

Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD)



Purpose

Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD) is an alternative subdivision process that provides flexibility in meeting residential zoning requirements while maintaining or enhancing Thurston County's rural character. Through this process, dwelling units may be "clustered" on lots smaller than normally allowed in the zoning district, while a relatively large portion of the site is devoted to a "resource use," such as open space, critical area protection, agriculture or forestry. This allows protection of sensitive environmental resources, more efficient use of roads and utilities, and preservation of rural character.



Who can use the PRRD process?

If your property is located within unincorporated Thurston County, outside of urban growth areas, and in one of the following zoning districts, PRRD may be right for you:

- Rural Residential/Resource – 1 unit per 5 acres
- Rural Residential – 1 unit per 2 acres
- Long Term Agriculture District
- Nisqually Agriculture District
- Long Term Forestry District

Note: If your residential property is located in another area, a different

clustering process may be available to you. Inquire at the permit counter.

The resource use parcel

When you go through the PRRD process, one of the parcels you create is a "resource use parcel." Different zoning districts have minimum amounts of land that must be set aside as a resource use parcel, ranging from 60% to 90% of the site. Because resource use parcels are intended to maintain the rural character of Thurston County, they should retain scenic views, connect with other rural land uses or critical areas (wildlife corridors, wetlands, streams, agricultural land, contiguous forest, etc.), and may only be used for activities such as:

- Agriculture and forestry
- Critical area preservation
- Passive recreation

Residential development may be located within a one-acre building envelope on the resource use parcel. Septic/water systems and stormwater ponds are also allowed. If a property owner has not received a density bonus (see below), then slightly more intensive activities (boat launches, riding stables, golf courses) may be allowed. Remember that the resource use parcel must be a relatively large, contiguous area in a shape that works for the allowed uses. It may not be broken up into strips or blocks interspersed with houses, nor should it be bisected with roads or easements. The

design of the entire subdivision must be done carefully to ensure that lots are



configured to blend with natural features and preserve rural character. An individual or an association

may own and maintain the resource use parcel.

How does a density bonus work?

An incentive is built into the PRRD process to encourage eligible property owners to cluster their dwelling units. This incentive is called a density bonus. You must have a least **7.5 acres** of land in order to get a density bonus. Here is an example of how it works.

Under standard zoning requirements, an owner of 100 acres with RRR 1-5 zoning may create up to 20 lots. But if the owner sets aside 60 acres (60%) as a resource use parcel, s/he can build 27 clustered dwelling units – a 35% density bonus. The owner may get an even larger density bonus by setting aside a greater percentage of land in the resource use parcel.

Note: Density bonuses may NOT be applied in the Long Term Agriculture,

Nisqually Agriculture, or Long Term Forestry districts, and are limited to 35% in the RR1-2 district.

I'm interested – What do I do next?

Talk to a planner! A planner can discuss the details of your property to help you calculate your potential density bonus and decide if the PRRD process is right for you. You'll want to schedule a presubmission conference to go over your proposal. You'll then need to submit a subdivision application (for a plat or a short plat) and a PRRD application, which will require specific details about your property, including natural characteristics, critical areas, intended use of the resource use parcel, general configuration of proposed lots, and additional legal and descriptive information. The approval process takes about the same amount of time as the process for a traditional subdivision.

Read the code

This information bulletin is only a guide. For more detailed regulations, read Thurston County Code, Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development. The code is available online through the Thurston County Development Services web site (see below)

For more information contact:

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(360) 786-5490
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