

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN MAKING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS REGARDING THE PLANNING OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HROMADA TERRITORIES

Valentyna Boklah¹, Oleksandr Mordvinov², Kateryna Naboka³

Abstract. *Research subject.* The role and place of the public in making management decisions on hromada development planning, which is extremely important for ensuring effective, transparent and democratic governance at the local level. The study is based on the issue of involving citizens in the planning of spatial development of the hromada territory and their significant impact on the development and adoption of strategic plans for the development of the hromada territory, given that this process is often accompanied by a number of difficulties and barriers that can complicate effective co-operation, while at the same time such interaction between local authorities and the public has a number of advantages. *Methodology.* The scientific and theoretical foundations of public involvement in making managerial decisions on planning the development of hromada territories are investigated. As a result of the study, using general scientific methods, the author examines the regulatory framework governing the place of the public in the process of making managerial decisions, in particular, in planning the spatial development of the hromada territory. In the system of local development management, the planning function is singled out as the main one in public administration, which involves setting priorities, allocating resources, defining specific tasks and determining ways to achieve results at the initial stage of the system development. *Research objective.* Scientific and theoretical substantiation of public involvement in making managerial decisions on hromada development planning. To determine the place of strategic planning for the development of hromada territories as a component of strategic management of socio-economic development of the region and the main function of the management activities of local self-government bodies. To explain the importance of a comprehensive plan for the spatial development of the territory as the main document reflecting the territorial development of the hromada, as well as the importance of public involvement in its preparation. To identify the forms of public participation in spatial development planning, as well as the importance of taking into account the advantages and problems of such participation. *Conclusion.* The article examines the role and place of the public in strategic planning of hromada development and its participation in management decision-making, which is necessary for the development of an effective and transparent local self-government system. It is determined that the public has a significant influence on the development and adoption of strategic plans for the development of the hromada, but this process is often accompanied by a number of difficulties and barriers that can complicate effective co-operation. Ways to overcome challenges and find compromise solutions require a comprehensive approach, including improved communication, increased trust, optimisation of citizen engagement mechanisms, and removal of administrative, financial and legal barriers. Among the functions of local governance is planning, which involves setting priorities, allocating resources, defining specific tasks and identifying ways to achieve results at the initial stage of the system's development. Strategic planning for hromada development is highlighted, which results in the definition of long-term goals and objectives for hromada development, in particular in the areas of economy, social sphere, environment and infrastructure. Particular attention is paid to public involvement in planning the spatial development of the hromada's territory, which not only improves the quality of decisions

¹ Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies, Ukraine (*corresponding author*)

E-mail: boklag_val@ukr.net

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0248-0963>

² Classic Private University, Ukraine

E-mail: mordvinov1202@ukr.net

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5747-1290>

³ Classic Private University, Ukraine

E-mail: omka2387@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9883-9044>



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made but also ensures broad support among the hromada's residents. The main forms of public involvement in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for hromada spatial development are identified: public hearings and consultations, publication of drafts, questionnaires and surveys, creation of focus groups, use of mobile platforms and applications. The advantages and challenges of this process are identified. The advantages include: increased transparency and trust in the authorities; improved social unity and hromada cohesion; improved monitoring and control over the implementation of plans; innovative solutions and creativity, etc. At the same time, there may be a number of problems with public participation in the process of hromada development planning: low activity and interest of citizens; difficulty in coordinating and managing the process; communication and understanding problems; low quality of proposals (proposals that do not take into account technical and economic realities).

Keywords: public, local self-government bodies, spatial planning, territory development, strategic planning, territorial planning, local development management.

JEL Classification: H76, H83

1. Introduction

The process of decentralisation of power in Ukraine, which began in 2014 with the adoption of the Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine, involves the increasing involvement of the general public in managing the development of their hromadas (The Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine", 2014). It is worth noting that the legal aspects of citizen participation in governance were enshrined at the international level as early as 1948. Thus, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), among other human rights and freedoms, defined the right to participate in public affairs and the fundamental principle arising from this right: government should be based on the will of the people. Article 21 of this fundamental document of world democracy states: "1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 3. The will of the people shall be the basis of governmental authority; this will shall be expressed through periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures" (Berdanova, 2017).

