

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2740

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding the definition of land use decision in the land use petition act.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist and Angel.

House Committee on Local Government & Housing
Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections

Background:

The Land Use Petition Act.

The Land Use Petition Act (LUPA) was enacted in 1995 to provide uniform, expedited judicial review of land use decisions made by counties, cities, and unincorporated towns. Land use decisions subject to judicial review under the LUPA are limited to:

- applications for project permits or approvals that are required before real property may be improved, developed, modified, sold, transferred, or used;
- interpretations regarding the application of specific requirements to specific property; and
- enforcement by local jurisdictions of ordinances relating to particular real property.

Land use decisions that do not fall under the LUPA are approvals to use, vacate, or transfer streets, parks and other similar types of public property, approvals for area-wide rezones and annexations, and applications for business licenses. In addition, the LUPA does not apply to land use decisions that are subject to review by legislatively created quasi-judicial bodies, such as the Shorelines Hearings Board, the Environmental and Land Use Hearings Board, and the Growth Management Hearings Board.

A person seeking review of a land use decision must file a petition in superior court and serve all parties within 21 days of the issuance of the land use decision. The parties must follow certain procedures within specified timeframes intended to expedite the judicial process.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

"Land use decision" is defined to mean a final determination by a local jurisdiction's governing body or officer with the highest level of authority to make the decision, including those with the authority to hear appeals at the local, non-judicial level.

Generally, the court sets a hearing within a few months of the filing of the petition. The court may affirm or reverse the land use decision or remand it for modification or further proceedings.

Judicial relief may be granted based on any one of the following grounds:

- the decision maker followed an unlawful procedure or failed to follow a required procedure;
- the land use decision is erroneous in its interpretation or application of the law;
- the land use decision is not supported by evidence;
- the land use decision is outside the authority or jurisdiction of the decision maker; or
- the land use decision violates the petitioner's constitutional rights.

Recent Court Cases Pertinent to LUPA Appeals.

In recent years there have been conflicting decisions by the courts of appeal in this state regarding when time limits for the filing of judicial appeals begin to run in cases involving motions for the reconsideration of local administrative decisions.

In *Skinner v. Civil Service Commission of the City of Medina (Skinner)*, Division I of the Washington State Court of Appeals ruled that where the law allows a local, non-judicial motion for reconsideration of an administrative decision, the time limit for the filing of a judicial appeal runs from the date of the final order on the motion for reconsideration rather than from the date of the original administrative decision. This ruling has been appealed to the Washington State Supreme Court, which has agreed to review the case.

Contrary to the ruling in *Skinner*, in 2009 Division II of the Washington State Court of Appeals ruled in *Mellish v. Frog Mountain Pet Care* that under LUPA the 21-day limit for filing a judicial appeal begins to run on the date the order is entered on the original, administrative land use decision, regardless of whether a party has filed a local, non-judicial motion for reconsideration.

Summary:

Under the LUPA, when a motion for reconsideration of a local land use decision has been filed with the local decision-making authority, the date of the "land use decision" is the date of the entry of the decision on the reconsideration motion rather than the date of the original decision.

Votes on Final Passage:

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| House | 97 | 0 |
| Senate | 47 | 0 |

Effective: June 10, 2010