size requested for this period was 11 acres.

Parcel Size Requested vs. Parcel Size Approved

It should be noted that the average parcel size requested for the evaluation period (9 acres) is slightly higher than the average parcel size approved (8 acres). This suggests that while waivers to the subdivision policy were granted there were instances where the parcel size was reduced as a condition of approval. Slightly over one third (36%) of the requests for waivers to the subdivision policy were approved with a reduction in the parcel size during this time (2003-2015).

Closer examination of the number of subdivision applications within each year shows that over the last three years, 2013, 2014 & 2015 the average parcel size requested and the average parcel size approved were the same (9 acres, 7 acres and 12 acres respectively). This also occurred in 2009 when the average parcel size requested and the average parcel size approved was 6.0 acres. This suggests that in these years there were fewer instances where the parcel size was reduced as a condition of approval. In all other years, the average parcel size requested was larger than the average parcel size approved (see Table 3 below).

Table 4: Comparison of Average Parcel Size Requested vs. Average Parcel Size Approved

Year	Average Parcel size requested (acres)	Average Parcel size approved (acres)
2003	7	6
2004	8	7
2005	7	6
2006	7	6
2007	7	6
2008	12	9
2009	6	6
2010	10	8
2011	14	12
2012	11	7
2013	9	9
2014	7	7
2015	12	12
Average	9	8

Waiver of maximum 5 acre subdivision policy

More than half of the applications (55%) for single lot residential subdivision were for more than the maximum 5.0 acre stipulated in the MDP. In 2011 as much 75% of the applications required a waiver of the subdivision policy. On average 36% of the applications requiring a waiver had the parcel size reduced upon approval by the MPC. The year 2014 had the lowest percentage (10%) of waiver request that were reduced as a condition of approval (see Table 4 below).

Table 5: Percentage of Applications requiring a waiver & Percentage of Applications requiring a waiver that are reduced on approval

	Percentage of applications requiring a waiver	Percentage of waiver requested that are reduced
2003	56%	40%
2004	55%	36%
2005	59%	30%
2006	33%	40%
2007	35%	63%
2008	69%	45%
2009	33%	25%
2010	50%	30%
2011	75%	50%
2012	56%	56%
2013	67%	17%
2014	50%	10%
2015	71%	20%
	55%	36%

Table 5 overleaf provides a comprehensive breakdown of subdivisions during the period 2003 – 2015.

KEY TAKE AWAY

- ☐ There was an average of 15 applications/year for single lot residential subdivision between 2003-2015.
- ☐ More than half of all subdivisions occur within divisions 4, 6 & 7.
- ☐ The average parcel size requested is 9.0 acres
- ☐ The average parcel size approved is 7.9 acres
- ☐ Over the last three years (2013-2015) the average parcel size requested was equal to the average parcel size approved.
- ☐ Fifty-five percent of the applications for single lot country residential subdivisions required a waiver to the 5.0 acre maximum subdivision policy.
- ☐ On average 36% of the applications for waiver were approved with the condition of a parcel size reduction.
- ☐ Twenty-four percent (24%) of all subdivision applications since 2009 have been VCR subdivisions.

Table 6: Breakdown of Subdivision Applications 2003 - 2015

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total No. of Subdivisions	12	24	24	19	32	22	15	29	16	18	18	28	20
Total No. of single lot residential subdivision	9	20	17	15	23	16	13	20	8	16	9	20	14
Average Parcel size requested	7	8	7	7	7	12	6	10	14	11	9	7	12
Average Parcel size approved	6	7	6	6	6	9	6	8	12	7	9	7	12
No. of waiver requested	5	11	10	5	8	11	4	10	6	9	6	10	10
Percentage of App with waiver request	56%	55%	59%	33%	35%	69%	31%	50%	75%	56%	67%	50%	71%
No. of Parcel Reduced	2	4	3	2	5	5	1	3	3	5	1	1	2
Percentage of waiver requested that are reduced	40%	36%	30%	40%	63%	45%	25%	30%	50%	56%	17%	10%	20%
Number of requests for 5 ac or less	4	9	7	10	15	5	8	10	2	7	3	10	4
Percentage of applications for 5 ac or less	44%	45%	41%	67%	65%	31%	62%	50%	25%	44%	33%	50%	29%