



Photo by Jo Lopez on Unsplash.com

# Welcome to the Planning Commission

*"Planning is a process in which community values, needs, goals, and objectives are expressed, typically through a comprehensive land use plan. The goals and objectives are then implemented through regulatory ordinances. These are known collectively as "official controls," which include zoning codes, subdivision codes, building and health codes, environmental codes, and others that make up the regulating framework of the community."  
- Department of Commerce, A Short Course on Local Planning*

This ten-member volunteer citizen group advises Thurston County government on land use, development and zoning regulations. Meetings are on the first and third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m., and are open to the public. Planning Commissioners serve six-year terms, and are appointed by Thurston's Board of County Commissioners.

The Planning Commission reviews land use and environmental policies and rules as assigned and prioritized by the Board of County Commissioners through the official dockets. Commissioners work together to provide recommendations on local land use plans to the Board of County Commissioners, who make the final decision.

This guide aims to serve as a brief introduction to the Planning Commission's role and abilities in shaping Thurston County's future.

## Thurston County Community Planning

3000 Pacific Ave SE,  
Olympia, WA 98501

<http://www.thurstonplanning.org>

*Thank you for serving on the Thurston County Planning Commission!* This guidebook is here to provide you with the foundation and guiding principles you need to be a successful member of the Planning Commission. Please note, this handbook is here to guide you and does not take place of bylaws or other governing rules of the Planning Commission. Being a member of an advisory commission takes time and effort. We recognize the work you put in to provide your input and welcome your ideas and suggestions. You are an important part of Thurston County's ability to maintain and improve programs and services. We wish you success in your appointment and hope this information will be helpful to you.

## Establishment of the Planning Commission

The Thurston County Planning Commission (PC) is established by [Thurston County Code 2.04](#) pursuant to [RCW 35.63](#). TCC 2.04 describes the size, manner of appointment, and term of office of the Planning Commission members. The Planning Commission is one of over 20 advisory groups that volunteer their time to the County to represent the public interest.

## Guide to Being an Effective Member

Those appointed to volunteer advisory boards and commissions play a vital role by representing the public at large and bringing residents' perspectives to local government. Each member brings an important point of view, often representing a geographic interest, area of expertise, or professional association. If each commissioner strives to be an effective member, it creates a greater opportunity to have a profound impact on county policies and legislation, and lead to improved processes and services. All individuals and items discussed must be treated with fairness, impartiality, and respect. *To be an effective member, please abide by the following:*

Notify Chair or staff liaison if you are unable to attend. Excessive absences may result in removal.

Understand your role and scope of responsibility.

Attend and actively participate in all meetings.

Respectfully engage with staff and other members.

Share info about topics the PC is discussing with the community.

Propose viable and cost-effective solutions.

# Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

Because the Planning Commission is subject to the OPMA, **all deliberations, motions, and discussions** on projects, recommendations, and findings need to happen during open meetings. Additionally, all records produced or received by the Planning Commission are subject to the Public Records Act. Therefore, training on the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30) and the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) is required upon appointment and every four (4) years thereafter. A quorum (majority of members) will not discuss or deliberate board or commission business in any form in unnoticed meetings. Group texts or emails can even be considered meetings, so it is important to understand these rules.

Training on the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30) is required for every member of a governing body including members of city councils, boards of county commissioners, school boards, fire district boards, state boards and commissions, and other public agency boards, councils and commissions subject to the OPMA. Commissioners can find more information and trainings on the OPMA through Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MRSC):

<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/legal/open-government/open-public-meetings-act/open-public-meetings-act-basics>

## Robert’s Rules of Order

This parliamentary procedure provides the process for proposing, approving, defeating, and amending legislative motions. It ensures meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient, and orderly manner. Rules include how to allow speakers individual time, how to make a formal motion, banning inflammatory or irrelevant speech from commission members, and how to run a debate.

*Basic Motions:*

To do this:	Say this:	Second needed?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?
Adjourn/End a Meeting	“I move that we adjourn the meeting”	Yes	No	No
Amend a Motion	“I move to amend the motion by...”	Yes	Yes	Yes
End Discussion and Vote	“I move to take a vote on...”	Yes	No	No
Ask a Question	“Point of Information...?”	No	No	No
Second a Motion	“I second the motion to...”	No	No	No

# Planning Commission Expectations

In addition to the general rules for members of a Thurston County advisory board or commission, the Planning Commissioners are expected to:

- Adhere to Planning Commission Rules of Procedure\*, which contains more procedural rules for the commission.
- Engage in and invite conversation and deliberation with fellow Planning Commissioners to ensure that a full, transparent, and respectful discussion of the topic occurs; make space for fellow commissioners to ask questions and express differing opinions.
- Act in a manner that is transparent to the public about any personal interests the Planning Commissioner may have with a topic or issue, including sharing communications that the commissioner may have outside the Planning Commission with community stakeholders.
- Leave personal agendas at the door. Impartially consider the current and future implications of land use decisions on the community and surrounding landowners. Demonstrate openness to listening to facts, state and federal policy, scientific and legal guidance, the diversity of public comment, and staff analysis when reviewing projects.
- Work within the scope and timeline of a project as established by the Board of County Commissioners and communicated by staff. Respect the role of staff to ensure that the project is reviewed within that scope and timeline. Ensure that requests for additional information or research from staff are agreed to by a majority of the Planning Commission and are necessary to inform Planning Commission recommendations within the scope of the project.
- Communicate recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners in a manner that describes key issues deliberated and the rationale behind the recommendations, including how public comment was considered. Describe and comment on the work and views of other professionals, including other commissioners and staff, fairly and professionally.
- Members may not use their position to secure special privileges, gifts or things of value, or exemptions for themselves or others. Members shall use public resources appropriately.
- Members shall not use their position to influence board or commission decisions in which they have a financial interest, organizational responsibility, or a personal relationship that presents a conflict of interest. Members will disclose the various groups they are associated with so the board or commission can identify if there is a potential conflict of interest when an agenda item might arise. If there is a conflict of interest regarding a particular agenda item, the member will refrain from discussion, decision, and voting.
- Members will communicate respectfully with fellow board or commission members, the BOCC, County staff, and the public.
- Members shall not speak or act on behalf of the BOCC or commission except when formally given authority to do so for a specific purpose.
- Members will create, foster, and maintain an atmosphere of non-discrimination in all personnel and volunteer-related matters.

