



# Walla Walla County Community Development Department

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Date: June 29, 2022  
To: Walla Walla County Planning Commission  
From: Lauren Prentice, Community Development Director  
RE: Lot Combination Amendments to Title 16

## **Introduction**

As a result of inquiries from customers, internal review, and general direction from the Board of County Commissioners, staff has drafted amendments to Chapter 16.70, Boundary Line Adjustments, that would establish a new, simpler process for combining two or more adjacent lots in common ownership. Currently, the combination or consolidation of lots can only be achieved via a Boundary Line Adjustment (or a plat amendment). These processes require the properties to be surveyed. Often lot combinations occur within older subdivisions that predate current regulations where lot sizes are too small to accommodate development and comply with environmental health standards. The County does not allow for structures to be built across property lines, so these boundary lines must be eliminated via a BLA application. This is an added cost and time burden beyond permitting requirements.

Staff has reviewed State regulations (which exempt all boundary line adjustments from platting requirements) and reviewed examples from other Washington jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions within the State, including Benton County, have adopted such a Lot Combination application process. The proposed Lot Combination process would still require County review (Community Development, Assessor, Surveyor) and recording of a map, but the process would be simplified. This review would be limited to the proposed elimination of a shared property line. The same BLA criteria would apply (WWCC 16.70.010 and 16.70.030).

In the case of un-platted lots, the process would provide authority to the Department to require the applicant to have legal descriptions prepared by a licensed surveyor to ensure accuracy of the new legal descriptions.

## **Attachments**

1. Proposed Amendments to WWCC 16.70 and 16.08

## AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 16.08 DEFINITIONS

### 16.08.010 Generally.

Whenever the following words and phrases appear in this title they shall be given the meaning attributed to them by this Chapter. (Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009; Ord. No. 385, § III(Exh. A, § 27), 8-30-2010)

### TERMS DEFINED

#### Lot Combination.

“Lot Combination” is a boundary line adjustment which results in the combination of lots or parcels into one parcel to be utilized as one buildable parcel.

## AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 16.70 BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS

### 16.70.010 General.

If an alteration results in any of the following it is not a boundary line adjustment:

- A. Creates any additional lot, tract, parcel, site or division;
- B. Results in a lot, tract, parcel, site or division, which contains increased density or insufficient area or dimension to meet the minimum requirements for area and dimensions as set forth in the land use and health codes and regulations;
- C. Diminishes or impairs drainage, water supply, existing sanitary sewage disposal, and access or easement for vehicles, utilities, and fire protection for any lot, tract, parcel, site, or division;
- D. Creates or diminishes any easement or deprives any parcel of access or utilities;
- E. Increases the nonconforming aspects of an existing nonconforming lot;
- F. Vacates a final plat or final short plat;
- G. Amends a condition of approval for previously platted property. (Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009; Ord. No. 385, § III(Exh. A, § 80), 8-30-2010)

### 16.70.020 Application requirements.

- A. A complete boundary line adjustment (BLA) application shall be filed with the department on forms prescribed by the director, shall be signed by the owner(s) of the property, and shall be accompanied by the following:
  1. Sheet size eighteen inches by twenty-four inches BLA map/plot plan depicting both existing boundary lines and proposed boundary line changes drawn at a scale agreed upon by the applicant and the director. The map/plot plan shall be signed and stamped by a professional land surveyor and shall

comply with the requirements of Chapter 58.09 RCW and 332-130 WAC governing minimum standards for land boundary surveys;

2. The map/plot plan shall be titled on the top of the page, in large capital letters, as follows: RECORD OF SURVEY FOR BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT.
3. The map/plot plan shall contain a signature block for the Walla Walla County director's signature of approval.
4. The map/plot plan shall contain a signature block for the auditor's certificate, as follows:

**Auditor's Certificate**

Filed for Recorded this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at the request of \_\_\_\_\_ in Volume \_\_\_\_ at Page \_\_\_\_ of Record of Survey, together with deed of conveyance recorded under Auditor's fee No. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Auditor

5. A note shall be placed on the map/plot plan that reads as follows:  

THIS BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT IS NOT A PLAT, REPLAT, OR SUBDIVISION. APPROVAL OF A BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT IS NOT A GUARANTEE THAT FUTURE PERMITS WILL BE GRANTED FOR ANY STRUCTURE OR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A LOT AFFECTED BY A BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT.
6. A free consent statement as shown below shall be inked on the map/plot plan. This shall be signed and notarized, prior to submittal, in permanent black ink, by all parties having interest in the property.  

The undersigned agree that the boundary line adjustment set forth herein is made with the free consent and in accordance with the desires of the owners

Black In Seal  
(Paper Press Seals Will Not Be Accepted)

Notary Seal

I hereby certify that the above individual(s) signed as a free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes herein mentioned.

