

What to expect at a land use hearing

Public hearings are held at City Hall in the City Council Chambers. You may watch previous City Council or Planning Commission hearings on the City's website. The City's website has helpful background information on the project, including the application, site plans, and the Staff Report.

Continuation of hearings

Sometimes, public hearings may be continued or postponed to a later date. Before the conclusion of the initial hearing, any participant may request an opportunity to present additional evidence, arguments or testimony regarding the land use proposal. In this case, the public hearing will be continued to a specific date and time.

How is a decision made?

After discussion, the decision making body will vote to either approve (with or without conditions) or deny the land use proposal (a majority vote is required). The decision may occur at the initial hearing or at a later hearing, but all decisions are made at public meetings.

Who is notified of the final decision?

The Planning Department will mail the *Notice of Land Use Decision* letter to the applicant, anyone who provided written or oral testimony, and those who were required to be noticed. Anyone else may request to be notified at the hearing.



Appealing decisions



All land use decisions can be appealed. However, only people with "standing" may appeal a decision. Generally, if you provided written or oral testimony at the hearing, or were required to be noticed, then you have standing. Requesting to be notified of the final decision does not give you standing. Appeals against Planning Commission decisions are heard by City Council, and appeals against City Council decisions are heard at the State level.

If you want to appeal a decision, please contact City Staff as soon as possible so we can explain the appeal process and requirements.

More information...

For more information about land use planning in Scappoose, or details on land use proposals, visit the City's website at the following address:

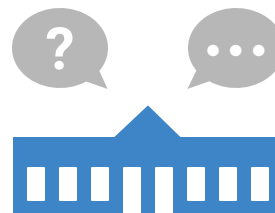
<http://www.ci.scappoose.or.us>

This guide is not a complete list of all land use rules and procedures. If you have any questions about land use proposals, the approval process, or the Land Use and Development Code, please contact the City Planning Department.

Planning Department

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Scappoose, OR 97056



How to testify at public land use hearings

Local decision makers rely on community members to broaden their understanding of neighborhood issues. You can influence land use decisions in the City of Scappoose by commenting on land use proposals or by testifying at land use hearings with the Planning Commission or City Council. Your input will be most effective if you know what to expect at a public hearing, and this guide will help you prepare effective testimony.



Prepare for the land use hearing

First, review the Staff Report for the proposal.

This will be available at City Hall or online at least seven days prior to the hearing. The Staff Report will describe the proposal, the project site, and any major issues to be considered. It will also include a recommendation to approve or deny the proposal along with any proposed conditions of approval, and finally, the reasoning behind the recommendation.

When considering your comments, you should understand that land use decisions made by the Planning Commission and City Council are based on how well the proposal meets the requirements of the Scappoose Land Use and Development Code. The decision makers can only consider testimony that speaks to the relevant criteria. The Staff Report will cite the exact relevant sections of the Scappoose Land Use and Development Code, so review them carefully and base your comments only on those requirements.

Providing testimony at the hearing

Testimony forms will be available at the hearing. Please fill in all of the requested information. You must provide your name and address if you want to receive a copy of the final decision.

You may write comments on these forms for the City Council or the Planning Commission to consider. If you indicate a desire to speak, your name will be called during the Public Comment portion of the hearing.

Tips for giving effective testimony

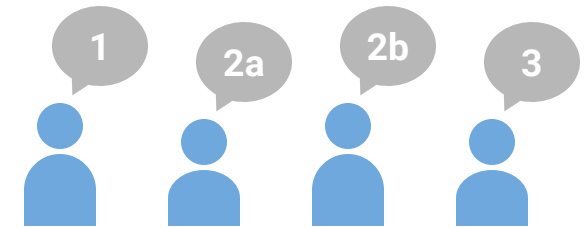
Be complete, but concise. Decision makers are generally overwhelmed with information, so they appreciate short, concise comments. It is a good idea to rehearse your testimony to find out how much time you need to make your comments. Usually, testimony is limited to five minutes so that everyone has an opportunity to testify. If you are providing oral testimony, it is helpful to the hearing participants to receive a written copy or outline of your comments. Some testifiers deliver a shorter version of a longer written piece that they hand out.

Use your own words. Most people are more comfortable and effective when using clear, direct language. Do not feel you need to use legal jargon when preparing your comments. You should direct your comments directly to the Planning Commission or City Council or rather than City Staff, the applicant, or other people that testified. Personal attacks toward other people are inappropriate and draw attention away from the important points you wish to make.

Be clear about your position. Do you agree with the Staff recommendation? If not, what parts do you oppose? How does the proposal meet or not meet the approval criteria? Instead of repeating information that has been mentioned by someone else, state your agreement with their comments. It is fine to disagree with the Staff recommendation or any other testimony provided at the hearing; decision makers want to hear from all sides.

Testifying as a group

If you represent an organization or group of people, state this fact at the beginning of your presentation. Your testimony should clarify your role and interest in the application. Instead of each group member restating the same issue, it is much more effective to have each group member address a different issue and then to state that they support the previous testimony.



Using visual aids

You may supplement your testimony with presentation boards, maps, photos, or computer presentations. However, any visual aids must remain with the City as part of the official record (so make copies for yourself because you won't be able to take them home with you). If you want to make a presentation via computer, the presentation must be delivered to City Staff 48 hours prior to the meeting. Please coordinate the details with Staff well in advance of the meeting.

