

Online Resources

- **Land Use Code & Maps**
www.ashland.or.us/comdevdocs
- **Comprehensive Plan**
www.ashland.or.us/comdevdocs
- **Planning Commission Information**
www.ashland.or.us
- **Public Hearing Staff Report**
Available one week from the public hearing date at the Community Development & Engineering Services Building and online at www.ashland.or.us

Contact Information

For further information, please contact the Community Development Department.

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**CITY OF
ASHLAND**
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Ashland Land Use Decisions Tips for Providing Effective Testimony



**CITY OF
ASHLAND**

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Participating in Land Use Decisions

The City of Ashland encourages, promotes, and uses citizen input in its decision making. You can influence land use matters in the City of Ashland by providing comments on a proposed land use action. When considering your comments, you should understand that the Planning Commission or City Council decisions are based on how well the proposal meets the requirements in the Land Use Code. The hearing 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 Ashland Planning Division.

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 makers.

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

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

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY

Be sure of your facts when presenting or preparing testimony. Research the applicable sections of the Land Use Code and base your comments on the requirements. Stick to the issues and the criteria of the application.

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 participant, 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 types of testimony will be accepted and when the record will be closed to comments.

Additional Tips for Oral Testimony

KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED AT THE HEARING

Many people find public hearings intimidating. You may want to attend another Planning Commission hearing ahead of time so you know what to expect, or watch one of the meeting videos available on the City’s website.

CONSIDER VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids may be useful. Contact the Community Development Department ahead of time if you need a projector. 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 public hearing participants to review a copy or an 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.

OTHER PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS:

- ✓ 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.