



Bellevue Planning Commission

September 10, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Planning Commission Roles and Responsibilities Training:

Statutory framework under WA State law (RCW 35A.63.020), the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW), the State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C RCW), and City Code (Chapter 3.64 BCC)

Process IV Legislative Land Use Decisions (LUC 20.35.400 to LUC 20.35.440), Comprehensive Plan Amendments (Chapter 20.30I LUC), and Land Use Code Amendments (Chapter 20.30J LUC)

Planning Commission Bylaws, Public Meetings, and Ethics Code (Chapter 3.92 BCC)

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

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DIRECTION

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INFORMATION ONLY

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This study session item will provide a refresher course on the Planning Commission's Roles and Responsibilities under Washington State law and local City of Bellevue statutes and ordinances. The City Attorney's Office will present background information, legal authority, guidance, and recommended best practices.

As an overview, this training will cover the following topics:

1. What are the Planning Commission's Roles and Responsibilities?
2. What Washington State authority and City Codes govern the Planning Commission's planning and land use work?
3. How does the Growth Management Act (GMA), Chapter 36.70A RCW, govern and inform the Planning Commission's planning and land use work?
4. How does the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Chapter 43.21C RCW, inform the Planning Commission's planning and land use work?
5. What is a Process IV Legislative land use decision in the City of Bellevue?

In addition, the primary work program for the Planning Commission under City Code involves acting as the City advisory body providing planning and land use recommendations to the City Council in connection with Comprehensive Plan amendments and amendments to the text of the Land Use Code. The GMA requires local governments to develop and adopt long-range comprehensive plans, and the GMA requires local land use regulations (referred to as development regulations) to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The training will explain the difference between Comprehensive Plan amendments (CPAs) and Land Use Code amendments (LUCAs), discuss the Planning Commission's role as it processes CPAs and LUCAs, and identify best practices that the Planning Commission may employ when providing a recommendation to the City Council on a proposed CPA or LUCA. The training will also include an overview of Planning Commission public meetings, with a specific focus on Process IV public hearings and the Planning Commission Bylaws.

The training will conclude with a high-level discussion of the Planning Commission's obligations under the Open Public Meetings Act, the Public Records Act, and the Code of Ethics for City Advisory Boards and Commissions (Chapter 3.92 BCC). Ultimately, the goal of this training is to provide the Commissioners with a solid understanding of how City Code, the Planning Commission's role in Bellevue, the Comprehensive Plan, the Land Use Code, and the various transparency requirements and ethical considerations all work together as the Planning Commission fulfills its unique role to support the City Council's vision for future growth and development.