



Washington State Department of Commerce: Short Course on Local Planning



Roles in Planning and Effective Public Processes

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Purpose

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

I. Roles in the Planning Process

II. Land Use Planning Decisions

III. Effective Planning Processes

IV. Resources

I. Participants in Planning

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



I(a). Participants in Planning: Elected Officials

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

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

Staff and consultants



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

I(d). Participants in Planning: Hearing Examiner

Professionally trained attorney that makes objective quasi-judicial decisions

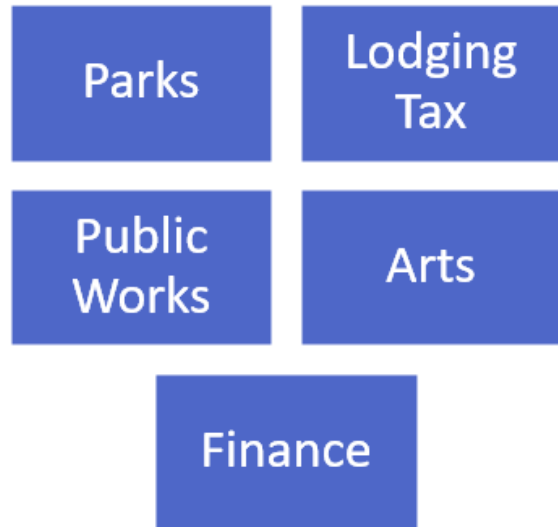


- ❖ Appeals, conditional use permits, planned unit developments, preliminary subdivisions, shoreline substantial development permits, variance.
- ❖ Allows local legislative/advisory bodies that might otherwise conduct these type of public hearings to concentrate on policy-making (legislative activities).



