



Washington State Department of  
Commerce: Short Course on Local  
Planning



Roles in Planning and Effective  
Public Processes

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Stacie Pratschner, AICP, RPA  
Development Services Director  
Mount Vernon, WA

## Purpose

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To empower you with information about both planning processes and tools that will help you to prepare, recommend, and make planning and permitting decisions that are procedurally and factually sound.

# Presentation Outline

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I. Roles in the Planning Process

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II. Land Use Planning Decisions

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III. Effective Planning Processes

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IV. Resources

## I. Participants in Planning

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- ❖ The Public
- ❖ Elected Officials
- ❖ Planning Commission
- ❖ Staff
- ❖ Hearing Examiner
- ❖ Other Appointed Bodies
- ❖ The Public
- ❖ Tribes
- ❖ Agencies



## I(a). Participants in Planning: Elected Officials

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### **Mayor – Council**



### **Council – Manager**

### **Commission**

- ❖ Leaders and decision makers.
- ❖ Communicate the strategic vision, policies, priorities, and goals of the jurisdiction.
- ❖ Funding and operations.
- ❖ Appoint Planning Commissioners and members to other appointed bodies.

## I(b). Participants in Planning: Planning Commission

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**RCW 35.63.080 and RCW 36.70.040**



- ❖ Recommendations for adoption of land use legislation to elected officials.
- ❖ Preparation and execution of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ❖ Assist the Planning Department in carrying out its duties.

## I(c). Participants in Planning: Planning Staff

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### Staff and consultants



- ❖ Legislation and policy development.
- ❖ Land Use and Building Permits.
- ❖ Economic Development.
- ❖ Code Enforcement.

## I(d). Participants in Planning: Hearing Examiner

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**Professionally trained attorney that makes objective quasi-judicial decisions**

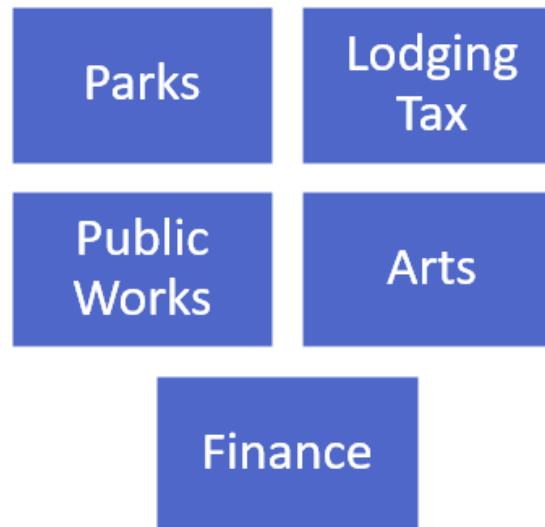


- ❖ Appeals, conditional use permits, planned unit developments, preliminary subdivisions, shoreline substantial development permits, variance.
- ❖ Allows local legislative/advisory bodies that might otherwise conduct these type of public hearings to concentrate on policy-making (legislative activities).

## I(e). Participants in Planning: Other Advisory Bodies

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### Boards, Commission, Committees



- ❖ Support Comp Plan goals and strategies.
- ❖ Advisory recommendations on TIP, CIP, and budgets.
- ❖ Focus on key projects.
- ❖ Communicate with their members and others in the community.

