CITY OF SEQUIM

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Sequim Municipal Code Title 17 - Land Division (full update) and Chapter 18.21 - Supplemental Housing Requirements (new)
Overview Memo

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memo is to inform interested parties, agencies and citizens in the updates proposed for a complete update to Sequim Municipal Code Title 17 Land Divisions and a new Chapter to Title 18 Zoning - Chapter 18.21 Supplemental Housing Requirements.

The Growth Management Act of Washington (GMA) requires counties and cities to review and evaluate comprehensive plans and development regulations, and update them if necessary, according to a schedule established by RCW 36.70A.130. Updates to Title 17 and Title 18 are planned, with this amendment package being the first released and processed; additional amendments are planned in 2026 and 2027.

SUMMARY OF THE UPDATES

SMC Title 17 Land Division

The proposed Draft Title 17 Land Division Ordinance represents a full rewrite of the City of Sequim's land division and subdivision regulations. Multiple new state requirements have been enacted that directly affect land division processes. These include, but are not limited to, regulations related to lot splitting, unit lot subdivisions, and other housing-related reforms. Staff also considered feedback received over time and as part of the comprehensive plan update process from the development community. These changes are intended to improve the code to align with real-world application while maintaining the required regulatory standards.

Of main significance, the Draft Title 17 Land Division ordinance's new or revised provisions include:

Chapter 17.10 General Provisions

- Clear statement of authority and purpose tied directly to RCW 58.17 and GMA
- Explicit administrative authority granted to DCED Director
- Formal conflict-resolution hierarchy (state law > city code, etc.)
- Expanded and modernized definitions

Chapter 17.20 Land Division Standards

- Explicit proportionality language (RCW 82.02.020)
- Stronger alignment with adopted city standards:
- Clear street connectivity requirements
- Standardized certification/dedication language managed administratively
- Clear utility undergrounding and frontage improvement expectations

Chapter 17.30 Boundary Line Adjustment and Consolidations

- Combines boundary line adjustments and lot consolidations into one chapter

- Establishes a more clear and detailed application process

Chapter 17.40 Minor Subdivisions
- Fully modernizes minor subdivision procedures
- Allows up to 9 lots
- Explicitly allows unit lot subdivisions under RCW 58.17.060(3)
- Stronger alignment with adopted city standards

Chapter 17.50 Unit Lot Subdivisions
- A complete, state-authorized framework for fee-simple unit lot subdivisions
- Applies development standards to the parent lot, not individual unit lots
- Requires clear plat notes, CCRs, and common-area ownership provisions
- Limits unit lot subdivisions to:
    - ≤9 lots
    - Non-stacked dwelling units
    - Residential zones only

Chapter 17.60 Administrative Lot Split
- Aligns with RCW 58.17.145 (SHB 1096, 2025)
- Enables a one-time lot creation for one additional residential lot from an existing lot
- Applies only to residentially zoned property
- Uses administrative review process
    - No public hearing or administrative appeal if standards are met.
- Relies on clear, objective approval standards
- Ensures long-term enforceability through recording

Chapter 17.70 Major Subdivisions
- Improved clarity and modernized approach
    - Clear thresholds, timelines, review authority and extension rules
- Required for creation of 10 or more lots
- Strong alignment with housing and land division reform
- Stronger alignment with adopted city standards

Chapter 17.80 Binding Site Plans
- Improved clarity and modernized approach
    - Clear thresholds, timelines, review authority and extension rules
- Updated statutory (RCW) references
- Streamlined approval authority
- Simplified application and plan requirements
- Integrates BSPs with final plats (Chapter 17.90) and the subdivision framework, ensuring coherent land division regulation.

Chapter 17.90 Final Plats and Site Plans
- Improved clarity and modernized approach

    - Clear rules for modifications, bonding, and maintenance; unified procedures for all final approvals.
- Covers final plats for minor, major, unit lot subdivisions and final binding site plans
- Updated Recording Requirements

Chapter 17.100 Vacation and Alteration

- Broader Applicability
    - New code includes short plats, unit lot subdivisions, in addition to final plats and BSPs.
- More Detailed & Modernized Applications
    - Explicit requirements for partial vacations/alterations to show they don't violate prior approvals.
    - Alteration applications require a document showing proposed changes.
- Recording Standardization
    - New code standardizes naming, notes, and record-keeping, ensuring transparency and traceability in county records.
- Consistency with RCW
    - New code references RCW 58.17.212/215 and SMC 20.01 consistently, aligning Sequim's process with state law and quasi-judicial procedures.

Chapter 17.110 Phased Developments

- Significant simplification and streamlining
- Phasing is more incorporated as part of the underlying approval
- Updated eligibility thresholds
    - Applies to all major subdivisions and binding site plans regardless of size
- Focus on functional content
- Direct access, stub-outs or easements to neighboring properties are required
- Separated from development agreements

Draft Chapter 18.21 Supplemental Housing Requirements

The proposed Draft Chapter 18.21 Supplemental Housing Requirements includes a number required state legislative updates enacted that directly relate to housing provision.