# Roles

## Planning Commissioners:

- Listen to and solicit public input on land use matters
- Represent and interpret community needs and opinions
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing the agenda and other documents to be discussed
- Listen to staff analysis and public input to draft an advisory recommendation to the BoCC
- Reflect the consensus of a majority of members
- Request additional information or suggest changes collectively, rather than individually
- Bring any relevant questions or ideas to work sessions
- Can provide recommendations to staff, but not direct staff duties

## Chair of Planning Commission:

- Assists in running the meeting
- Calls for votes
- Gives the floor to speakers
- Ensures Robert's Rules are followed
- Manage time limits and decorum

## Community Planning Staff:

- Research regulations, data, existing policies and standards, best practices, and legal parameters
- Draft code and policy documents based on BoCC direction
- Provide technical and professional expertise
- Offer objective analysis based on facts and best practices
- Organize and present materials to the public and commissioners
- Facilitate stakeholder groups, open houses, and meetings
- Receive information and feedback from BoCC, advisory groups, stakeholders, government agencies, County departments, applicants, and the public
- Facilitate the public process, including scheduling meetings and meeting statutory noticing requirements
- Conduct site visits
- Write memos, reports, notices, web mailers, website pages, SEPA files, and more

## Board of County Commissioners:

- Represent districts they were elected by
- Determine scope and hierarchy of docket items
- Review and consider Planning Commission recommendations and staff analysis
- Review and consider public comment
- Make final decisions on docket items
- Direct staff duties

## Thurston County Planning Process

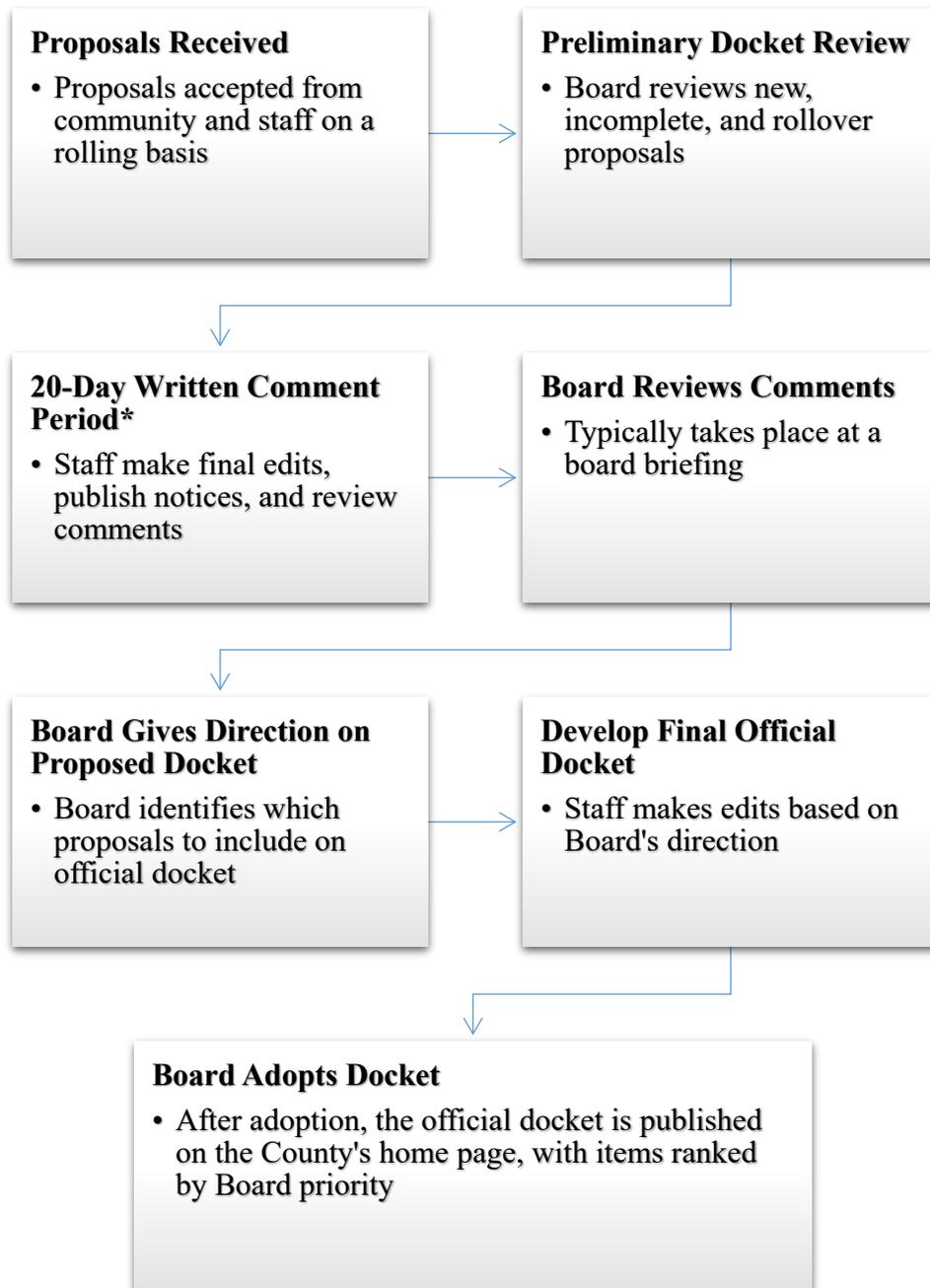
The Thurston County Community Development Department organizes long range projects that are chosen by the Board of County Commissioners on a two-year cycle. These items can be brought to the Board by anyone to be considered for addition to the Comprehensive Plan or Development Code Dockets.

