

# PLATTING: All You Need to Know

REID C. WILSON  
Wilson Cribbs + Goren  
Houston, Texas

2019 Land Use Fundamentals  
April 24, 2019

1

## PLATTING: All You Need to Know

Part of the Dev. Reg. process, but frequently misunderstood.

### *Origin:*

- Public law (health, safety and public welfare – the “police power”) not contract law.
- Different from zoning- Gov’t rights significantly limited when reviewing a plat.

Wilson Cribbs + Goren

2

***Basis*** of subdivision control:

- Land registration system
- Registration is a privilege
- Gov't grant/withhold registration approval based upon the compliance with conditions
- Legitimate government interest in
  - “promoting healthy and orderly development” and
  - protecting future lot owners

Wilson Cribbs + Goren

3

## WHAT IS A . . . ? (The Jargon of Platting)

**Subdivision (to subdivide, subdividing)**

The division of land

Subdividing ≠ platting

**Platting (to plat)** – Government process

**Subdivision Plat (or Plat)** – Written depiction of the lots, blocks and reserves - Government Permit

**Planning Commission** – Appointed governmental body with plat approval authority

**Houston** – 26 members

Wilson Cribbs + Goren

4

**Variance** – Right to vary from the literal word of the applicable regulation upon a showing of “hardship”

**Houston- requires supermajority vote**

**Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (“ETJ”)-** Special area surrounding a city where city has power of annexation and limited regulatory authority- City platting authority may be extended to ETJ

**Applicant** – Any “person” may be an applicant, but only an “owner” may actually plat property

Wilson Cribbs + Goren

5

**Development Agreement** – An agreement between a land owner and a local government relating to development of land.

LGC §212.172- ETJ Dev. Agmts.

- ETJ only
- Defer annexation up to 15 yrs. & 2 extensions – 45 yrs. max.
- May extend City planning authority & regulations
- Authorizes specific regulations
- May provide for infrastructure
- May specify uses
- “Other lawful terms”
- Must be recorded
- Vests rights

Wilson Cribbs + Goren

6

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](https://utcle.org/elibrary)

## Title search: Platting: All You Need to Know

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the  
2019 Land Use Fundamentals session

"Subdivision and Platting: A Land Use Foundation"