

**RCW 35A.63.170 Hearing examiner system—Adoption authorized—
Alternative—Functions—Procedures.** (1) As an alternative to those provisions of this chapter relating to powers or duties of the planning commission to hear and report on any proposal to amend a zoning ordinance, the legislative body of a city may adopt a hearing examiner system under which a hearing examiner or hearing examiners may hear and decide applications for amending the zoning ordinance when the amendment which is applied for is not of general applicability. In addition, the legislative body may vest in a hearing examiner the power to hear and decide those issues it believes should be reviewed and decided by a hearing examiner, including but not limited to:

(a) Applications for conditional uses, variances, subdivisions, shoreline permits, or any other class of applications for or pertaining to development of land or land use;

(b) Appeals of administrative decisions or determinations; and

(c) Appeals of administrative decisions or determinations pursuant to chapter 43.21C RCW.

The legislative body shall prescribe procedures to be followed by a hearing examiner. If the legislative authority vests in a hearing examiner the authority to hear and decide variances, then the provisions of RCW 35A.63.110 shall not apply to the city.

(2) Each city legislative body electing to use a hearing examiner pursuant to this section shall by ordinance specify the legal effect of the decisions made by the examiner. The legal effect of such decisions may vary for the different classes of applications decided by the examiner but shall include one of the following:

(a) The decision may be given the effect of a recommendation to the legislative body;

(b) The decision may be given the effect of an administrative decision appealable within a specified time limit to the legislative body; or

(c) Except in the case of a rezone, the decision may be given the effect of a final decision of the legislative body.

(3) Each final decision of a hearing examiner shall be in writing and shall include findings and conclusions, based on the record, to support the decision. Such findings and conclusions shall also set forth the manner in which the decision would carry out and conform to the city's comprehensive plan and the city's development regulations. Each final decision of a hearing examiner, unless a longer period is mutually agreed to in writing by the applicant and the hearing examiner, shall be rendered within ten working days following conclusion of all testimony and hearings. [1995 c 347 s 424; 1994 c 257 s 7; 1977 ex.s. c 213 s 2.]

Finding—Severability—Part headings and table of contents not law—1995 c 347: See notes following RCW 36.70A.470.

Severability—1994 c 257: See note following RCW 36.70A.270.

Severability—1977 ex.s. c 213: See note following RCW 35.63.130.