### Docketing

In Thurston County the Board of County Commissioners uses a "docket" process to prioritize upcoming projects. RCW 36.70A.470 explains that the purpose of the docketing process is to provide a way for interested parties to suggest changes to the Comprehensive Plan and development code. Each year, Thurston's Board of County Commissioners reviews the preliminary list of incoming change requests to decide which will go on the Official Docket for deeper analysis and public review. Items not completed by the end of the year may be included in next year's preliminary docket. There are two dockets: the Comprehensive Plan Docket and Development Code Docket.

The *Comprehensive Plan Docket* is a list of proposed changes to the County's Comprehensive Plan. In order to change future land use, zoning, and policy, the County's Comprehensive Plan must be amended. The Comprehensive Plan can only be amended once per year. The *Development Code Docket* is a list of proposed changes to County land use and development regulations.

# The Docket Process



*\*The Board of County Commissioners has the discretion to not hold a comment period and maintain the existing docket. The projects submitted previously would be carried over the following year's review.*

# Comprehensive Planning

The Comprehensive Plan guides the growth of unincorporated Thurston County (areas outside of the cities). It details policies and goals for zoning and development regulations, and addresses requirements of Washington state's Growth Management Act. It also includes specific guidelines for the subareas of Grand Mound, Rochester and Nisqually, as well as Joint Plans for the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) of Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Tenino, Tumwater, and Yelm.

*The Growth Management Act requires mandatory and optional elements for the Comprehensive Plan:*

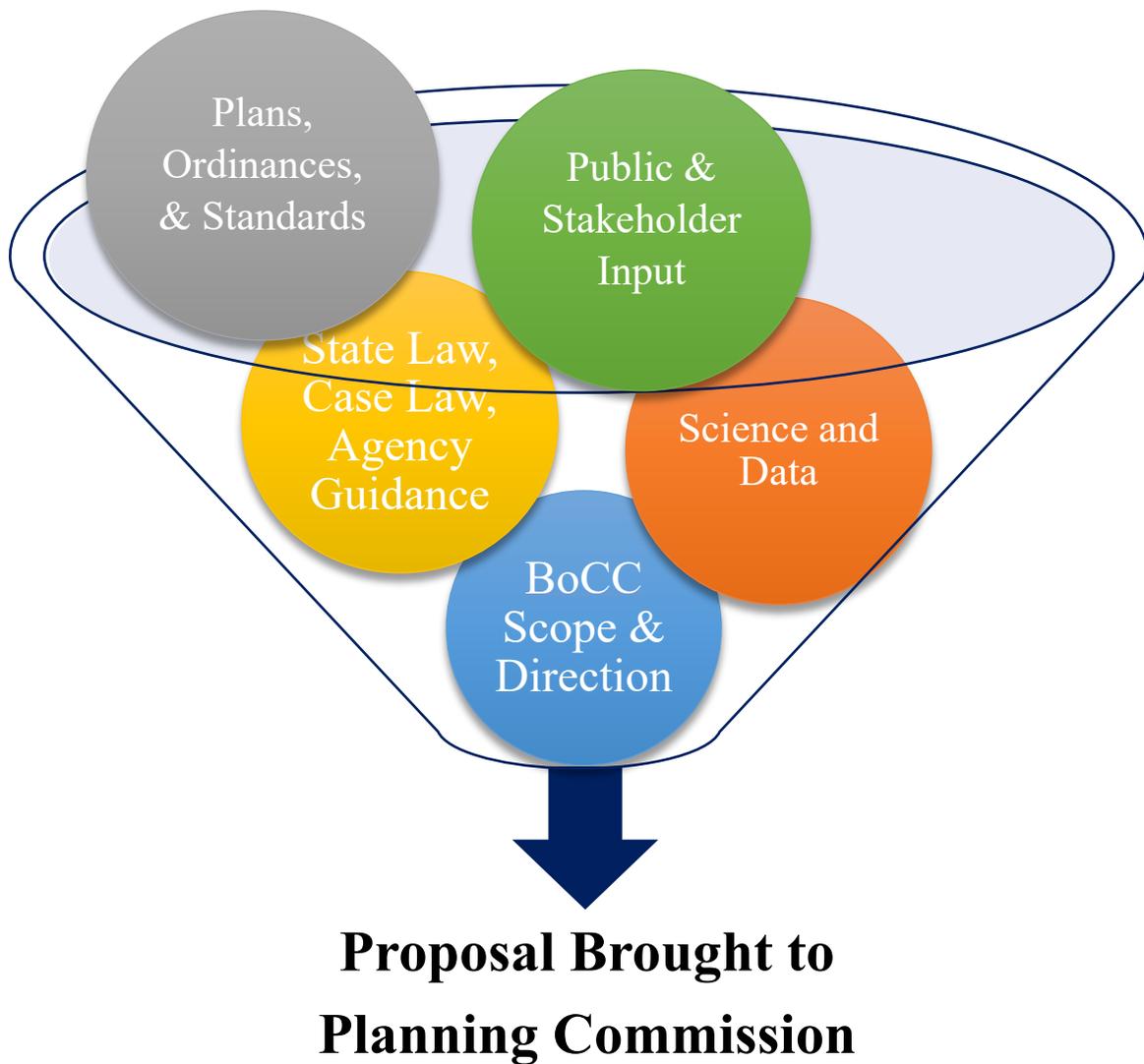
<b>MANDATORY:</b> LAND USE HOUSING CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN UTILITIES RURAL DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY	<b>OPTIONAL:</b> ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT* PARKS AND RECREATION* CONSERVATION SOLAR ENERGY SUBAREA PLANS (AND UGAS)
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Mandatory and Optional Elements as of October 2023.