## I(f). Participants in Planning: Public

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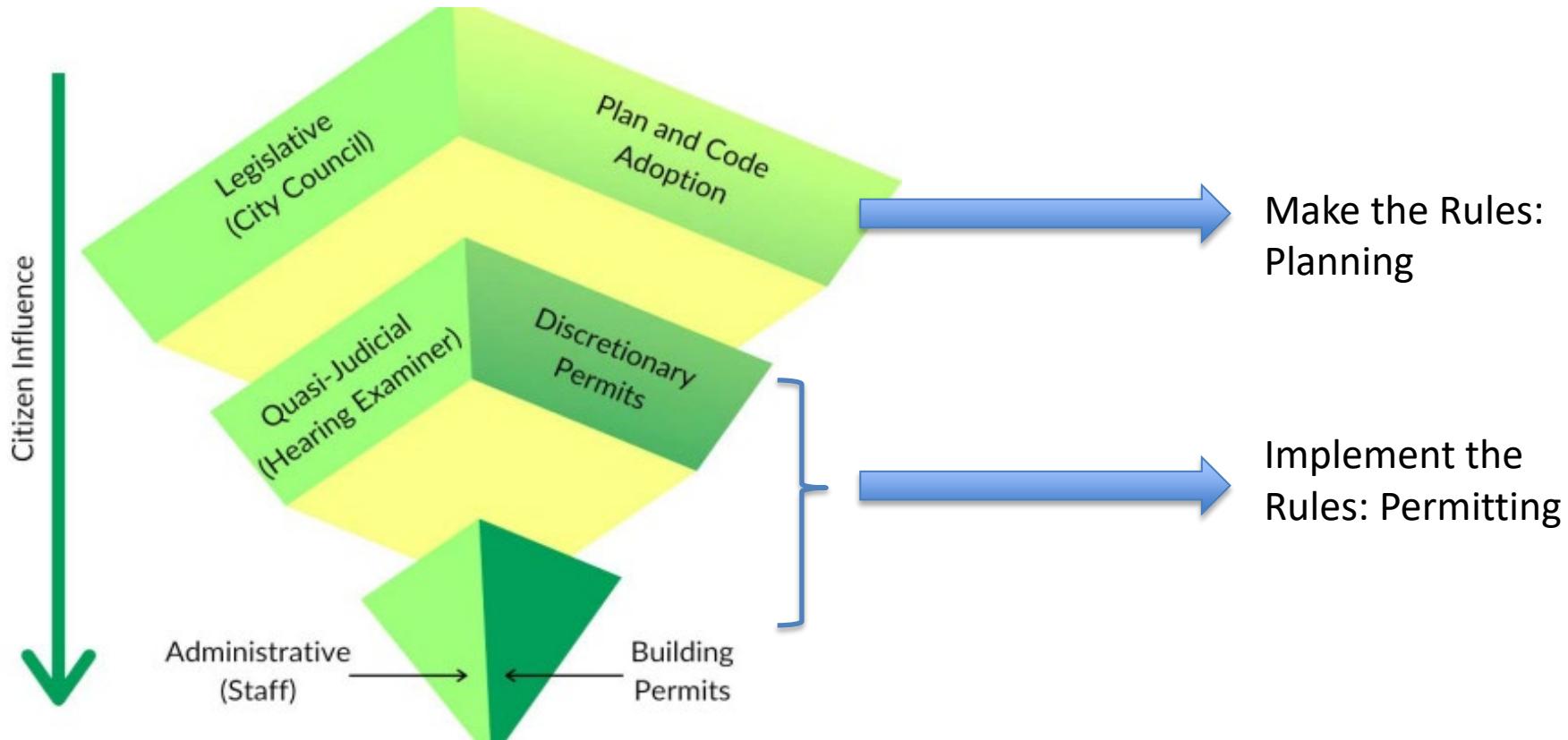


## I(h). Participants in Planning: Agencies

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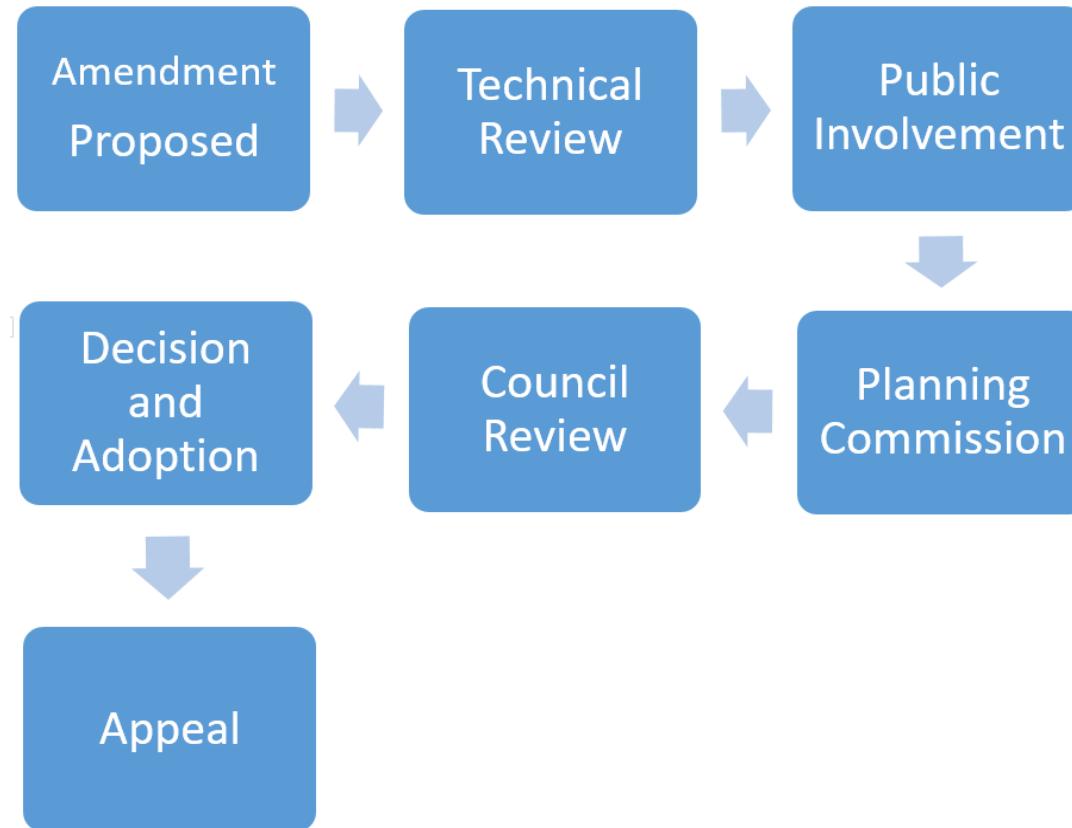
## II. Land Use Planning Decisions: Types