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

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



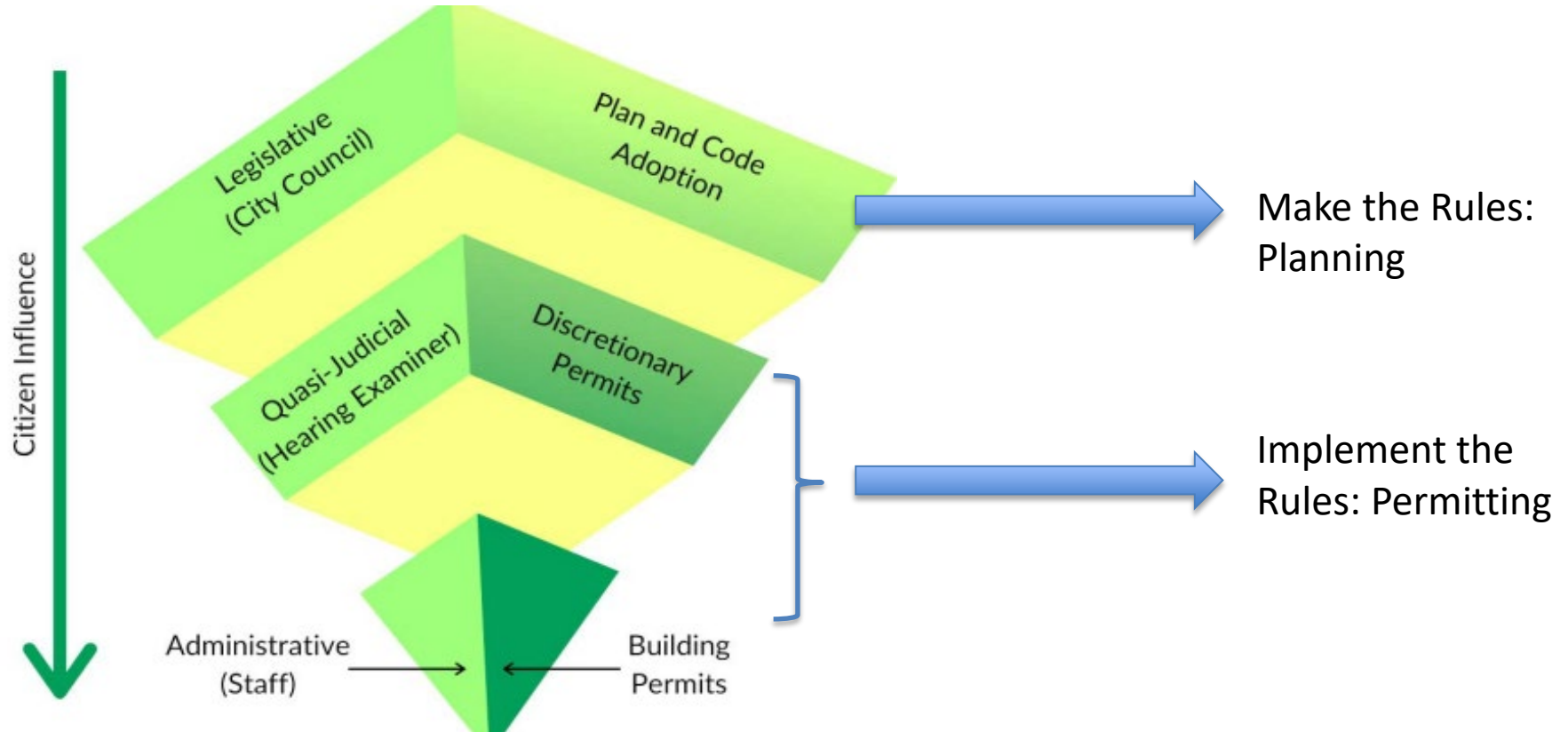


I(h). Participants in Planning: Agencies





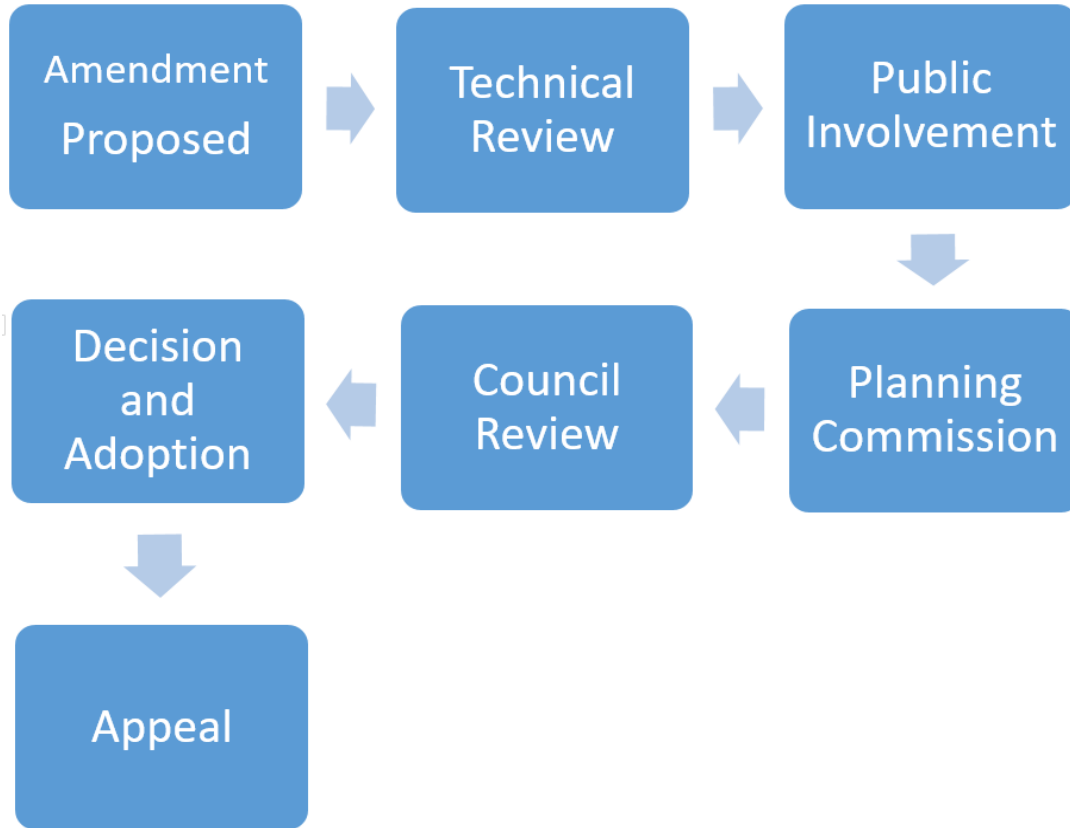
II. Land Use Planning Decisions: Types



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

Administrative (staff) decisions	Hearing Examiner (quasi judicial)	City Council decisions
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