Staff considered the impact of adopting the proposed Title 17 rewrite and decided to propose Chapter 18.21 concurrent with the proposed land division standards in order to maintain the same level of procedural clarity for a variety of uses that the state is either requiring or encouraging cities to facilitate. This includes various residential use types such as affordable housing projects, supportive and transitional housing, co-living, emergency housing/shelters and more. These uses have been defined and included in a supplemental zoning table to meet the state's requirements.

In addition, Draft Chapter 18.21 proposes affordable housing exceptions. This is not a requirement but is authorized by state law and is seen as a way to remove barriers for low-incoming housing in Sequim. Through the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, the City was allocated approximately 1,000 affordable housing units (under 50% AMI), and these provisions may assist the provision of affordable/low income units.

The key takeaways from this new chapter are as follows:

- Consolidates multiple housing bills into one place
    - Designed to supersede conflicting code provisions elsewhere in the SMC
- Residential use permissions are modernized to reduce discretionary interpretation and aligns with state requirements
- Supportive, transitional and emergency housing are treated as residential uses
    - Density is capped by the underlying zone
    - Zoning relief provided by affordable housing exceptions section
- Includes new housing within existing buildings state requirement
- Definitions are updated to be aligned with RCWs
- Parking requirements for residential uses are updated to meet state requirements
- ADU regulations are updated to meet state requirements
- Affordable housing exceptions included to promote low income housing
- Temporary emergency housing on religious properties now has a process per state requirements
- Chapter functions as a coordinated housing toolbox

18.21.010 Purpose

- Establishes this chapter as a state-implementation and housing-enabling chapter
- Signals legislative intent to remove barriers, resolve conflicts, and comply with multiple RCWs
- Provides authorities for later flexibility (parking reductions, density allowances, exceptions)

18.21.020 Residential Use Table

- Centralizes how state-protected housing types are treated across zones
- Clarifies where uses are permitted outright, require conditional use permits, or are prohibited
- Avoids treating supportive, emergency, or group housing as institutional uses

18.21.030 Definitions

- Provides precise definitions for key housing terms, especially those recently updated by state legislature
- Aligns with RCWs

18.21.040 Residential Parking Requirements

- Modernizes parking standards (stall size, surfacing, tandem parking)
- Eliminates or reduces parking for housing types where state law discourages parking mandates

18.21.050 Accessory Dwelling Units

- Allows two ADUs per lot consistent with state mandates
- Removes owner-occupancy, frontage improvement, and excessive parking requirements
- Explicitly allows ADUs to be sold, condominiumized, or unit-lot subdivided – independent of the primary use

18.21.060 Affordable Housing Exceptions

- Creates a clear, codified pathway to waive development standards when affordability is provided
- Requires findings and long-term affordability covenants
- Applies flexibility for specific affordable housing providers

18.21.070 Temporary Housing on Religious Properties

- Authorizes temporary housing as an allowed use on religiously owned properties per state requirements
- Applies operational, health, and safety standards without over-regulation

18.21.080 Density Bonus for Housing on Religious Property

- Affordable housing on religious property is eligible for a density bonus of up to 25 percent
- Additional exceptions beyond density bonuses would be covered by 18.21.060

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND TIMELINE

The City is committed to providing multiple opportunities for the public to engage throughout the process. The City will take advantage of various modes of communication to inform the public and encourage their participation.

• Website: The City's Community and Economic Development (PED) Department webpage will house a Development Code Update where interested citizens and community members may visit for status updates, draft documents, official notices, minutes, and project information. This webpage will be the primary repository of all information related to the process: Development Code Updates | Sequim, WA - Official Website

• Comment: Interested citizens are encouraged to provide comments to the City by letter, email or fax. All comments will be forwarded to the Sequim Planning Commission and City Council. Written comments can be submitted via email at dced@sequimwa.gov or mailed/dropped off to 152 W Cedar Street, Sequim WA 98382.

• Attend: Interested citizens are encouraged to attend and provide verbal comments to the City at the Planning Commission and/or City Council meetings and public hearings.

Title 17 Land Division and Chapter 18.21 Housing Focused Code Amendments Anticipated Schedule	
January 2, 2026	Public Release of Draft Title 17 Land Division
January 6, 2026	Planning Commission Meeting – Draft Title 17
January 20, 2026	Planning Commission Meeting – Draft Title 17
January 22, 2026	Developers' Forum
January 23, 2026 (or earlier)	Public Release Draft Chapter 18.21 Housing Focused
January 27, 2026	Special Planning Commission Meeting – Title 17 if needed
February 3, 2026	Planning Commission Meeting – Chapter 18.21 Housing Focused
February 10, 2026	Special Planning Commission Meeting – Chapter 18.21 if needed
February 17, 2026	Planning Commission Public Hearing – Title 17 and Chapter 18.21
March 9, 2026	City Council Work Session: PC Recommended Title 17 and Chapter 18.21
March 23, 2026	City Council Public Hearing – Draft Title 17 and Chapter 18.21 (work session before hearing if needed/desired)