



## Comprehensive Lot Grading Plans Bulletin 2011-005-BG October 28, 2011

To meet the relevant sections of the District's Subdivision and Development Bylaw, Watercourse Protection Bylaw and Building Bylaw, the Inspection Services Department introduced a new policy for comprehensive lot grading plans effective immediately.

### **COMPREHENSIVE LOT GRADING POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS**

The comprehensive lot grading plan is considered an essential service and confirmation of the design grades is required prior to the application for a building permit.

#### **Highlights:**

- Policy is meant to clarify existing practices already in place
- Tightens up requirements for urban subdivisions but relaxes some requirements for rural/suburban subdivisions.
- Only retaining walls required to create the lot or walls identified as "developer-built" walls are required to be shown on the lot grading plan. Retaining walls required for "aesthetic" purposes (landscaping needs, to facilitate specific house design items like rear level splits, raised entry, etc) are no longer required to be shown.
- Boulder walls are no longer allowed between lots in urban subdivisions and will only be accommodated on the "low side" lot for rural/suburban subdivisions.

#### **Process:**

- Comprehensive lot grading plans must incorporate the items listed in the "Comprehensive Lot Grading Plan Requirements" checklist. This is in addition to any lot grading requirements required by the Engineering Department.
- The review and acceptance process for the subdivision servicing drawings has not changed - all information is to be submitted to the Engineering Department.
- Once lot grading is complete, the subdivision's design engineer must submit a sealed copy of the as-built lot grading plan to the Building department for review and acceptance. A separate sealed copy will still need to be submitted to the Engineering department as part of the as-built drawing requirements.
- If a developer-built retaining wall is indicated on the lot grading plan, then a sealed memo from the appropriate professional confirming that the wall was built and inspected to good engineering standards must be on file with the Building Department prior to building permit application.
- All grading must comply with the accepted lot grading plan; areas of fill can be left in their natural state if it can be demonstrated that the final design grades will be met by anticipated house construction within a reasonable time frame (6 months) and will not have a negative impact on adjoining lots. Further, should these areas of fill be at the interface between the proposed development and lands that are either undevelopable or not part of this development, or contain services or catch basins, then grade levels as established under the grading plan are to be met prior to acceptance of the grading plan for permit application. Permission for this must be obtained from the Building Department and will be noted in the subdivision file.



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### SITE PLAN GUIDELINES

The site plan guidelines will help designers and builders to prepare site plans in support of their building permit applications to ensure consistent and efficient processing of permits.

#### Highlights:

- Differentiates between infill lots and lots with an as-built lot grading plan.
- All retaining walls must be shown on the site plan.
- The grades between lots are assumed to be uniformly graded. Any changes to these grades are the responsibility of the applicant proposing the change.

#### Process:

- An accepted as-built grading plan must be on file with the Building Department prior to building permit application - no exceptions.
- Revisions to the as-built grading plan are not permitted for the designated control points (corner pin elevations, building envelope corner elevations, lawn basins, etc).
- Revisions can be made to "builder-built" retaining walls shown on the lot grading plan if it can be demonstrated that the transition between lots can be made without retaining walls and the change does not negatively impact adjoining lots. Revision must be submitted to the Building department as a revision application and, if accepted, a revised lot grading plan (not a photocopy of the plan) must be submitted at the builders cost.
- All "aesthetic" walls must still comply with the retaining wall policy - changes to these walls will be subject to the regular revision process.
- Addition of any "aesthetic" walls will require a retaining wall permit if not initially shown on the site plan.
- Interpolated grades must be shown on the site plan - this includes showing the actual building envelope and the lot grading plan building envelope so that plan checkers can see that interpolation was used.

### EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGE

The lot grading policy, the comprehensive lot grading plan requirements and the site plan guidelines are in effect immediately. It is recognized, though, that we have a number of developments that are currently at house construction stage so the following will apply:

- Subdivisions that have not been issued a Preliminary Review Letter but have had their servicing drawings accepted do not need to comply with the new plan requirements but will be required to submit an as-built lot grading plan and comply with the new policy and guidelines related to the as-built plan

Subdivisions that have been issued building permits do not need to supply an as-built grading plan but must meet the design grades shown on the accepted comprehensive lot grading plan. Changes to "aesthetic" walls will not require a revised lot grading plan however; the retaining wall policy still applies.