Given under my hand and seal this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

NOTARY PUBLIC, in and for the State of Washington, residing at \_\_\_\_\_

7. A vicinity map that depicts the location of the property;
8. Legal descriptions of the revised lots, tracts, or parcels, certified by a licensed surveyor;
9. For sites one acre or less in size the location of all structures/improvements existing upon the affected lots and the distance between structure/improvements and the proposed lot/boundary lines;
10. The position of rebar and caps set at each new property corner;
11. All parcel numbers of affected lots;
12. The location of the property to quarter/quarter section;
13. The general location of any drain field;
14. The location and dimension of any easement or right-of-way existing within or adjacent to any affected lots;

15. The area and dimensions of each lot following the proposed adjustment;
16. Certification by the applicant that each resulting lot affected by the BLA has an accessible building area;
17. Acknowledgement signed by the applicant that county approval of a BLA proposal does not guarantee or imply that the subject property may be developed or subdivided, and that BLA approval may not be grounds for approval of subsequent modification or variance requests; and
18. All other information required for applications in WWCC Title 14, Development Code Administration.

B. If the proposal is a lot combination, see application requirements in Section 16.70.080.

~~B.C.~~ B. The director may establish more specific submittal standards (such as detailed plot plan specifications and number of copies required) provided such standards only constitute refinement of the items required by this section.

~~C.D.~~ C. If the BLA proposes lots that result in reduced county road frontage and/or changes in access, a review by the department of public works to verify that all lots have safe access points may be required. In such cases, the applicant shall stake approximate proposed access points and property lines along the road frontage within five days of BLA application. (Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009; Ord. No. 385, § III(Exh. A, § 81), 8-30-2010)

### **16.70.030 Criteria for approval.**

The following criteria for approval shall govern consideration of BLAs:

- A. The proposed BLA is consistent with applicable development restrictions or code requirements including but not limited to restrictions and requirements of the Walla Walla County development regulations;
- B. The proposed BLA will not detrimentally affect access, design or other public safety and welfare concerns. The evaluation of detrimental effect may include review by the health district, the department of public works, or any other agency or department with expertise;
- C. The proposed BLA will not cause boundary lines to bisect on-site sewage disposal systems, prevent adequate access to water supplies or obstruct fire lanes;
- D. The proposed BLA will not create new access, which is unsafe or detrimental to the existing road system because of sight distance, grade, road geometry or other safety concerns, as determined by the department of public works;
- E. If within an approved subdivision or short subdivision, the proposed BLA will not violate conditions of approval of that subdivision or short subdivision;
- F. The proposed BLA meets the consistency requirements of Walla Walla County development regulations;
- G. The proposed BLA will not cause any lot that conforms with lot area or lot width requirements to become substandard;
- H. The proposed BLA will not result in lots without building areas when building areas existed before the adjustment. (Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009)

## **16.70.040, 16.70.050 Reserved.**

Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 385, § III(Exh. A, §§ 82, 83, repealed former §§ 16.70.040, 16.70.050 in their entirety. Former § 16.70.040 pertained to authority to act, and former § 16.70.050 pertained to appeals procedure. Both these former sections derived from Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002; Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009.

## **16.70.060 Recording.**

- A. A.—To finalize an approved BLA, the applicant must record with the county auditor the BLA map or lot combination map within six months of approval or the approval shall be void.
1. A final BLA map or lot combination map, containing required property owner and surveyor signatures, shall be submitted for signature by the director prior to recording, along with any other documentation necessary to demonstrate that any conditions of approval imposed by the director have been met.
  2. Prior to recording, all property taxes due and owing for the affected property must be paid to the County Treasurer.
- 0.—
- B. ~~B.~~—If the BLA affects more than one property owner, a conveyance document(s) shall be recorded at the same time as the BLA survey. The conveyance document(s) shall establish ownership consistent with the approved, adjusted boundaries. When a BLA is recorded subsequent to a record of survey for the same property, the recording number of the record of survey shall be noted on the BLA map.
- C. —Immediately after recording, copies of the recorded BLA documents shall be provided to the director by the applicant. (Res. 02118, Attach. A (part), 2002)

(Ord. No. 376, § III(Exh. A), 11-16-2009; Ord. No. 385, § III(Exh. A, § 84), 8-30-2010.

## **16.70.070 Lot Combinations – applicability.**

Adjustments in conformity with Section 16.70.080 which result in the combination of lots or parcels into one parcel to be utilized as one buildable parcel shall be authorized by the director.

The purpose of a lot combination is to provide an economical way of combining two or more properties into one buildable lot. Lot combinations are legally binding and will reflect in the title history of the lot or parcel.

## **16.70.080 Lot Combinations – application requirements and criteria.**

- A. Applications for a lot combination shall be submitted to the director and include.
1. The parcel number(s) of the effected parcel(s).
  2. Platted lots: Provide a copy of the recorded plat.
  3. Un-platted lots: Provide existing and proposed legal descriptions. The director may require the legal descriptions be prepared by a licensed land surveyor to ensure the accuracy of the new legal descriptions.

4. A lot combination map, drawn to scale and accurately dimensioned, clearly showing the following information:

a. The proposed parcel lines for all effected lots, indicated by heavy solid lines;

b. The location of all structures existing upon the effected parcel(s);

c. The location and dimensions of any drain field, wellhead protection area, easement or right-of-way existing within or adjacent to any effected parcel(s); and

d. The area and dimensions of each parcel following the proposed combination

e. All other information required for applications in WWCC Title 14, Development Code Administration.

B. The director shall forward the proposed lot combination to the County Assessor's Office and the County Surveyor for review. Other agencies will be contacted by the director if determined to be necessary to the review of the lot combination.

A.C. No lot combination may be approved unless the director finds compliance with the BLA criteria in 16.70.010 and 16.70.030.