



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Harford County  
Health Department**

**Environmental Health  
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## **ABBREVIATED PROCESS**

### **Why Final Plats are Revised**

If you are planning to construct a house, addition, garage, pool, or some other accessory structure on your property that is serviced or will be serviced by a septic system (on-site disposal system {OSDS}), you may have been informed by the Harford County Health Department (HCHD) or the Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning (HCP&Z) that you must first revise the septic reserve area (SRA) on your property by re-recording the record plat. This is because the proposed construction either extends into the SRA or will be too close to the SRA as presently recorded. The HCHD has laws and regulations that forbid the construction or the placement of a structure within the SRA and also limits how close a house or accessory structure can be constructed to the SRA. You may also desire to change a SRA configuration to accommodate a proposed house site that is different than the one that was proposed on the approved preliminary plan.

In addition, many people desire to reduce the size of the SRA as presently recorded to provide greater flexibility for future construction activities on their property. The new minimum SRA (10,000 sq. ft.) requirements were enacted August 15, 2014. See Note on page 2 for conditions.

Final plats are also revised through the abbreviated process when property lines are altered, lots are combined, or easements are added.

### **How to Begin the Process**

First you must secure the services of a licensed land surveyor to prepare an Abbreviated Process Plan. Typically submittal of a plan with the following items is sufficient for the HCHD review.

1. Any existing and proposed structure (dwelling, shed, garage, pool, deck, etc.).
2. Any existing or proposed driveway, paved or disturbed area.
3. Any existing or proposed well.
4. Any existing or proposed OSDS.
5. The configuration of the current SRA.
6. The configuration of the proposed SRA.
7. Any neighboring well, OSDS or SRA within 100 feet of the property.
8. Soil type(s).
9. Contours in a minimum of 5 ft. intervals. Many plans will required contours in 2 ft. intervals.
10. All field located soil percolation test sites (old & new test sites).
11. Any existing or required easement, right-of-way, or any other designated area including but not limited to Critical area, flood plain, Natural Resources Area, etc.

Other reviewing agencies may have other requirements that will be necessary to complete our review or secure approval from Harford County. If your surveyor has any questions, your surveyor should consult with the HCP&Z.

Once the plan is prepared, the licensed surveyor will submit the plan to the Bureau of Environmental Health, Resource Protection Division of the HCHD for review and comment.

The HCHD will review the submitted plan to determine the following:

1. If the revision as proposed is acceptable. (Some SRAs cannot be revised.)
2. Are soil percolation tests necessary to determine if the proposed revised area is satisfactory? Most SRA reductions from 40,000 sq. ft. to 10,000 sq. ft. will require additional soil percolation testing. There is a percolation test application fee that is the responsibility of the applicant. (See HCHD web-site Perc Testing.)
3. If the submitted revision cannot be approved as proposed, what options are available, if any, that could be considered or discussed with you and/or your surveyor (i.e. smaller structure, different location, etc.).

If the final plat revision cannot be approved, or a soil percolation test is required, the HCHD will notify your surveyor. Please keep in mind that if percolation tests are required, depending on soil mapping unit(s) or site conditions, the soil percolation tests may have to be conducted during the wet season testing period which typically occurs between February 1<sup>st</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. This could cause delays in the approval of your project or release of a building permit. Once the revision can be approved, the HCHD will submit an approval letter to the surveyor and the HCP&Z.

**Please Note:** A reduction of the SRA below 20,000 sq. ft. will require the consultant to provide a site plan showing an initial OSDS (trench length & spacing) layout design and three (3) future repair OSDS based on a four (4) bedroom house. The installation of a Best Available Technology (BAT) tank will be required as part of the process and must be installed prior to final plat approval.

A reduction of the SRA to  $\geq$  20,000 sq. ft. will not trigger the installation of a BAT unit.

Any existing OSDS and/or well must be in good repair and deemed safe and adequate based on existing laws, regulations and guidelines.

### **Preparation of the Revised Final Plat via an Abbreviated Blueprint**

Once the Abbreviated Process Plan has been approved, the final plat or mylar may be submitted to the HCP&Z. The submitted final plat will then circulate through the various approving agencies for signature. The HCHD is the first stop in the circulation and signature process. The final plat must be recorded in the court house prior to the HCHD issuance of any building permits.