SUBDIVISIONS:
UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

STEVE LEHMAN AICP
Prairie dog developers
“Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die.”

DANIEL BURNHAM
Father of City Planning
SUBDIVISIONS

- DEFINITION OF SUBDIVISION
- SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS
- DESIGN STANDARDS
- PROCESSING
"Subdivision" means any land that is divided, re-subdivided or proposed to be divided into two or more lots, parcels, sites, units, plots, or other division of land .......
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

- ORIGIN
- DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS
- ADVANTAGES

"I GUESS THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS DIDN'T CALL FOR A WIDE ENOUGH CUL-DE-SAC."
Early platting and subdivision regulations were to govern the recording of plats to ensure that proper land records were made when land was described and sold.

With the publication of the Standard City Planning Enabling Act in 1928, by the U.S. Department of Commerce, local governments were able to regulate subdivision development through State adoption of enabling legislation.
With the adoption of enabling legislation, regulations began to evolve into development controls:

- Design standards for lots and blocks.
- Incorporation of design and construction standards of subdivision improvements.
- Many Cities began to require public facilities — including dedication requirements.
- Adequate public facilities test.
- Impact fees.
ADVANTAGES

- Communities want liveable neighborhoods that are not prone to deterioration.

- Existing residents do not want adverse effects from development near their neighborhood.

- Future residents want a variety of housing options from which to choose and an attractive environment in which to live.

- Developers want flexibility to provide the housing they conceive as being marketable.
LIVEABLE NEIGHBORHOODS NOT PRONE TO DETERIORATION

Building Materials

Public Improvements

  Street Lighting
  Storm Drain Facilities
  Well Maintained ROW

Landscaping
POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS FROM ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

Existing vs. New Subdivision Development

Existing Public Facilities
FUTURE RESIDENTS WANT A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS.

Senior Condominiums

Townhomes
PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY FOR DEVELOPERS TO MARKET A VARIETY OF HOUSING
DESIGN STANDARDS

- Design standards provide the specific guidelines for the design of the physical improvements in the subdivision. Standards are developed for the purpose of protecting the public health and safety, preserving natural resources, and achieving community aesthetic goals.

- Planning and Zoning Administration in Utah – Third Edition
CONSIDERATIONS

- OVERALL SUBDIVISION DESIGN
- STREET DESIGN & PATTERNS
  - Good vs. Bad
  - Residential Street Hierarchy
- STREET IMPROVEMENTS
- UTILITIES
- LOT DESIGN
- SENSITIVE LANDS
OVERALL DESIGN

- To be effective, the overall design should be integrated with other local government plans, policies and ordinances.

- The design should take into account the surrounding land uses and other natural constraints that may impact the quality of the project.
STREET DESIGN

- Critical to subdivision success.
- Generally defines lot layout.
- Provide avenues for utilities.
- Cities should have a street classification system.
Street widths and patterns should be compatible with natural features.

Subdivision streets should discourage through traffic.

Public improvements should be installed to make streets safe.
STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- Curb & Gutter
- Sidewalk
- Parkstrip
- Appropriate ROW
- Street Lights
UTILITIES

- **Direct Services:**
  - Sewer
  - Water
  - Storm Drain
  - Power, Gas, Phone, etc.

- **Indirect Services:**
  - City Parks
  - Police & Fire
  - Libraries
  - Schools
Lot size and design can help establish appealing neighborhoods.

Ordinances should be flexible for challenging infill properties.

General Plan should be used to guide decisions about lot sizes and density.
LOT DESIGN

Subdivisions – Development & Regulation – Planning & Zoning Education Series
Center for Public Policy & Administration – University of Utah
Subdivision review should ensure that new development is integrated into the natural environment.
SENSITIVE LAND STUDIES

- **Subsurface Reports**
  - Groundwater
  - Environmental

- **Geologic Reports**
  - Natural Hazards
  - Man Made Hazards

- **Wetland Reports**
SUBDIVISION PROCESS

- Example Flow Chart
- Conceptual Review
- Preliminary Plat
- Final Plat
Conceptual Review

- Fosters an informal review between the applicant and municipality.
Preliminary Plat

- Most important step in the process.
- Standards and regulations are applied.
- Engineering and other agency reviews are conducted.
- Planning Commission review.
The final plat should be drawn to reflect any changes made by the Planning Commission, or reviewing agencies during the preliminary process.

- Plan and Profiles.
- Final Approval.