



CITY OF
West Linn

Memorandum

Date: April 1, 2009
To: Commission for Citizen Involvement
From: Peter Spir, Associate Planner
Subject: Citizen Participation Brochures

Based upon a successful program of citizen involvement in Corvallis, staff has used that city's format as the basis for two brochures: "Participating in Land Use Decisions" and "Tips for Providing Effective Testimony".



CITY OF
**West
Linn**

Land Use Decisions

**Tips for Providing
Effective Testimony**

**You can influence land use decisions
in the City of West Linn**

City of West Linn
Committee for Citizen Involvement

Participating in Land Use Decisions

The City of West Linn encourages, promotes and uses citizen input in its decision making. You can influence land use matters in the City of West Linn by providing comments on a proposed land use action. When considering your comments, you should understand that the Planning Director, Planning Commission or City Council decisions are based on how well the proposal meets the requirements in the Community Development Code (CDC). The decision making body can therefore only consider testimony that speaks to the relevant criteria. You can find the criteria that apply to a particular proposal by visiting the City of West Linn Planning Department, reviewing the applicable CDC criteria online at the City's website or at the West Linn library. Your participation in the land use decision making process does not guarantee that the final decision will be the one that you favor. However, by providing comments, also called "testimony", you ensure that your opinion is heard and considered by decision maker(s). Different land use decisions allow for different types of input. Some decisions permit only written testimony, while public hearings allow both written and oral testimony. You can ask the Planning Division office what type of testimony is appropriate for the land use case.

Preparing Testimony

Know what you want to say.

Be sure of your facts when presenting or preparing testimony. Research the applicable sections of the Land Development Code and base your comments on the requirements. Stick to the issues and criteria of the application. You can contact City planning staff to help identify the applicable code sections.

Use your own words. You will be more comfortable and effective when using clear, direct language. Do not feel you need to use legal jargon when preparing your comments.

Be complete, but concise. Decision makers are generally overloaded with information. They appreciate short, concise comments.

Be courteous and polite. Personal attacks toward any participants, including those running the meeting, city staff, the applicants, or any audience members, tend to draw attention away from the important points you wish to make.

Know what is expected. Contact the Planning Division to determine what type of testimony will be accepted.

Additional Tips for Oral Testimony

Know what to expect at the hearing.

Many people find a public hearing intimidating. You may want to consider watching a Planning Commission or City Council hearing on the local cable channel ahead of time so you know what to expect.

Consider visual aids. Make sure your visual aids are appropriate and readable.

Distribute copies of your testimony.

If you are providing oral testimony, it is helpful to the hearing participants to review a copy or outline of your comments. This is a good strategy for expanding on limited time at the podium. Some testifiers deliver a shorter version of a longer piece that they hand out. Bring at least 15 copies for the decision making body and staff who will need to keep a copy in the case file.

Other Presentation Suggestions

Here are some other suggestions for effective delivery of your testimony:

Maintain eye contact with the hearing body, not the staff, applicant, or audience. Speak clearly and into the microphone so your testimony can be heard.

Instead of repeating information that has been adequately addressed, state your agreement with another's comments.

For Further Information

West Linn Planning Department:

*West Linn Planning Department
22500 Salamo Road
West Linn, OR 97068*

Phone: 503-656-4211

Fax: 503-656-4106

E-Mail: PL@westlinnoregon.gov

City Website: [www.cityofwestlinn](http://www.cityofwestlinn.com)

Community Development Code And Zoning Map:

! Planning Department

! West Linn Public Library

! www.westlinn.oregon.gov

Planning Commission Information:

! Planning Department

! [www. West Linn Oregon](http://www.WestLinnOregon.com)

Public Hearing Staff Report:

*Available from the Planning Department one week
prior to the public hearing date.*

! Planning Department

! [www. West Linn Oregon](http://www.WestLinnOregon.com)

Committee for Citizen Involvement:

*Facilitates citizen involvement in the City's land
use planning and decision making.*

Contact the Planning Division for more
information or to request additional brochures.



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Participating in Land Use Decisions

City of West Linn
Citizen Involvement Committee

Participating in West Linn Land Use Decisions

The City of West Linn encourages,

promotes, and uses citizen input in its decision making. An important way that you can influence land use matters in the City of West Linn is to provide comments on a proposed land use action.

Your participation in the land use decision making process does not guarantee that the final decision will be the one that you favor. However, by providing comments, known as “testimony,” you ensure that your opinion is heard and considered by decision makers.

Finding Out

About Pending

Land Use Actions

Many people find out about a proposed land use action when they receive a mailed land use notice from the City. The City is required to send these notices to property owners and residents within a certain distance (often 500 feet) from the affected property. The notice describes the land use request, the property, the hearing date, and the relevant sections of the Community Development Code (CDC) that apply to the application.

A staff contact is listed for further information.

Other ways that the City notifies the public of pending land use actions:

- Signs posted on the affected property.
- Legal notices and meeting announcements in the West Linn Tidings.
- Pending land use applications on the City’s Web site.
- Large projects are required by CDC to contact neighborhood association and nearby property owners and hold informational meeting before applying.

Gathering Background Information

Here are some ways you can learn more about what is being proposed:

Discuss your questions and concerns with the City planner working on the application.

Review the land use criteria that will be used to evaluate the case. The relevant criteria are taken from the CDC.

The criteria that staff has identified as relevant are included in the land use notice and a staff report prepared for the public hearing. Other criteria that you feel are applicable also may be identified.

Make an appointment to meet with a staff person or review the case file.

Review the staff report, available one week before the hearing.

Options for Providing Input

There are several options for providing comments on the proposed land use action. Some may find it inconvenient or intimidating to testify at a hearing.

You may want to prepare written comments instead of, or in addition to, oral testimony.

You also may want to consider preparing your comments with other individuals or organizations.

It is recommended that you send any written comments to the City at least 14 days before the hearing, so that your comments can be included in the staff report. This will give other interested citizens and the decision makers the most amount of time to consider your comments.

Comments received after the staff report is prepared will be distributed at the hearing.

You may choose to comment again after reviewing the staff report.

The brochure "Tips for Providing Effective Public Testimony" provides additional suggestions. Contact the Planning Department to obtain a copy or access it online through the City's website.

For Further Information

West Linn Planning Department:

The Planning Department processes land use applications that are reviewed at a public hearing. Some other land use applications are processed at the staff level by the Planning Director

Contact:

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West Linn, OR 97068*

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