Legal lot

A “Legal Lot” is a parcel of land that has been created in accordance with the subdivision, short subdivision, or other land segregation laws in existence at the time that the lot was created. The building and land use requirements for legal lots are organized according to the way the lots were created or divided, by the date, and by other relevant criteria. Note that while a “Tax Parcel” is usually also considered a Legal Lot, there are circumstances in which a Tax Parcel is not considered a Legal Lot.

Know Before You Build

Before a property owner can build or subdivide, a lot must meet the requirements of a legal lot as defined by King County Code, Title 19A, Land Segregation. Proof of a legal lot is required before a permit application can be accepted. Although a parcel may be determined to be a legal lot, other requirements will apply, including, but are not limited to, applicable zoning, health, and building site criteria, as well as compliance with all land use ordinances.

Proof of a Legal Lot

Proof of a Legal Lot is the responsibility of the person claiming legal lot status. Acceptable proof presented to the King County Department of Local Services, Permitting Division (Permitting) may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following documents:

- Recorded copy of the plat or short plat
- A copy of the King County approval for unrecorded subdivisions of four or fewer lots
- A deed, or historical tax record dated prior to October 1, 1972
- A letter or notice from King County previously recognizing a parcel as a legal lot
- Other reliable documentation that clearly demonstrates that a parcel satisfies the requirements of the King County Code Title 19A.08.070, Determining and maintaining legal status of a lot.
Other Documentation

A request for legal lot status of a lot(s) created in a plat recorded prior to June 9, 1937 will also require submittal of proof that indicates that each individual lot was either conveyed or taxed separately and that they have been provided with approved sewage disposal, water, or roads.

Current tax statements and records, assessor maps, survey maps or other historical records alone typically are not sufficient proof of a legal lot, except where these records satisfy the requirements of King County Code Title 19A, Land Segregation for the recognition of a legally created lot.

Locating Documentation

The information that property owners need to prove legal lot status generally is not available at the Permitting office. Resources include:

- **All recorded documents, including plats, short plats, surveys, condominiums, deeds, easements** (online records available)

  King County Department of Executive Services, [Records and Licensing Services Division](#)
  311 Administration Building
  500 - 4th Avenue
  Seattle, WA  98104
  206-263-2880
  Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- **Unrecorded short plats, on microfilm**

  Department of Local Services, [Permitting Division](#)
  35030 SE Douglas Street, Suite 210
  Snoqualmie, WA  98065-9266
  206-296-6600
  7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. (Closed Wednesday.)
  Please call ahead to review records.

- **Assessor's maps, unrecorded plats, tax history from 1973-present, lot areas** (online records available)

  King County [Department of Assessments](#)
  709 Administration Building
  500 - 4th Avenue
  Seattle, WA  98104
  206-296-7300
  Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., except Thursday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Legal Lot, continued

Assessor’s tax records from approximately 1937-1973
Washington State, Puget Sound Regional Archives Office
Pritchard-Fleming Building on Bellevue Collage Campus
3000 Landerholm Circle SE, Building N (Mail Stop N-100)
Bellevue, WA  98007-6484
425-564-3940
Wednesday - Friday, for in-person research, by appointment only

Title reports, abstract of title
Title Insurance Companies

Additional Resources

King County Code, Title 19A, Land Segregation

Department of Local Services, Permitting Division

Property Research Guide

Property Research & Maps

Legal Lot Determination: Application

King County Green Building Handbook