

PLANNING COMMISSION

PURPOSE

The Planning Commission must regularly make decisions regarding land use policies and specific development applications. Some are recommendations to the Council and some are final, subject to appeal to the Council. The Commission also reviews and recommends long-range plans for the City's growth and development.

FUNCTIONS

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Council in five areas:

1. **General Plan** – The Commission reviews proposals on long-range planning policies. These may be in the form of new sections for the General Plan, or amendments to the existing plan, and are brought to the Commission by City planning staff, consultants, and private applicants.
2. **Zoning** – The Commission reviews proposals for changes in the zoning of land, or in the zoning regulations, and makes recommendations to the Council. In some matters, such as use permits, the Commission's decision is final unless appealed to the Council.
3. **Subdivisions** – The Commission makes recommendations to the Council on the subdivision of land.
4. **Capital Improvement Program** – The City's long-range financial plan for major municipal construction projects, equipment purchases, and planning studies is reviewed for General Plan conformance by the Commission, and its recommendations are forwarded to the Council.
5. **City Services and Resources** – The Commission reviews the adequacy of City services and resources needed for proposed development. When City facilities or resources are in danger of being overburdened, the Commission offers recommendations to the Council on possible remedies.

When Planning Commission decisions are final, the Commission also takes final action on environmental determinations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In weighing decisions on the growth and development of the City of San Luis Obispo, the Commission provides a sounding board for public opinion. Although commissioners do consider the rights and desires of property owners/developers and the general public, they must make their decisions pursuant to the General Plan, ordinances, and other standards and procedures set forth in State and City law.

STATUS

The Commission was established in the 1940s. It is staffed by planners in the Community Development Department who prepare meeting agendas, meet with developers, and handle other functions for the Commission. The Commission is responsible to the Council (SLOMC Chapter 2.12, Ordinance No. 254N [1944 Series], Ordinance No. 1139 [1989 Series], and Bylaws amended by Resolution No. 9467 [2003 Series]). Commissioners are compensated \$50 per meeting with a monthly maximum of \$200 (Resolution No. 9189 [2001 Series]).

MEMBERS

The Planning Commission has seven members who are not necessarily planning professionals. No special training is required for appointment. Members occasionally may be requested to attend seminars and workshops to enhance skills in planning.

TERMS/LIMITS

Members of the Commission serve a term of four years. Members are eligible for re-appointment for an additional four years. Members are subject to a term limit of eight years or two consecutive four-year terms.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.