



**CRANBERRY**  
• TOWNSHIP •

Planning & Development  
Services

Subdivision/Land Development/  
Conditional Use

**GUIDELINES**



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The Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use process in Cranberry Township may seem extensive. Applications, submission deadlines, meetings, and various code requirements make it possible to omit necessary information. Cranberry Township realizes these challenges and has designed this pamphlet to reference throughout the process.

The Cranberry Township Subdivision/Land Development Ordinance, Chapter 22 and the Cranberry Township Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 27, state that a LAND DEVELOPMENT is defined as the following:

- 1) The IMPROVEMENT of one lot or two or more contiguous LOTS, tracts or parcels of land for any purpose involving:
  - a) A group of two or more residential or nonresidential BUILDINGS, whether proposed initially or cumulatively, or a single nonresidential BUILDING on a LOT or LOTS regardless of the number of occupants or tenure; or
  - b) The division or allocation of land or space, whether initially or cumulatively between or among two or more existing or prospective occupants by means of, or for the purpose of streets, COMMON AREAS, leaseholds, condominiums, BUILDING groups or other features.
- 2) A SUBDIVISION of land.

The Land Development definition includes all new non-residential DEVELOPMENT or IMPROVEMENTS, and any residential or non-residential lot line additions, deletions, revisions, or alterations of any kind. If there are any questions of whether or not this definition applies to your situation, contact Cranberry Township Planning & Development Services.

Upon determining that you must apply for the Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use process, the first step is to decide if your project is feasible given the current zoning, land development and building code regulations. Cranberry Township is divided into 12 different zoning districts, each with their own set of standards. A map of these zoning districts and boundaries as well as a code book of their standards (Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 27) will be a helpful reference and may be purchased at the Customer Service Center or viewed on the Township web page at [www.cranberrytownship.org](http://www.cranberrytownship.org). Some preliminary questions that should be addressed at this time may include:

- Is the use allowed in the zoning district?
- Is there enough land/acreage to meet the parking, setback, and green space requirements?
- What kind of traffic, engineering, or stormwater issue may arise given my proposed development?
- Is the proposed use a “use by right” or a “conditional use” as set forth by Cranberry

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Township’s Zoning Ordinance?

What building code concerns will arise?

Do Transportation Impact Fees apply?

These are just a few of the many questions that should be addressed before any application for Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use is submitted for review.

***FOUR STEPS TO SUBDIVISION/LAND DEVELOPMENT/CONDITIONAL USE***

The four (4) steps to Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use approval are as follows:

**I. Preliminary meeting with Planning & Development Services staff**

Contact Planning & Development Services for a preliminary meeting to discuss any questions or concerns that may need to be addressed.

The Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use process is separated into a preliminary (sometimes called a “Master Plan”), and a final approval. Depending on the scope of the improvements and the use and size of a proposed Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use, it may be a requirement to submit a preliminary application for an overall “Master Plan,” or phase development for large or phased projects.

When separate preliminary and final approvals are required, the applicant must first submit a preliminary subdivision/land development application. You may want to meet with staff for a determination of whether preliminary and final approvals can be done together or separately. The Planning Advisory Commission and Board of Supervisors will review this submission for preliminary approval. Upon preliminary approval, the applicant would then submit an application and plans for final approval consideration. This submission may include the entire project or individual phases. Again, both the Planning Advisory Commission and Board of Supervisors would review and grant their approval of these plans.

While Cranberry Township strictly adheres to the Township codes and standards, we realize that it may be difficult for your Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use to comply with them all. It is best to determine potential issues before the land development process begins, avoiding delays during the process. There are two (2) approaches in dealing with modifications/waivers or variances to certain code standards. These include:

The Modification/Waiver request process:

The modification/waiver request process is for use by an applicant through the Subdivision/Land Development Ordinance or the Zoning “Conditional Use” process. The modification/waiver process is used when an applicant would like to obtain a modification or waiver from a provision of the Township ordinances. This is done by proposing something that is equal to or better than strict conformance with Township requirements. The applicant is required to submit a written request for a modification/waiver with a written justification to demonstrate that what is proposed on the plan is equal to or better than the development standard. This must be done while still meeting the overall intent and objectives of the Township’s ordinances.

The Zoning Variance application:

While it is difficult to obtain, it may be possible to be granted a zoning variance for an ordinance provision that cannot be met. This is a separate application process. In order to be considered for a variance, an application must be made to the Zoning Hearing Board. The Zoning Hearing Board meets the third Monday of the month (if warranted), and an application to appear on the agenda must be made a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. An applicant must show the Zoning Hearing Board that a hardship precludes them from complying with Township requirements. The Municipalities Planning Code (Pennsylvania Act 247) and the Township Zoning Ordinance define the parameters of what is considered a legal or applicable hardship.

**II. Planning Advisory Commission**

After a preliminary meeting with the staff, you may be ready to submit applications for Subdivision/ Land Development/Conditional Use (if applicable). In order to be considered for review by the Planning Advisory Commission, an application for Subdivision/Land Development and/or Conditional Use shall be submitted at least twenty (20) working days in advance of their next meeting. A complete list of what needs to be included with an application, as well as what type of approval you are seeking, is outlined in the Subdivision/Land Development and Zoning Ordinances. These ordinances may be viewed on the Township Web Page at [www.cranberrytownship.org](http://www.cranberrytownship.org). Please contact Planning & Development Services if you have any questions after review of the submission requirements.