\*The elements with an asterisk are listed as mandatory in RCW 36.70A.070(7) and (8), but they are actually optional because funds have not been appropriated to help pay for preparing them, per RCW 36.70A.070(9).

## Development Code

The [Development Code](#) is a collection of Thurston County's Land Use and Development Regulations, listed within chapters 17-26. This code is used by applicants, land use planners, public works, and more to determine site and use requirements and allowances. The code dictates processes for development applications. Additionally, the development code includes a chapter that lays out the minimum measures for public participation under the Growth Management Act, TCC 2.05.



## Work Sessions vs. Public Hearings

**Work Sessions:** These are public meetings for the Planning Commission to receive information from staff on the proposal, discuss the submitted project materials, and discuss including findings for approval/ or disapproval based on the provided information and required criteria. These meetings are not meant to gather "more evidence", but are intended for questions, comments, and discussion.

**Public Hearings:** Public Hearings are public meetings for individual docket items, where the public is encouraged to share their comments on the project. The comments are provided at the meeting or via written comment during the comment period. The Planning Commission considers the public feedback before issuing their recommendation to the BoCC. Any comments received after the close of the public hearing will be submitted to the BoCC.

## Process for Issuing a Recommendation

1. Planning Commission deliberates during a regular meeting and votes on a motion with recommendation for the BoCC
2. Staff records the motion, majority vote and any findings made by the Planning Commission at the meeting. Minority votes/opinions are also recorded in the minutes.
3. Staff drafts a recommendation letter reflecting the Planning Commission majority recommendation and stated findings, then emails that draft letter to the Chair for review, editing, and approval
4. The Planning Commission Chair makes any necessary changes to the recommendation letter and sends back to staff with approval
5. Staff finalizes letter for Chair signature (Chair may e-sign letter or sign a hard copy at next meeting if in person)
6. Staff submits the signed Planning Commission recommendation letter to the BoCC (usually as attachment to the first BoCC briefing on the topic)
7. 2+ Planning Commission members may draft their own minority findings in a minority report for the BoCC and submit that to staff, who transmits that report to the BoCC along with the majority recommendation.

**On the infrequent occasion that staff has a recommendation that differs from the Planning Commission recommendation, staff will notify the Planning Commission and provide the opportunity for the Chair or the Chair's designee to represent the Planning Commission when the report is presented to the BoCC.**

### FAQ:

#### **How do I request a change to a document?**

This works best when proposed changes, options, or ideas are suggested during a work session by a commissioner. The Planning Commission then debates the idea if necessary, and if the majority agrees, requests staff to craft language reflecting this option or direction.

#### **How do I make sure to be heard at a meeting?**

Raise your hand to be called on by the Chair.

#### **Can I contact staff or interested parties directly?**

Communication to staff shall be sent to the Community Planning administrative staff. They will be responsible for recording the question and disseminating the communication to all applicable staff.

### **Can I meet up with other commissioners outside of our scheduled public meetings?**

Yes, as long as you meet [Open Public Meetings Act](#) standards, which would require certain things like not meeting quorum (the majority of the commission) or making commission decisions. Texts, emails, and phone calls can also violate the OPMA, so make sure to be aware of the rules.

### **Can I talk to other commissioners separately about commission business?**

Only if these meetings/conversations do not constitute a “serial” or “chain” meeting according to the OPMA. This includes email, calls or texts, and any other form of communication.

*“A serial meeting occurs when a majority of members of a governing body have a series of smaller gatherings or communications that results in a majority of the body collectively taking action even if a majority is never part of any one communication. Such a meeting violates the OPMA because it amounts to taking “action” — as defined in RCW 42.30.020(3) — outside an open meeting.”*  
– MRSC

### **I don't think the scope of a docket item goes far enough, can I ask staff to do more than what is on the docket?**

No, the scope is determined by the Board of County Commissioners. The Planning Commission may produce a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to expand the scope, however the BoCC has the final decision on project scope.

## **Resources**

- Short Course on Local Planning: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/short-course/>
- OPMA: <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/legal/open-government/open-public-meetings-act/open-public-meetings-act-basics>
- Meeting packets and agendas, recent projects, and information about the docketing process can be found at [thurstonplanning.org](http://thurstonplanning.org)
- [Thurston County Citizen’s Advisory Boards and Commissions Handbook](#)
- [The Basics of Serial Meetings](#)
- [A Brief Guide to Robert’s Rules of Order](#)
- [Planning Commission Rules of Procedure](#)

Thank you for volunteering  
your time to Thurston County

**THURSTON COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Thurston County Courthouse Complex  
Building #1, Second Floor  
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW  
Olympia, WA 98502



**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**PLANNING COMMISSION OF THURSTON COUNTY**

Including Amendments through January, 2013

WE, THE MEMBERS of the Planning Commission of Thurston County, State of Washington, created by a Resolution of the Board of Thurston County Commissioners, pursuant to Chapter 201, Laws of 1959, do hereby adopt, publish and declare the following rules of procedure:

I. NAME

The official name shall be the "Thurston County Planning Commission."