The concepts of "public participation", "citizen participation" or "citizen engagement" are becoming increasingly widespread. Foreign experience shows that public participation is a necessary, useful and extremely important mechanism for positive public influence on the activities of local self-government bodies. In addition, public participation is a source of additional intellectual resources for the AHs council, and therefore is useful and necessary for it as well (Berdanova, 2017).

Currently, Ukraine has a regulatory framework that defines the role of the public in the process of making hromada management decisions and is

an integral part of effective and democratic local governance. In particular, the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine for 2021-2026 states that the main tasks are to create favourable conditions for the development of public initiatives, form a system of civil society institutions, and establish communications and interaction between them and the authorities (The Decree of the President of Ukraine "On the National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine for 2021-2026", 2021). The Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine emphasises the importance of maximising the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process on local governance and promoting direct democracy (The Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine", 2014).

2. Hromada Development Planning as the Main Function of Local Development Management

Among the main management functions at both the state and local levels is planning, which involves setting priorities, allocating resources, defining specific tasks and identifying ways to achieve results at the initial stage of the system's development. Therefore, hromada development planning is an important management tool that contributes to the organised, balanced and sustainable development of local hromadas in Ukraine. It envisages a set of measures aimed at the efficient use of natural, economic, social and cultural resources of the territory in order to improve the quality of life of the population and ensure sustainable development of the hromada.

Domestic scientists study such definitions as "strategic planning of the territory", "planning of economic development of the territory", "planning of

sustainable development of the territories", "territorial planning", etc., but each concept as a whole considers the scientific position on planning sustainable hromada development in its best manifestation, in particular, it is about planning local economic development with a focus on three components – social well-being, equal access of all residents to public services, healthcare, environmental cleanliness, environmental safety and security.

Modern domestic scholars pay considerable attention to strategic planning of hromada development, because, as Buryk (2020) notes, "...strategic planning, being a component of strategic management of the socio-economic development of the region and the main function of the management activities of local governments, is aimed at developing strategic decisions, the implementation of which provides for the effective functioning in the long term of a particular hromada. The development of strategic decisions involves the definition of specific goals and strategies for the behaviour of management entities."

Nevmerzhytska S. concludes that strategic planning is an important requirement for achieving sustainable competitive advantages in the development of territories. For most amalgamated hromadas, it is vital to plan strategically, i.e., to analyse, create, implement and monitor, and to do so on an ongoing basis. This is an important process that helps to look at things from a broader perspective and promotes co-operation (Nevmerzhytska, 2021).

The authors agree with scholars who believe that in order to ensure sustainable development of territories, increase productivity and overall quality of services provided, the public sector needs to widely use modern strategic management tools. Strategic planning is one of the main tools needed to respond appropriately to specific situations and development challenges. The means take various forms, and strategic planning encompasses a system of long-term, medium-term and short-term plans, projects and programmes (Bryl, 2020, Kuhlenko, 2017).

Focusing on strategic planning, planning is defined as the process by which local governments, in the case of hromadas, plan their future activities. The result of this process is a document that guides the authorities and citizens to achieve their goals. The main document that defines the long-term goals and objectives of hromada development, in particular in the areas of economy, social sphere, environment and infrastructure, is the Hromada Development Strategy. Based on the strategy, other documents, programmes and plans are developed and implemented, such as: a comprehensive plan for hromada spatial development; social development programmes; environmental development plans; hromada investment

plan; financial plan for hromada development; hromada improvement plan, etc.

Among these documents, a special place is occupied by a comprehensive plan for the spatial development of the hromada, as it is a document that determines the development of the hromada's territory not only "in time" but also "in space". Development projects are physically implemented "at a certain time" and "in a certain place", and in such a way that it does not just cause problems for the environment, surroundings, residents and facilities, but also brings a number of positive changes. This unity of development processes in time and space is reflected in the relevant terms: "strategic plan", "master plan", "detailed territory plan", "territory zoning plan", "territory planning scheme", etc. The matrix or a kind of "foundation" for the strategic hromada development plan is the spatial development plans (urban planning documentation), which defines the main issues of long-term planning and development of the hromada territory (Vasylchenko, 2015).

It should be noted that these documents, which envisage the long-term development of the hromada's territory, are developed in close co-operation with the public, local authorities and experts in the fields of urbanism, economics and ecology to ensure comprehensive and sustainable development of the hromada.

