

DOT&PF Northern Region
Subdivision Plat & Section Line Easement Vacation Review Procedures

1. Subdivision Plat Review: This task has traditionally been a function of the Regional Planning Section. A plat is not reviewed for adherence to technical standards, as that is the jurisdiction of the local platting authority. The Department's responsibility is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the travelling public. Preliminary plat reviews primarily focus on increased traffic impacts, provision of adequate and safe access to the highway facility and consideration of long-range transportation needs. The Regional Planning section's continuing involvement with community development organizations and local governments as well as their knowledge of transportation engineering requirements make them particularly well suited to perform plat reviews. Planning consults with other regional staff as a plat review warrants. Generally, most plat reviews can be completed within the Planning section.

2. Section Line Vacation Review: The approval process for a section line vacation requires approval of the platting authority, approval by Department of Natural Resources and approval by DOT&PF. All three entities must sign the plat to complete the process. Because of this process, DOT&PF has a unilateral veto authority over all section line easement vacations. In the Northern Region all requests and preliminary plats for section line easement vacations are submitted to our Planning section for review. After the platting authority has approved the vacation, the final drawing is forwarded to DOT&PF for two signatures. If the review planner's comments have been adequately addressed and the Department does not object to the vacation, the Chief of Planning will sign a certificate recommending that the Commissioner approve the vacation. The drawing is then forwarded for signature to our Regional Director who has authority to sign on behalf of the Commissioner.

Several years ago the approval process had the Right of Way Chief recommending approval to the Regional Director rather than the Planning Chief. This process was changed as Planning was the lead section for plat reviews and was therefore in the best position to assure that the Department's comments had been addressed.

It appears that the plat review process in the Northern Region is working well. The plat review task is an operations/overhead task for which the Planning section is funded to perform. If the task were to be transferred to another section, the issues of additional resources and funding would have to be addressed.