II. MEETINGS

- A. Meetings are typically held at the Thurston County Courthouse, Building One, Room 152, 2000 Lake ridge Drive SW, Olympia. Regular meetings shall be held the first and third Wednesdays of each month and shall be open to the public. Regular meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. Public hearings will begin at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Special meetings shall be at the call of the Chair or by a quorum.
- C. When a regular meeting day falls on a legal holiday, the Commission will convene at the call of the Chair.
- D. If no matters over which the Planning Commission has jurisdiction are pending upon its calendar, a meeting may be canceled at the call of the Chair.
- E. Except as modified by these rules of procedure, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the conduct of the meetings and all procedures.

### III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chair and Vice Chair elected from the members of the Commission; and such other officers as the Commission may, by majority vote, approve and appoint.
- B. The election of officers shall take place at the second regular meeting in January of each calendar year. The term of office of each officer shall run until the subsequent election; provided however, any officer may be removed at any time by vote of a quorum plus one member. If, for any reason, Planning Commission officers are not elected at the second January meeting, the existing officers shall continue to serve until an election is held.
- C. The vacancy of an officer caused by the resignation, removal, or expiration of term of any officer of the Commission during the term of office shall be filled for the remaining term of office by the vote of a majority of the appointed members of the Planning Commission.

### IV. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- A. The Chair shall preside over the meetings of the Commission and may exercise all the powers usually incident to the office retaining, however, as a member of the Commission, the full right to have a vote recorded in all deliberations of the Commission.

The principle duties of the Chair of the Planning Commission under parliamentary rules are listed below:

1. To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the Chair and calling the meeting to order, having ascertained that a quorum is present.
2. To announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the Planning Commission or becomes in order in accordance with the prescribed order of business, agenda, or program, and with existing orders of the day.
3. To recognize members who are entitled to the floor.
4. To state and to put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the Planning Commission as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings (except questions that relate to the presiding officer in the manner noted below), and to announce the result of each vote or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order.
5. To protect the Planning Commission from obviously frivolous or dilatory motions by refusing to recognize them.
6. To enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the Planning Commission. Formal disciplinary procedures should be reserved for serious or potentially serious situations and should be handled properly and tactfully. Prior to initiating any formal disciplinary procedure, the

Chair, accompanied by another member, will meet discreetly and informally with the offending member in an effort to reach a satisfactory resolution. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the Chair will forward the matter to the Thurston County Chief Administrative Officer and the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners.

7. To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members.
  8. To decide all questions of order, subject to appeal unless, when in doubt, the Chair prefers initially to submit such a question to the assembly for decision.
  9. To respond to inquiries of members relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information bearing on the business of the Planning Commission.
  10. To authenticate by his or her signature, when necessary, all acts, orders, and proceedings of the Planning Commission.
  11. To declare the meeting adjourned when the Planning Commission so votes or – where applicable – at the time prescribed in the program, or at any time in the event of a sudden emergency affecting the safety of those present.
- B. The Chair shall have full power to create subcommittees of one or more members.
- C. The Vice Chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, perform all the duties incumbent upon the Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair, both being absent, the members present may elect for the meeting a temporary Chair who shall have full powers of the Chair during the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

#### V. SECRETARY

The Planning Director or his/her designee shall be the Secretary and shall keep record of all regular and special meetings of the Commission and its committees and of other meetings when requested to do so, and these records shall remain the property of the Commission and be retained at such office as the Commission may direct. When the Chair of the Planning Commission is not available, the Vice Chair is authorized to sign Planning Commission documents.

#### VI. SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. Subcommittees shall be established as needed to conduct studies and prepare proposals for consideration by the full Planning Commission.
- B. At its first meeting, the subcommittee shall select its own chair.
- C. Within the bounds of the adopted work program, subcommittees may develop, as appropriate, detailed scope of work, review process and time frame for carrying out their assigned tasks.

- D. Work scope, schedule, and periodic progress reports shall be reported to the full Planning Commission for review.
- E. Subcommittees shall avoid the appearance of representing the full Planning Commission or of giving the commitment of the full Planning Commission.

#### VII. QUORUM, VOTING, CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. Quorum: A simple majority of appointed Commission members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Commission can receive reports or petitions whenever a quorum is not present, however, a quorum must be present to comment or take action on any reports or petitions received.
- B. Voting: No action of the Commission may be taken without the affirmative vote of a simple majority of the appointed members. Meeting minutes may be approved without a quorum of members who were in attendance at the subject meeting under the following conditions:
  - 1. At least two members who were in attendance at the subject meeting attest that the minutes accurately reflects the activities of the subject meeting; and
  - 2. A simple majority of appointed Commission members votes affirmatively to approve the minutes.
- C. Conflict of Interest: If there is a desire of any Commission member to abstain from voting because of a conflict of interest, this view should be expressed as soon as the conflict becomes apparent and before any discussion is held on the business before the Commission. He or she shall then step down and not enter into the discussion. When a member has stepped down because of a conflict of interest, he or she shall not be counted as present for purposes of establishing a quorum during considerations undertaken while he or she is not sitting with the Commission.

#### VIII. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

- A. The Secretary shall keep a record of attendance and submit it to the Chair of the Planning Commission at the beginning of each month.
- B. If a member knows he or she will be absent from a scheduled meeting, the member shall inform the Secretary or Chair in advance of the meeting. The Chair will determine whether this is an excused absence. Excused absences include those due to work-related commitments or illness. Members who do not inform the Chair or Secretary ahead of time will not have the absence excused, with the exception of emergencies, which may be excused by the Chair with or without notice.