The Constitution of Ukraine, in its Article 5, stipulates the following: "The people of Ukraine are to be recognised as the legitimate bearers of sovereignty and the sole legitimate source of power within the nation. The people shall exercise power directly and through state authorities and local self-government bodies" (The Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). Thus, engaging citizens in local self-government involves not only informing the public about the intentions of the authorities, but also taking into account the wishes of the population and implementing initiatives that come from hromada members. Therefore, the issue of organising effective work with local initiatives will never lose its relevance for local governments.

3. Public Involvement in the Preparation of a Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan for the Hromada

Local governments work every day to ensure that communities are viable and can develop, because without successful hromadas it will be difficult to build Ukraine. Despite the military and security challenges that complicate this work, it is important to establish communication with residents and do everything possible to ensure that hromadas really develop. The process of planning for hromada recovery

and development will be more effective and the resulting strategic documents will be of higher quality if they combine the opinions, needs, and interests of as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

A systematic dialogue between executive authorities and the public, and improvement of the quality of decision-making on important issues of state and public life, taking into account public opinion, is possible with the active participation of citizens and interest groups in the decision-making process. This requires the existence of appropriate legal mechanisms and procedures that, on the one hand, allow citizens to influence the decision-making process and, on the other hand, enable these decisions to be made quickly and efficiently. The Law of Ukraine 'On Access to Public Information' and the Law of Ukraine 'On Citizens' Appeals' are in place to create a legal framework that meets these requirements of the Constitution of Ukraine.

Within the framework of strategic planning of hromada development, one of the key elements is territorial planning, which is a component of planning economic and social development of the hromada and reflects the spatial aspect of the process of reproduction of material goods, labour force, industrial relations and solving social and economic problems. The main document reflecting the spatial development of the hromada is a comprehensive plan of spatial development of the territory, which determines the planning organisation, functional purpose of the territory, basic principles and directions of formation of a unified system of public services, road network, engineering and transport infrastructure, engineering preparation and improvement, civil protection of the territory and population from hazardous natural and man-made processes, protection of land and other environmental components, formation of an ecological network, protection and preservation of cultural heritage and traditional character of the environment of settlements, as well as the sequence of implementation of decisions, including the stages of territory development (The Law of Ukraine 'On Regulation of City Planning Activity', 2011).

Ukrainian legislation provides for the active participation of hromada residents in decision-making on the spatial development of the hromada territory. Thus, the Law of Ukraine 'On Local Self-Government' provides for the direct right of citizens to participate in local self-government, which is carried out on the principles of democracy, transparency, and collegiality. Thus, public involvement in the preparation of a comprehensive hromada spatial development plan is an important process that not only improves the quality of decisions made, but also ensures broad support among hromada residents. It allows to take into account the needs and desires of local residents, businesses and other stakeholders, which has

a positive impact on the efficiency and sustainability of the territory's development. The role of the public in territory planning is determined by the fact that hromada residents, having direct experience of living in the territory, can point out problems that are not always obvious to the administration. Their participation helps to identify real needs for infrastructure, services and other aspects of development.

The role of the public in solving the problems of spatial planning has certain advantages, as it allows making governance more democratic, transparent and focused on the real needs of the population. At the same time, it is important to realise that such a complex process is accompanied by problems.

Among the positive factors of public involvement is the fact that open discussion of plans allows citizens to be aware of changes affecting the territory. In addition, hromada members may have specific knowledge or experience in the use of land resources, which helps to avoid ineffective decisions in planning and infrastructure development. The public can participate in monitoring the implementation of the plan, providing an additional level of control over the activities of the authorities, and taking into account public opinion makes the authorities more accountable for the fulfilment of their promises and plans.

Therefore, public involvement in hromada territorial planning is essential to ensure more efficient, sustainable and inclusive development. It allows for the generation of useful ideas, increased trust between citizens and authorities, reduced social tensions, and more efficient use of resources. Ultimately, this approach helps to create a more comfortable, transparent and balanced environment for every hromada resident.

At the same time, when engaging the public in the decision-making process on spatial planning, it should be remembered that this may be accompanied by certain problems, in particular: low participation in public hearings, surveys and other forms of engagement; residents may be against the development of certain infrastructure facilities (schools, businesses) because it may affect their lifestyle or the environment; citizens may be dissatisfied if their suggestions are not taken into account; public engagement requires additional resources to organise hearings, meetings, surveys, publish information, etc.

