

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1935

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Reform & Land Use

Title: An act relating to the development of inherited property.

Brief Description: Permitting development of inherited property.

Sponsors: Representative Reams.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Reform & Land Use: 2/26/97, 2/26/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM & LAND USE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Sherstad, Vice Chairman; Bush; Mielke; Mulliken and Thompson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Romero, Ranking Minority Member; Lantz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fisher and Gardner.

Staff: Kimberly Klaiber (786-7156).

Background: In general, when a property owner wishes to divide his or her land, the division of the land must be reviewed by the city, town, or county pursuant to a subdivision or short subdivision ordinance. A division of land into four or fewer lots is considered a short subdivision, but a city or town may allow a parcel to be divided into a maximum of nine lots under its short subdivision ordinance.

The legislative body of a city, town, and county is required to adopt procedures for the *summary approval* of short subdivisions. Subdivisions that are not short subdivisions must be submitted to the legislative body of the city, town, or county for approval. The proposed short subdivision or subdivision will be approved only after the applicable administrative official makes written findings that the proposed short subdivision or subdivision appropriately provides for the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The approval process for regular subdivisions also requires the filing of a preliminary plat of the proposed subdivision with the legislative body of the city, town, or county. Notice of a public hearing or an administrative review of the preliminary plat must be sent to adjacent landowners and must also be published. Any person may comment on the proposed preliminary plat. The legislative body of the city, town, or county has the sole authority to approve final plats.

Certain property divisions are exempt from the requirements of plats and subdivisions. Among the exceptions are divisions of land made by a last will and testament.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The substitute provides that the number of parcels into which inherited property can be developed can equal no more than the number of immediate family members who inherit the property. The total number of lots into which inherited property may be divided can be no higher than 10 parcels.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute adds language allowing division up to, not necessarily equal to, the number of immediate family members who inherit property. A ceiling of 10 lots is added to already-existing requirements for development of inherited land.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Growth Management Act is fine, but we need to breathe some humanity into it. We have not taken into consideration a lot of the problems that people have in various communities around the state. If we do it right, this is one way to do some of that -- to make that recognition.

Testimony Against: This bill has the ability to throw off land use patterns. In a family inheritance situation, people want to keep land in the family for cultural reasons and want to preserve a certain way of life. The bill needs to accommodate family while ensuring that families don't break up land and sell it off to third parties. Perhaps there should be restraints so that not every estate becomes a redevelopment project. Maybe people who inherit should be restricted from certain development unless they reside there themselves.

Testified: Representative Reams, prime sponsor (pro); and Mike Ryherd, 1000 Friends of Washington and the American Planning Association (concerns).