- C. In the event of a member being absent without excuse from three consecutive regular meetings, or being absent without excuse from 50% of all meetings (including committee) in any six-month period, the member's record shall be forwarded by the Chair to the Board of Thurston County Commissioners for consideration of asking for the member's resignation.

IX. TRANSMITTAL OF REPORTS TO THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

- A. Any two or more concurring Planning Commissioners may submit a minority report to accompany the majority report to the Board of Thurston County Commissioners.
- B. Findings of fact appropriate to the minority report should be included.
- C. Majority and minority reports will be submitted through the Planning Department.
- D. Any Planning Commissioner may have his or her minority opinion heard and entered into the minutes immediately following a vote, to be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners in addition to majority or minority reports.
- E. When the Planning Department is making a recommendation to the County Commissioners different from that of the Planning Commission, the Department shall notify the Planning Commission so the Commission Chair or a designee may represent the Planning Commission when the report is presented to the Board.

X. PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

- A. The Planning Staff shall perform two major roles in its work with the Planning Commission:
  - 1. The professional-technician role in which staff planners representing the Thurston County Planning Department bring proposals to the Planning Commission, or comment on proposals before the Planning Commission, and make recommendations consistent with the County's adopted plans, ordinances, and standards and with accepted planning theory and practice.
  - 2. The traditional staff role in which the staff planners provide research assistance to the Planning Commission and help its members in articulating their collective will.

Both of these roles involve research, fact-finding, identification of alternatives, evaluation and recommendations.

From time to time, these roles may lead to differing recommendations to the County Commissioners from the Planning Commission and Planning Staff. On such occasions, it shall be the responsibility of the Staff Planner to prepare a report to the Board of Thurston County

Commissioners which includes both the Planning Commission and Planning Staff recommendations and any minority reports in which two or more Planning Commissioners concur. Further, it shall be the responsibility of the Staff Planner to advise the Planning Commission Chair that the Planning Staff intends to present a separate recommendation to the County Commissioners so that the Chair or a representative may be in attendance to represent the Planning Commission.

The manner in which the Planning Staff provides its day-to-day service to the Planning Commission may be redefined annually by the Lead Planner and the Planning Commission. Essentially, the relationship between the Planning Staff and the Planning Commission shall be whatever the two entities negotiate between them.

The work of the Planning Staff shall be confined to those projects and activities officially incorporated into the County's adopted work program and budget. The work program is typically developed in consultation with both the Planning Commission and the Planning Staff, but the final adoption authority rests solely with the Board of Thurston County Commissioners. If the Planning Commission should identify a new work task during the work year, the Planning Staff may pursue work on this task only if the Board of Thurston County Commissioners amends the adopted work program.

#### XI. APPLICATION AND PETITION

- A. Petitions and applications allowed by law will be accepted by the Planning Commission when properly filed with the Planning Department on or before the closing dates as established by and posted at the Planning Department. Upon presentation to the Planning Department, application materials will be examined to ensure they are complete and accurate before acceptance.
- B. The Planning Commission need not take action on a properly filed application or petition at the public hearing. Instead, the matter may be referred to the appropriate committee for review and recommendation to be presented at the meeting following the public hearing. Once satisfied, the Planning Commission recommendation shall be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners.

#### XII. AGENDA

An agenda shall be prepared by the Secretary and approved by the Chair for each regular meeting, consisting of at least the following order of business:

1. Call to Order
2. Public Communications
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Calendar
5. New Business Items (Briefings; Worksessions; Hearings)
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

### XIII. MEETING MINUTES

#### A. Objectives of Minutes

1. Meet legal requirements to maintain a complete, factual record of motions, findings of fact and actions of the Planning Commission, as well as the usual details of time, place, type of meeting, members present, speakers and their addresses, roll call votes and other pertinent information needed to describe what was accomplished at the meeting.
2. Provide a summary of what occurred for use by a Planning Commissioner who misses a meeting or for Planning Commissioners to refresh their memories as to what occurred.
3. Provide the Board of County Commissioners with enough information to be able to follow what the Planning Commission is doing.
4. Provide the greatest level of detail for public hearing testimony and final actions taken by the Planning Commission; a moderate level of detail for post-hearing worksessions that are continued to a later meeting; and the least amount of detail for briefings and other worksessions.
5. For an official meeting record, meeting tapes shall be used.

#### B. Content of Minutes

1. Concise, factual record of what was done, not what was said. If a Planning Commissioner would like a particular statement to be placed in the minutes, they should state that for the record.

2. Detailed summary of public hearing testimony, actions taken and findings of fact for actions.
3. Summary of only major points for post-hearing worksessions that are continued to another meeting (for use by Planning Commissioners who miss the meeting or want to refresh their memory as to what occurred in preparing for the follow-up worksession).
4. Very brief summary of briefings and final worksession discussions.
5. For staff presentations, summary of only new information that was not in the written staff report.
6. Planning Commission requests for information or questions of staff that require follow-up work, with a list of outstanding requests attached to each set of minutes for reference.
7. Reference to documents that are cited by Planning Commissioners, rather than complete excerpts presented at the meeting.
8. Motions should be underlined, so that they stand out.
9. Factual errors, ambiguities, and misinterpretations should be corrected in draft minutes. Planning Commissioners should call staff in advance of a meeting if they have questions about the draft minutes, to allow time for staff to review the tapes if necessary.