Thus, public involvement in hromada territorial planning is an important tool for improving the quality of decisions and ensuring social justice, but this process can have a number of difficulties and shortcomings, such as low citizen participation, conflicts of interest, high costs of organising consultations and the possibility of manipulation. To minimise these problems, it is important to effectively organise

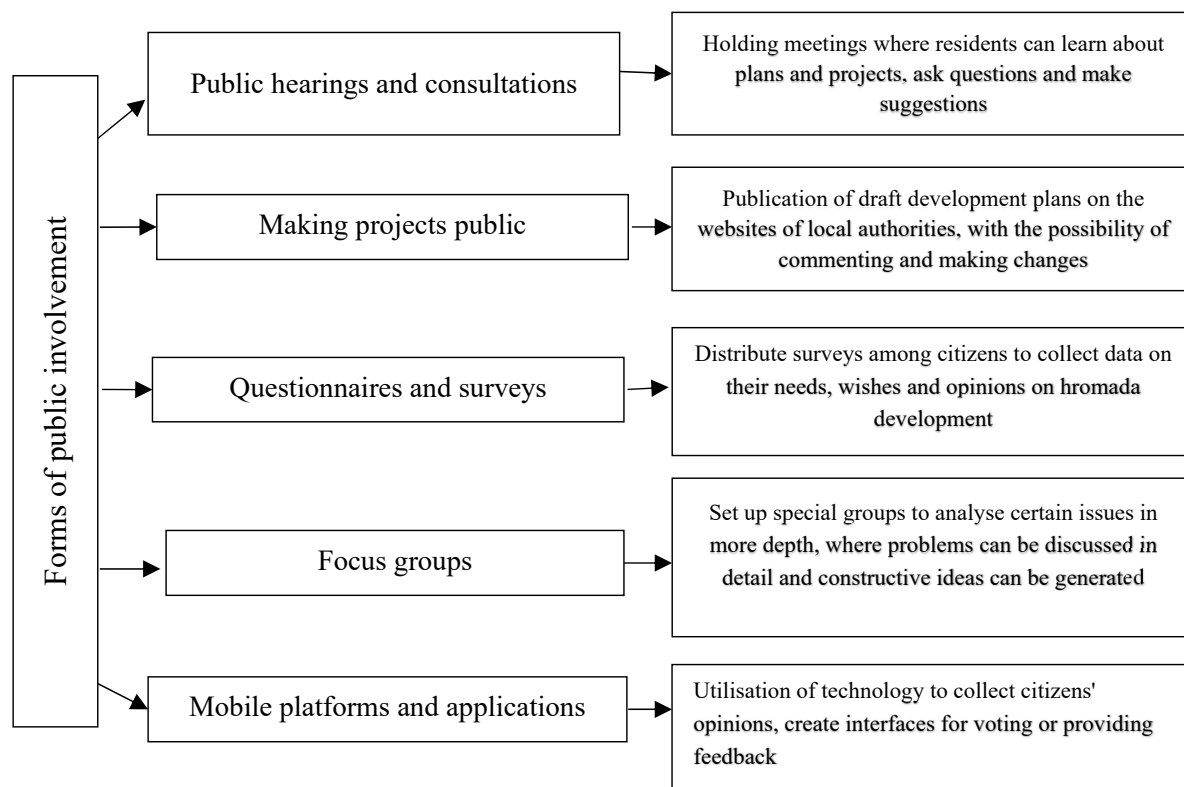


Figure 1. Forms of public involvement in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for hromada spatial development

Table 1

Involvement of the public in hromada territorial planning

Advantages	Challenges and issues
1. Improving the quality of solutions: – Diversity of ideas; – balance of interests. 2. Increased transparency and trust in the authorities: – Distrust reduction; – transparency of the process. 3. Improving social unity and hromada cohesion: – Involvement in a common cause; – increased social activity. 4. Ensuring sustainable development and efficient use of resources: – Involvement of expert knowledge; – more effective use of resources. 5. Reducing social tensions and conflicts: – Prevention of protests and resistance; – satisfaction with local decisions. 6. Improved monitoring and control over the implementation of plans: – Involvement in control; – accountability of the authorities. 7. Innovative solutions and creativity: – New development vision;\n – technological solutions. 8. Strengthening public responsibility for the future of the hromada: – A sense of self-worth; – involvement of young people.	1. Low activity and interest of citizens: – Apathy of citizens; – lack of awareness of planning processes. 2. Ambiguity and conflicting interests: – Conflict of interest; – mismatch of interests of the majority and minorities. 3. Difficulty in coordinating and managing the process: – Managing a large flow of information and offers; – uncertainty about the consideration of proposals. 4. High costs of organising and conducting consultations: – Financial and organisational costs; – the need for specialised knowledge. 5. Problems with communication and understanding: – Unequal access to information; – difficulties in ensuring mutual understanding. 6. Possibility of manipulation or lobbying: – Use of the process for lobbying purposes; – influence on decisions by economically powerful groups. 7. Technical and legal restrictions: – Lack of coordination between local and higher authorities; – legal restrictions. 8. Poor quality of proposals (proposals that do not take into account technical and economic realities).

