

Florida Enacts Pro-Property Rights Law To Expedite Development Approvals

By Mark Bentley

Florida Senate Bill 784 (2025), titled "Platting," introduced a streamlined administrative process for approving plats and replats. The bill was signed into law on June 20, 2025, and became effective on July 1, 2025. The law is codified at Section 177.01, Florida Statutes. This administrative process is accomplished through delegation of duties to an administrative official who must have direct or indirect oversight responsibility for the governing bodies land development, housing, utilities, or public works programs. In Florida, the approval of a plat oftentimes undergoes review by a zoning board and a governing body, at advertised public hearings which oftentimes added months to the permitting process.

Here's how the law functions: A local government's governing body (e.g., city council or county commission) must designate a specific administrative authority—such as a planning director, city manager or department—to receive, review, and process plat or replat submittals. The designated authority must consist of a department, division, or staff member, such as a county administrator or city manager, or a division director with responsibilities related to land development or public works. Upon receiving a submission for a preliminary or final plat, the administrative authority has 7 business days to (1) acknowledge receipt in writing and that the plat complies with Section 177.01, or (2) to identify any missing documents or required information.

The administrator must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the submission within a 7 business day timeframe, unless the applicant requests an extension. However, local governments are prohibited from initiating or requesting time extensions. If the plat is denied, the local government must notify the applicant in writing and its decision must include an explanation, citing specific code items that the plat fails to meet. Furthermore, the local government may not request or require an applicant to file for an additional extension.

The statutory change will now streamline the approval process, and save significant time and money for both developers and local governments. By delegating the review process to administrative staff, the new law will eliminate additional staff reviews and reports,

redundant, unnecessary public hearings and involvement in technical matters by a governing body, which are generally ill equipped to apply a level of expertise and technical analysis required by an engineer. Governing bodies rarely reject plat approval as it is a purely objective, standardized procedure. The delegation of plat approval to the administrative branch should also take the politics out of the development process, where oftentimes, opponents of a project, want a “second bite at the apple” by demonstrating their opposition and perfecting standing to appeal a project at a public hearing.

Preliminary and final plat and replat submissions are the foundations of the land development process. Florida SB 784 will provide much needed modernization in how platting approvals are handled across the state. By eliminating the archaic, traditional processes, and shifting approval authority to administrative bodies, and requiring clear timelines and communication from the government, the law will provide faster, more transparent, and more efficient processes.