

## **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION PROJECT REVIEW POLICY**

### **Purposes:**

1. To establish a procedure for review of projects that enables fullest participation by the Policy and Project Review Committee, the Board of Regional Commissioners, local municipalities, and regional residents.
2. To provide for a level of review commensurate with potential benefits and/or negative impacts and issues.
3. To enable implementation of the regional plan and its goals and policies and to ensure timely and relevant input by the Regional Planning Commission for consideration by regulatory agencies.

### **Applicability:**

This Project Review Process will be used for all permitting processes in which the Regional Planning Commission is a statutory party (Act 250, Section 248, etc.), and other project reviews as relevant.

### **Levels of Review:**

Although standards of review for all projects are equivalent, the level and detail of review will vary by project depending upon size, location, type, etc.

Staff Review- This is the minimum level of review for projects; review will be conducted by Commission staff, with ratification from the Policy/Project Review Committee. For permits in which the Commission is a statutory party, staff will prepare a minimum level of comments for the regulatory agency based upon the project's conformity with the Regional Plan and have them ratified by the Committee before submission. This level of review will only be used when a project is in conformance with the plan, staff has found little to no regional impact, and more detailed review has not been requested under the guidelines below.

Policy/Project Review Committee Participation- Review by the Policy and Project Review Committee will occur when staff has found that the project may not be in conformance with the Regional Plan, may have moderate to substantial regional impact (as defined in the Regional Plan), and/or review of the project is requested by: the Board of Regional Commissioners, the host and/or adjacent municipality(s) in writing through their Regional Commissioner(s), the project landowner/developer, legal parties, and/or staff. Review by this Committee will also take place if, upon the judgement of the Committee Chair, review by the Committee is necessary or beneficial.

The Policy/Project Review Committee shall review all projects brought to their attention under the guidelines above for conformity with the Regional Plan and staff will incorporate the Committee's findings into a report. If the Policy/Project Review Committee determines that a project *does not have substantial regional impact*, as defined in the Regional Plan, the report

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shall be submitted to the regulatory agency and act as a basis for any testimony submitted on the project. If a project is determined *to have substantial regional impact*, as defined in the regional plan, the Policy/Project Review Committee shall submit the report to the Board of Regional Commissioners for ratification (if timing necessitates, preliminary ratification by the Executive Committee will be used). If ratified by the Board, the report shall serve as a basis for any testimony submitted on the project. However, if the Board does not ratify the Policy and Project Review Committee's report, the Board's vote and the minutes of the Board meeting will serve as the basis for any report and testimony submitted on the project. The Board may task the Executive Committee with reviewing any report or testimony on the project..

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