

Guide to Hosting a Public Open House

A public open house provides the applicant(s) with an opportunity to engage with residents in the surrounding area by providing information on the proposal, discussing and answering any related questions, and obtaining feedback so that potential issues or concerns can be identified and addressed before the application goes to Council.

Recommended Applications

- Public open houses are recommended for land use bylaw amendments such as rezoning applications for commercial, industrial, or multiple-family developments (eight units or greater) located within 100 m of land zoned for residential use.

Public Open House Format

Date/Time

- A public open house should be scheduled as soon as possible so the applicant(s) can make changes to the project design based on feedback. A public open house must take place at least one month before the application goes to Council, and the date should be discussed with staff.
- A public open house should last approximately two hours and be scheduled on a weekday evening between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm to maximize opportunities for public input. A public open house should not be held on weekends or holidays.

Location

- A public open house should be held in an accessible location that is in close proximity to the development site, and the location should be large enough to accommodate the anticipated turnout. Appropriate venues include community buildings, civic facilities, community halls, schools, churches, banquet and meeting rooms, etc.
- Private residences, company offices, or construction sites are not appropriate venues for a public open house.

Format

- Staff recommend using standing display boards detailing the project and having representative(s) present to engage in conversation and answer questions. At minimum, full-size drawings should be available in a format that allows them to be easily viewed by more than one person at a time.
- Settings with tables and chairs are not recommended unless the applicant(s) intend to include a full presentation followed by a question and answer session.

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- It is recommended that comment sheets be distributed to allow attendees to record any comments or concerns. These comments should be incorporated into the summary report and may be broadly referenced in the Council report. Copies of the individual comments will not be circulated to Council.
- City staff may attend the public open house to observe, but they will not speak to the proposal.

Notification

- It is recommended that the applicant(s) mail or hand deliver a notice of the public open house to all property owners within 100 m of the subject property and to the Planning and Development Division a minimum of 10 days prior to the public open house date.
- In-person, door-to-door neighbourhood consultation may be an accepted alternative for applications with small notification areas.

Outcome

A summary report prepared by and signed by the applicant(s) or agent should be provided to staff and include the following information:

- timing and notification delivery method
- date, time, duration, and location of the public open house
- development representative(s) in attendance
- copy of the public open house notification
- number of attendees
- information that was provided
- discussion of the issues or concerns that were raised during the public open house
- copies of any completed comment sheets
- how the input from the public open house was addressed in the project

The summary report should be received by the City **at least 20 days before the application goes to Council**. Information contained in the summary report may be included in the Council report.