



## Subdivisions

The Portage County Planning Commission approves divisions and subdivisions of land in the unincorporated areas (townships) of Portage County. Individual townships' zoning regulations determine lot area, width, and frontage requirements as well as information specific to building. Contact the zoning inspectors for details.

For complete information about subdividing property, a copy of the **Portage County Subdivision Regulations** is available on the website:

<http://www.co.portage.oh.us/planningcommission.htm>.

Divisions or subdivisions of land fall under 4 basic types of review process by the Regional Planning Commission. Below is a brief explanation of each type of division/subdivision, but the explanations are not exhaustive and many other factors can be involved in the review process. For more information on specific divisions or subdivisions call 330-297-3613.

### 1) Exemptions:

When creating parcels over 5 acres or exchanging small pieces of property between adjoining owners\*, bring a copy of the survey and deed(s) with new legal descriptions for an approval stamp. Deed(s) can be stamped immediately when brought in to Regional Planning's office.

*\* Pieces of property over 1 acre in non-sewered areas or and over 4800 sq. ft. in sewerred areas must be combined with the new owner's property.*

### 2) Minor subdivisions:

A subdivision of land involving less than 5 parcels, any one of which is less than 5 acres, is a minor subdivision. Approvals for septic systems (Health Department) and central sewer (Water Resources) are required. All parcels must meet zoning requirements and the survey must have a zoning inspector's signature. A minor subdivision may take up to 7 working days to review. Applications are available online or from Regional Planning's offices.

### 3) Replats:

Changing lot lines, combining lots, or adding land to lots in an existing platted subdivision must be done with a replat. See **Subdivision Regulations** for requirements, Sections 315-323. Replats have a 30-day review process. Applications are available online or from Regional Planning's offices.

### 4) Major Subdivisions or Plats:

A subdivision of land involving more than 5 lots and/or construction of roads to serve more than one lot is a major subdivision. **Preliminary Plans** are encouraged as the initial step in creating a major subdivision. See **Subdivision Regulations** for requirements, Sections 301-305. Applications for Preliminary Plans and for Plats are available online or from Regional Planning's offices.



## Subdivision FAQs

Subdividing land can be a complicated process due to the many ways it is approached and the regulations that govern the process. Local surveyors are usually familiar with local regulations and can make the process easier.

Please see the **Portage County Regional Planning Commission's** website for complete information: <http://www.co.portage.oh.us/planningcommission.htm>. or call our offices (330-297-3613) for help.

### ***1. Where do I start if I want to split my property?***

A call or visit to the Regional Planning Commission offices is the best place to start. A copy of the Tax Map showing your property helps the discussion. Tax Maps (2009) are available online at [http://www.co.portage.oh.us/GIS/Parcel\\_PDFs/](http://www.co.portage.oh.us/GIS/Parcel_PDFs/) or can be purchased at the Tax Map Department on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Portage County Administration Building, 449 S. Meridian St., Ravenna, Ohio.

A discussion with the local Zoning Inspector about minimum lot size, frontage, and proposed use of the land is also encouraged.

### ***2. Why do I need Regional Planning's approval for a lot split?***

The **Ohio Revised Code** gives authority to a Regional Planning Commission to administer regulations governing the subdivision of property when a county has adopted subdivision regulations as Portage County has done.

### ***3. What departments or agencies are involved in a subdivision of land?***

Prior to and during the review process of a simple parcel subdivision, the following offices are involved:

- Local township Zoning Inspector
- Portage County Regional Planning Commission
- Portage County Board of Health if septic systems are involved
- Portage County Water Resources if central sewer is available
- Tax Map Department
- Auditor's and Recorder's offices are involved when the subdivision is put to record

### ***4. How long does it take for a subdivision to be approved?***

That depends on the type of division or subdivision of land. The **Ohio Revised Code** specifies the length of the review process.

- The simplest divisions, exemptions, can be processed when they are brought in to Regional Planning's office.
- Subdivisions of less than 5 parcels can be processed in 7 working days after a complete application is submitted to Regional Planning.



- Changes to lots within a platted subdivision or new major subdivisions take 30 days or longer.

**5. Why does it take so long to get a subdivision approved?**

The **Ohio Revised Code** specifies the length of the review processes for subdivisions. All offices involved do their best to assure the new property being created meets all required standards in order to avoid problems when the time comes to sell a parcel of land or to construct a home or business on a new lot. Septic approvals can take time. The Health Department should be contacted about this process.

**6. How does a new lot or parcel get created?**

After a lot or parcel is surveyed and receives the appropriate approvals, it goes to record at the Portage County Recorder's Office in one of two ways:

1. If the parcel is not in a platted subdivision it goes to record with a legal description, which is included in the deed. The original survey drawing is kept by the Tax Map Department.
2. If the new lot is in a platted subdivision, it goes to record as a plat map, not with a legal description. The County Engineer keeps the original plat and Tax Map keeps a copy of the recorded plat.

Lots and parcels are not created until they are processed by the Auditor's offices for tax purposes and put to record at the Recorder's Office.

**7. Why can't I create a lot that does not meet current standards if I don't want to build anything on it?**

Lots that do not meet zoning regulations present problems for townships and for future landowners. While a substandard lot can make sense in terms of the current owners and the current situation, owners and situations change, leaving difficult property circumstances for those who follow. All offices involved in the subdivision of land want to create pieces of property that allow both current owners and future owners the best opportunity to use the land. To assure optimal use of the land now and in the future, zoning and subdivision regulations must be followed.

**8. What if I want to create a lot or parcel that does not meet zoning standards or subdivision regulations?**

For lots that do not meet zoning standards, townships have Boards of Zoning Appeals to conduct *variance* hearings to decide whether to relax requirements in specific situations. A landowner may also need to apply for a variance from the **Portage County Subdivision Regulations** if they want to create a lot that does not meet *county* regulations. Financial hardships cannot be the sole purpose for a variance. Please call the township zoning inspector or Regional Planning's offices for information about variances. A variance takes 30 days to review and must be submitted 30 days before the monthly Planning Commission meeting.



**9. Why can't I create a landlocked parcel or parcel with no frontage if I own adjoining land that has road frontage?**

Zoning and subdivision regulations do not allow a parcel of land to be created without frontage even if there is adjoining land in the same ownership with frontage because either piece of land can be transferred to another owner at any time, eliminating that adjacency.

**10. Can Regional Planning approve a lot split that does not meet current zoning standards?**

Regional Planning makes every effort to have all new parcels of land meet zoning standards.

**11. What if my neighbor and I want to swap a piece of property?**

When property is being exchanged between adjoining landowners, the exchange process is not defined as a subdivision by the **Ohio Revised Code** and it is not subject to subdivision regulations. However the exchange *cannot create a new building lot*. Therefore, the Regional Planning Commission has a policy that defines building lots as follows:

1. In areas with central sewers, any lot *greater than 4800 square feet* is a building lot.
2. In areas with septic systems, a building lot is defined as any lot *1 acre or larger*.

If a new building lot *is* created during an exchange of land between adjoining landowners, the piece being exchanged must be combined with the receiving landowners' property.