Source: compiled by the authors

citizen engagement, ensure transparency, equality and accessibility of information, and take into account the different interests of the hromada.

4. Conclusions

The processes of decentralisation of power in Ukraine, which began in 2014, contribute to a more active involvement of citizens in managing the development of their hromadas. An important aspect of this is the legal recognition of citizens' participation in public governance at the international level, which is confirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Increasing the role of the public in decision-making is essential for the development of an effective and transparent local governance system. The legal framework that defines the role of the public is the basis for democratic governance, which in turn contributes to the development of direct democracy and sustainable development at the local level.

Hromada development planning is an important tool for effective governance that promotes the organised, balanced and sustainable development of local hromadas in Ukraine. It involves an integrated approach to the use of natural, economic, social and cultural resources to improve the quality of life of the population and ensure sustainable hromada development. Strategic planning is a key element of this process, as it ensures long-term, effective management of the development of the territory and contributes to the achievement of competitive advantages. An important aspect is the development of strategic decisions, including the definition of goals, objectives and ways to achieve them.

Strategic planning documents, such as the Hromada Development Strategy, the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan, and others, are the basis for management decisions aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the territories. All these planning documents should be developed with due regard for the interests of the public and local authorities, which allows for the effective implementation of citizens' initiatives and ensures their participation in local government processes. Hromada involvement in management decisions is a prerequisite for the development of democratic processes and sustainable development of territories.

Local governments have an important mission in ensuring the viability and development of hromadas, which is the basis for building a strong and prosperous Ukraine. Despite the challenges, including military and security, it is important to ensure active communication with residents and involve them in the planning and decision-making process. The process of hromada recovery and development will be more effective if it takes into account the opinions and interests of different stakeholders. The active participation of citizens in strategic

planning processes, particularly in territorial planning, allows for better and more sustainable results, as their experience and needs can reveal real problems that are not always addressed by the administration. Legal mechanisms, such as the law on access to public information and citizens' appeals, facilitate this process.

It is determined that the public has a significant influence on the development and adoption of strategic plans for the development of the hromada, but this process is often accompanied by a number of difficulties and barriers that can complicate effective co-operation.

Among the functions of management at the local level, planning is highlighted, which involves setting priorities, allocating resources, defining specific tasks and identifying ways to achieve results at the initial stage of the system development. It is noted that domestic scholars pay considerable attention to strategic planning of hromada development, which results in determining the long-term goals and objectives of hromada development, in particular in the areas of economy, social sphere, environment and infrastructure.

The emphasis is on public involvement in planning the spatial development of the hromada, which not only improves the quality of decisions but also ensures broad support among hromada residents. The main forms of public involvement in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for hromada spatial development are identified: public hearings and consultations, publication of drafts, questionnaires and surveys, creation of focus groups, use of mobile platforms and applications.

The advantages and challenges of this process are identified. The advantages include: increased transparency and trust in the authorities; improved social unity and hromada cohesion; improved monitoring and control over the implementation of plans; innovative solutions and creativity, etc. At the same time, there may be a number of problems with public participation in the process of hromada development planning: low activity and interest of citizens; difficulty in coordinating and managing the process; communication and understanding problems; low quality of proposals (proposals that do not take into account technical and economic realities).

The active participation of citizens in strategic planning processes, in particular in territorial planning, allows for better and more sustainable results, as their experience and needs can reveal real problems that are not always addressed by the administration. Legal mechanisms facilitate this process. Involving the public in the creation of a comprehensive spatial development plan not only improves the quality of decisions, but also ensures support among residents, which in turn contributes to the effective and sustainable development of the hromada.

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