## II(a). Land Use Planning Decisions: Permit Matrix

<b>Administrative (staff) decisions</b>	<b>Hearing Examiner (quasi judicial)</b>	<b>City Council decisions</b>
Boundary line adjustment	Appeals	Developer Agreements
Building permits	Conditional Use permits	Final plats
Lot certifications	Variances	Adoption of code
Shoreline exemptions	Subdivisions	Street vacations
Short plats	Plat alterations	Annexations
Land disturbance permits	Binding site plans	Establishment of LIDs, TIF

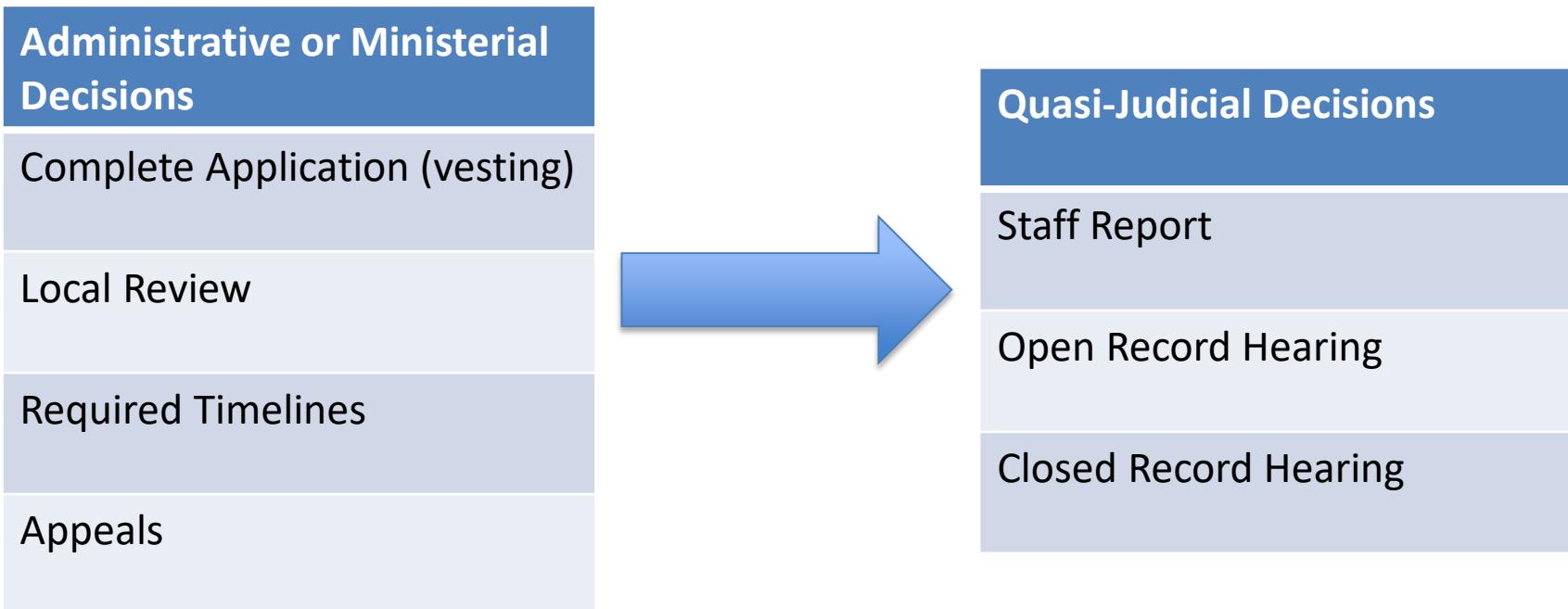
## II(b). Land Use Planning Decisions: Legislative Process



*Article I. All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

## II(c). Land Use Planning Decisions: Project Review (RCW 36.70B)

### ***Legal - Procedural - Factual***





# II(d). Land Use Planning Decisions: Material Record



## RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OR DENIAL

### **Project Description and Request**

Application and supporting materials

### **Background**

Past municipal actions that give context to the request

*Developer agreements; rezones.*

### **Application Process**

Complete application; public notice; SEPA

### **Approval Criteria**

Zoning, environment, and infrastructure

*Bulk and dimensional standards; critical areas; access to water and sewer; stormwater; LOS; concurrency.*

### **Public Comment and Testimony**

Conditions of approval

### **Appeal**

### **Attachments/Exhibits**

## RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OR DENIAL

### III. Planning Processes: The Spectrum of Public Participation

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RCW 36.70A.140: “Each county and city that is required or chooses to plan...shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a **public participation program** identifying procedures providing for **early and continuous public participation** in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans.”