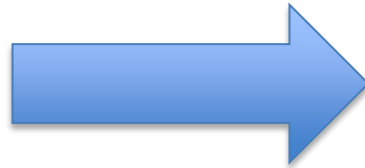
Administrative or Ministerial Decisions

Complete Application (vesting)

Local Review

Required Timelines

Appeals



Quasi-Judicial Decisions

Staff Report

Open Record Hearing

Closed Record Hearing



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 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



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

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.

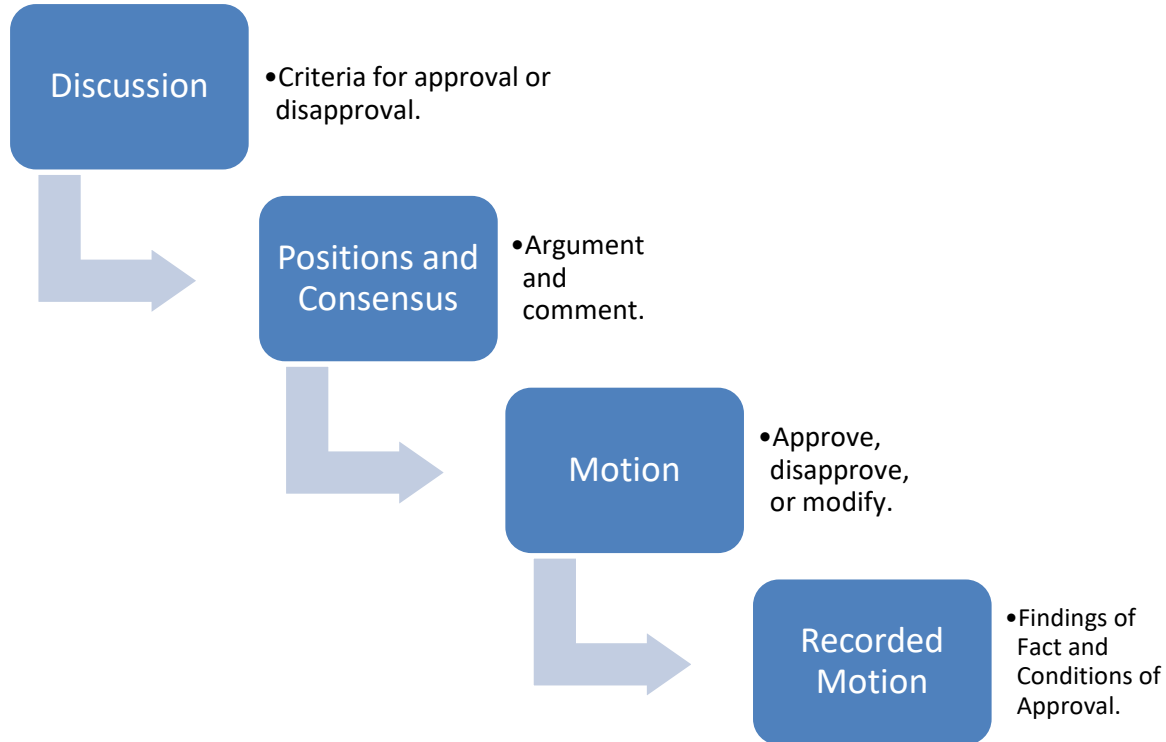


III(b). Planning Processes: Managing Public Hearings

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



III(c). Planning Processes: Deliberations





III(d). Planning Processes: Leadership





IV. Resources

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