# Resident Advisory Boards and Commissions Handbook

*Our Vision: Thurston County is a vibrant community ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of generations to live, work, and play*



*Our Mission: To create a community that promotes health, commerce, and environmental protection with transparency and accountability.*

## Welcome

Thank you for serving on a Thurston County resident advisory board or commission! This handbook is here to provide you, the resident, with the foundation and guiding principles you need to be a successful member. Please note, this handbook is here to guide you and does not take place of bylaws or other governing rules of the board or commission you are appointed to.

As a committee member, you are part of a team. Many of the groups are advisory in nature and will advise the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and staff on the needs, obligations, and responsibilities of the county as seen by the advisory board or commission. The Board of County Commissioners, with few exceptions, has the ultimate authority and responsibility for final policy decisions. Committee members serve as a vital link in providing resident input towards decisions.

Being a member of a resident advisory board or commission takes time and effort. We recognize the work you put in to provide your input and welcome your ideas and suggestions. You are an important part of local government's ability to maintain and improve programs and services. We wish you success in your appointment and hope this information will be helpful to you.

## Boards and Commissions

Agritourism Advisory Committee	Medic Once Emergency Medical Services Council
Agricultural Advisory Committee	
Appeals Board	Noxious Weed Control Board
Area Agency on Aging	Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council
Board of Equalization	Pest and Vegetation Management Advisory Committee
Boundary Review Board	Planning Commission
Citizen's Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials	Public Facilities District
Civil Service Commission	Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Current Use Advisory Committee (Agriculture)	Storm and Surface Water Advisory Board
Fair Board	Timberland Regional Library Board of Trustees
Historic Commission	Treatment Sales Tax Advisory Committee
Housing Authority	Veterans Advisory Board
Lodging Tax Advisory Committee	Racial Equity Council

## Guide to Being an Effective Member

Those appointed to resident advisory boards and commissions play a vital role by representing the public at large and bringing residents' perspectives to local government. Each member brings an important point of view, often representing a geographic interest, area of expertise, or professional association. If each appointee strives to be an effective member, it creates a greater opportunity to have a profound impact on county policies and legislation, and lead to improved processes and services.

Honesty and integrity shall be the primary value in all instances. All individuals and items discussed must be treated with fairness, impartiality, and respect. Each group will consist of diverse perspectives; it is important members work together to accomplish common goals.

To be an effective member, please observe the following:

- Attend each meeting and arrive on time.
- Notify the chair or staff liaison if you are unable to attend. Excessive absences may result in removal.
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing the agenda and other documents to be discussed.
- Understand your role and scope of responsibility.
- Be present and actively participate in meetings.
- Respectfully engage with staff and other members.
- Contribute your ideas for proposals and recommendations.
- Interpret community needs and opinions.
- Examine evidence and analyze materials distributed by staff, the board or commission, or the Board of County Commissioners.
- Share information about topics your board or commission are discussing, policies, programs, and budgets with members of the public.

When an advisory board or commission present recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, it is expected they will:

- Provide all recommendations in written form and in a timely manner.
- Propose viable and cost-effective solutions.
- Reflect a consensus of a majority of members.

## Open Public Meetings Act

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) expects each resident advisory board or commission to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), RCW 42.30. While some boards or commissions act on behalf of the BOCC and others only advise the BOCC, all boards or commissions exist as a sub-agency of the Board and, therefore, each should deliberate and act in an open public setting. If a board or commission offers a hybrid or virtual-only option when holding meetings, members are encouraged to participate with their camera on whenever possible.

The general guidance on orderly meetings, compliance with the OPMA/Public Records Act, and maintaining meeting documentation is critically important to help ensure good governance. Members are required to complete an Open Public Meetings Act training. A link to the training is below and is included in appointment letters as well. You must watch the online video and sign the attached acknowledgement form. Return the form to the staff liaison of the board or commission you are appointed to for record-keeping. The second link below the Public Meeting Act link, provides a basic overview of the Open Public Records Act. It is strongly encouraged for all advisory board and committee members to review.

OPMA Training: <https://wacities.org/data-resources/open-public-meetings-act-elearning>

Open Public Records Act Training: <https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-2-open-public-records-act-basics-rcw-4256>

### Robert's Rules of Order

Each board or commission is strongly encouraged to follow Robert's Rules of Order (RRO), or a friendly version of RRO. This parliamentary procedure provides the process for proposing, approving, defeating, and amending legislative motions. It ensures meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient, and orderly manner. The BOCC may take future legislative action to require each Board or Commission to conduct meetings in this manner. A digital format will be made available by the Clerk of the Board upon request. Contact your staff liaison to obtain a copy.

### Bylaws

Each board or commission is encouraged to have approved bylaws. Bylaws establish main characteristics such as the title, purpose, mission, officers and duties, parliamentary authority (such as RRO), meeting schedule and notice requirements, conflicts of interest, and procedures for further amending the bylaws. To learn if your board or commission currently has bylaws, inquire with the staff liaison. The BOCC may take future legislative action to require each board or commission to implement bylaws. If your advisory board of commission doesn't already have bylaws established and would like some examples, contact your staff liaison to request them from the Clerk of the Board.

### Appointments

The BOCC encourages all Thurston County residents interested in serving on a board or commission to apply. Members serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners.

To be considered for appointment a vacancy must occur and a completed application must be submitted to the board or commission, or Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners. Boards or commissions may review applications and provide a recommendation if asked to do so by the BOCC. The BOCC has the authority to make appointments and remove members without cause with a majority vote. Midterm vacancies may be filled in the same manner and the appointed member shall first finish the remainder of the term. Members appointed or removed by the

BOCC shall be so notified by the BOCC office. Members who wish to be considered for reappointment must reapply prior to the end of their term.