## III(a). Planning Processes: Participation for Individuals

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**GOAL:** Effective public participation promotes a transparent, inclusive, and fair decision-making process.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Public involvement should be as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgements become salient.
- Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources in to make a meaningful contribution to decision-making.

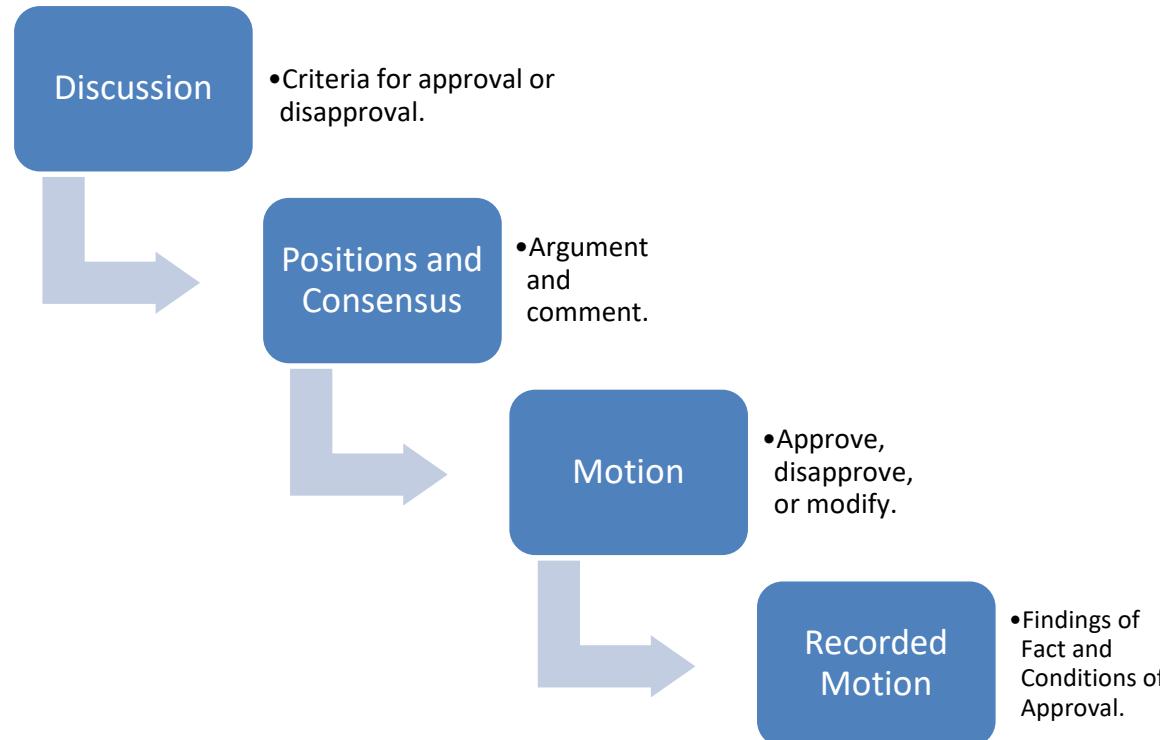
**ACTIONS:** Stay informed and remember that fundamental choices are made at the time of planning, not permitting.

## III(b). Planning Processes: Managing Public Hearings

Before the Meeting	During the Meeting	After the Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Rules</li><li>✓ Study sessions</li><li>✓ Top of the agenda</li><li>✓ Access to information</li><li>✓ Written and oral testimony</li><li>✓ Remote meetings</li><li>✓ Seating</li><li>✓ Greetings</li><li>✓ Sign-up Sheet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ground rules</li><li>✓ Issue briefing</li><li>✓ Lead by example</li><li>✓ No back-and-forth dialogue</li><li>✓ Full attention</li><li>✓ Time limits</li><li>✓ Limits of legal authority</li><li>✓ Credibility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Summarize the Meeting (Minutes and Recorded Motions)</li><li>✓ Follow up on commitments</li><li>✓ Communicate next steps</li><li>✓ Parties of Record</li></ul>

## III(c). Planning Processes: Deliberations

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## III(d). Planning Processes: Leadership

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## IV. Resources

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- ❖ [staciep@mountvernonwa.gov](mailto:staciep@mountvernonwa.gov)
- ❖ MRSC: Local Government Policy Making Process
- ❖ AWC: Association of Washington Cities
- ❖ APA: American Planning Association