
SILVERTON LAND USE DECISIONS

TIPS FOR PROVIDING EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY



**CITY OF SILVERTON
306 S WATER STREET
SILVERTON, OR 97381
(503) 874-2207**

Participating in Land Use Decisions



The City of Silverton encourages, promotes, and uses citizen input in its decision making. An important way that you can influence land use matters in the City of Silverton 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 input 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 comments, while public hearings allow both written and oral comments. Comments about a land use decision are considered testimony.

Preparing Testimony

- **Learn about the proposal.** Discuss your questions and concerns with the City Planner working on the application.
- **Know what you want to say.** Be sure of your facts when presenting or preparing comments. Stick to the issues and criteria of the application.
- **Raise issues of concern.** Many participants have questions or desire additional information. Direct your questions to the meeting chairperson. The chairperson will direct your question to the appropriate staff member later in the hearing.
- **Use your own words.** You will be most 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 messages.
- **Be courteous and polite.** Personal attacks toward any participants, including those running the meeting, city staff, the applicant, or any audience members, tend to draw attention from the important points you wish to make.

Additional Tips for Oral Testimony

Know what to expect at the hearing. Many people find a public hearing intimidating. You may want to consider attending another Planning Commission or City Council hearing to know what to expect. Call the Planning Division to determine if there may be a time limit for your presentation.

Consider visual aids. Visual aids may be useful. Contact the Planning Division ahead of time if you need a slide projector or overhead 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 hearing participants to review a copy or outline of your comments. This may be 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

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

- ✦ Maintain eye contact with the hearing body, not staff.
- ✦ Speak clearly and loudly so your testimony can be heard.
- ✦ Try not to repeat information that has been adequately addressed by another testifier, but feel free to state your concurrence.



For Further Information

Community Development Department

The Planning Division 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 Division.

City of Silverton

306 S Water Street
Silverton, OR 97381

Community Development Department: (503) 874-2207

Fax: (503) 873-3210

Email: planner@silverton.or.us

Web: www.silverton.or.us

Land Development Code and Map:

Silverton's zoning regulations

Community Development Department

Downtown Public Library

www.silverton.or.us

Comprehensive Plan and Map:

Land use policies for the Silverton City Limits/Urban Growth Boundary

Planning Division

Downtown Public Library

www.silverton.or.us

Planning Commission Information

Planning Division

www.silverton.or.us

Public Hearing Staff Report

Available from the Planning Division one week prior to the public hearing date