Upon the Township’s receipt of an application, the information is reviewed for completeness by the Planning & Development Services staff. If the application is found to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing regarding any deficiencies and must resubmit with a complete application before the next applicable submission date. Once a completed application has been received, it

will be reviewed by the Planning & Development Services staff as well as the Township Engineer, Township Traffic Consultant, and the Township Hydrologist for compliance with Township standards. Any minor deficiencies or outstanding issues will be noted and a development report prepared. Depending on the significance of issues or outstanding items, the application may or may not be placed on the Planning Advisory Commission’s Agenda for review. If there are significant issues or numerous outstanding items, the applicant will be contacted for a meeting to discuss the plan submittal and the various changes that need to be made.

**Fast Track Option:**

Submittals for approval that meet the following criteria may be “Fast Tracked” through the approval process. The “Fast Track” process may be for the following;

- (1) Subdivision applications of less than five (5) lots;
- (2) Revised subdivision applications;
- (3) Subdivision and land development applications that meet the requirements of Section 22-301.9 of Chapter 22, Subdivision and Land Development, of the Cranberry Township Code of Ordinances;
- (4) Revised conditional use applications; and
- (5) Revised tentative and final planned residential development applications, to which the primary revisions are adjustments of lot lines, easements, and rights of ways;

The “Fast Track” process consists of a code compliance review by Staff. Should the plan be found to be code compliant, the plan will be moved on to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval at the Agenda and/or Regular meetings. All other conditions of approval and requirements of Township Ordinances still apply.

The Planning Advisory Commission has four (4) review and recommendation options:

- 1. They can recommend the plans “as is” to the Board of Supervisors for approval. In this case, no changes will need to be made before it is reviewed by the Board of Supervisors.
- 2. They can recommend the plans be approved conditionally upon resolution of a list of outstanding items. These items must be satisfactorily resolved before it can be reviewed and considered by the Board of Supervisors.

- 3. They can request additional or revised information be submitted and continue the review until a future Planning Advisory Commission meeting.
- 4. They can recommend the denial of the plans if they do not meet Township ordinances.

In any of these cases, the applicant is notified in writing of the decision by the Planning Advisory Commission.

**III. Board of Supervisors**

After Planning Advisory Commission recommendation, the applicant shall revise their plan as necessary and resubmit two weeks prior to the next Board of Supervisors meeting. A second staff review and report shall be completed, and the subdivision/land development will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for review. At this time, any conditional use application will be considered and the meeting will be advertised for public comment before the Board of Supervisors.

The Board of Supervisors have the same decision options as the Planning Advisory Commission, however, their approval or decision is final and marks the end of the Subdivision/Land Development/Conditional Use approval process. Again, the applicant will be notified in writing of the decision by the Board of Supervisors.

NOTE: For phased projects or Subdivision/Land Developments requiring separate preliminary and final approval, the above two (2) steps (Planning Advisory Commission and Board of Supervisors) would be repeated once for each approval. The Conditional Use hearing will only be heard once, which is at the preliminary stage.

The developer must submit seven (7) full size sets of plans, with a CD (.pdf and .dwg formats), which address all outstanding comments from the Resolution. These plans are what are termed “As Per Resolution” sets of plans.

**IV. Bonding, Developer’s Agreements, Grading and Building Permits**

With the recommendations and approvals in place, it is time to finalize any outstanding agreements, documents, cost estimates and/or other conditions of approval.

**Bonding**

In order to guarantee that any proposed development is completed to the standards

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approved by the Board of Supervisors, all improvements are bonded in advance. The developer must estimate the amount of money it will take to complete all of the site improvements for the project (site improvements are defined as all required improvements, including sewer & water lines, but not including the building). This estimate is reviewed by the Township, and once approved, the developer is required to submit a bond for the approved amount. Upon satisfactory completion of the development, the bond will be released.

**Developer’s Agreement**

The bonding requirements, as well as other development guidelines and regulations, are outlined in a Developer’s Agreement. This agreement ensures that all development regulations will be followed. Two copies will be signed by both the developer and the Township.

**Recording Mylars**

After the Developer’s Agreements have been signed, bonding has been secured, and the As Per Resolution sets of plans have been approved, the applicant will then submit to the Township three (3) mylars of the final approved plans. These mylars shall be signed by all parties *except* any Township blocks and the Recorder of Deeds block. After the Township records these mylars, one (1) will be left at the Butler County Recorder of Deeds, one (1) will be kept on file at the Township, and one (1) will be given back to the applicant.

**Grading Permit**

A separate permit is also required specifically for site grading. Chapter 17 regulates grading, filling, excavation, and earth moving activities. A grading permit application and additional information can be obtained at the Customer Service Center or from a member of the Planning & Development Services staff or on the web site at [www.cranberytownship.org](http://www.cranberytownship.org).

**Building Permit**

Once the proper approvals, agreements, bonding, and other conditions of approval are satisfied, it is time to apply for building permits. Residential building permits generally take 10 business days to review and process. Applicants will be notified when a permit has been processed and what fees apply. Nonresidential building permits can be expected to take longer for review. The process generally can take up to 20 working days. Upon satisfactory review, a nonresidential building permit will be issued.

Once all documents are completed, applications submitted, and permits issued, construction on your new development may begin. Periodic inspections are required during construction and are outlined in the building permit process.

Additional information may be obtained by viewing the Township web page at

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www.cranberrytownship.org or by contacting Cranberry Township Planning & Development Services. We are located at 2525 Rochester Road, Suite 400, in the Cranberry Township Municipal Center and are open from 7:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. The following people can be reached by e-mail or by dialing (724) 776-4806 and their respective extensions, and will be able to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have:

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