Should a member need to resign from their position before their term expires, written notification must be sent to the staff liaison and the Clerk of the Board.

Appointments to multiple committee assignments is not preferred but may be approved by the BOCC.

#### Role of the Chair and Vice Chair

- Preside at all official meetings.
- Consult with the staff liaison in creating each meeting agenda.
- Keep discussions orderly, focused, efficient, impersonal, and fair.
- Find common ground among members and achieve a compromise, if needed.

#### Staff Liaisons

A County staff member(s) will be assigned to each board or commission. The primary role of staff is to represent the interests and needs of the County and facilitate two-way communications between the Board or Commission and the BOCC or other County departments. Staff coordinates the administrative functions, such as:

- Meeting arrangements and logistics.
- Communications with members.
- Creating, in coordination with the board or commission Chair, and posting the meeting agenda.
- Storing minutes.
- Sending information or recommendations to the BOCC.
- Assisting with parliamentary procedures as needed.
- Ensuring compliance with other information outlined in this handbook.

Staff liaisons are obligated to inform the BOCC if they disagree with a recommendation of a board or commission. Members may not direct staff liaisons to conduct major study or establish official policy without approval of the BOCC; the board or commission is responsible for its work. Members should feel free to contact the staff liaisons for inquiries or support.

#### Other Rules

- A quorum (majority of members) will not discuss or deliberate board or commission business in any form in unnoticed meetings.
- Members may not use their position to secure special privileges, gifts or things of value, or exemptions for themselves or others.

- Members shall not use their position to influence board or commission decisions in which they have a financial interest, organizational responsibility, or a personal relationship that presents a conflict of interest. Members will disclose the various groups they are associated with so the board or commission can identify if there is a potential conflict of interest when an agenda item might arise. If there is a conflict of interest regarding a particular agenda item, the member will refrain from discussion, decision, and voting.
- Members will communicate respectfully with fellow board or commission members, the BOCC, County staff, and the public.
- Members shall not speak or act on behalf of the BOCC or board or commission except when formally given authority to do so for a specific purpose.
- When speaking to the public or media, members shall explicitly state they are solely representing their personal opinions, and not representing Thurston County, the BOCC, or advisory board or commission they are appointed to.
- Members shall use public resources appropriately.
- Members will create, foster, and maintain an atmosphere of non-discrimination in all personnel and volunteer-related matters. This will include, but is not limited to, antiracist language in all position descriptions and application forms for all County employment/volunteer opportunities.
- Boards and commissions are encouraged to provide the opportunity for public comment at all regularly scheduled meetings.



# Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by // (add or strike words or both)"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Extend the allotted time	<i>"I move to extend the time by ____ minutes."</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	<i>"Point of order."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a Motion	<i>"I move to table..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verify voice vote with count	<i>"I call for a division."</i>	No	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	<i>"I object to consideration of this matter..."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up a previously tabled item	<i>"I move to take from the table..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	<i>"I move to reconsider our action to..."</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	<i>"I move to suspend the rules and consider..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close the meeting for executive session	<i>"I move to go into executive session."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Personal preference - noise, room temperature, distractions	<i>"Point of privilege"</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No vote

\*A member may make a motion to reconsider something that was already disposed; however, the reconsidered motion may not be subsequently reconsidered. [A motion to reconsider](#) must be made during the same meeting and can extend to a meeting that lasts for more than one day.

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# Planning Documents Reference Guide

## GUIDING DOCUMENTS:

- **[Buildable Lands Report](#)** – A 20-year evaluation of development trends and land availability to comply with Growth Management Act requirements.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Department of Commerce Growth Management](#)** – A collection of planning resources for updating Comprehensive Plan chapters and elements.  
*Department of Commerce*
- **[Housing Needs Assessment](#)** – A 25-year assessment of housing stock, demographics, and housing needs.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Intercity Transit Strategic Plan](#)** – A 5-year plan that determines levels of public transit service and funding sources.  
*Intercity Transit*
- **[Regional Housing Action Plan \(Draft\)](#)** – A plan to help guide local policies to meet housing needs.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Regional Transportation Plan](#)** – A plan for the County’s transportation system over 20-25 years.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Stormwater Management Program Plan](#)** – Guide to regulations and practices in County stormwater standards.  
*Thurston County*
- **[Sustainable Thurston](#)** – A plan to identify needed actions for sustainability in Thurston County.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan](#)** – A plan that identifies regional adaptation actions to improve climate resiliency.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan](#)** – A regional framework for County climate action and mitigation.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **[Thurston County Homeless Crisis Response Plan](#)** – A plan that tracks and assesses responses to the homelessness crisis.  
*Thurston County*

**POLICY:**

- **Capital Improvement Plan** – A 6-year plan of community investment projects.  
*Thurston County*
- **Countywide Planning Policies** – Regional policies for coordinating comprehensive planning in Thurston County.  
*Thurston County*
- **Hazards Mitigation Plan** – A plan that identifies hazards and plans for disaster response in Thurston County  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*
- **Habitat Conservation Plan** – Contains regulatory framework to protect federally listed and rare species, implemented via TCC Chapter 17.40  
*Thurston County*
- **Shoreline Master Program** – Contains regulatory framework for managing and developing shoreline properties.  
*Thurston County*
- **Stormwater Drainage Manual** – (DDECM) Regulatory standards for stormwater runoff in Thurston County.  
*Thurston County*
- **Thurston County Flood Hazards Mitigation Plan** – A plan that identifies and prioritizes flood risk mitigation tactics.  
*Thurston Regional Planning Council*