

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING INFORMATION

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

A neighborhood meeting may be required prior to any type of approval.

The City of Westminster places a high priority on contact with adjacent property owners and existing neighborhoods that could be affected by a new development proposal. As part of the development review process, the City of Westminster requires that the applicants representing new projects contact the surrounding neighborhoods regarding their proposed developments. The applicant is responsible for all public notifications, researching and providing property ownership information, and if applicable, organizing and conducting neighborhood meeting(s).

City staff will attend the meeting to answer any questions about the development review or public hearing process, and the Project Planner and Project Engineer can also help to answer questions about the project from the City's perspective. A copy of the "sign-in" sheet shall be provided to the Project Planner for the City's file.

This can be a valuable tool for the applicant to determine issues of importance to the surrounding community and, because this is typically required early in the review process, gives the applicant adequate time to make alterations to the plans, if necessary. In addition, addressing neighborhood concerns and identifying merits of the proposal through proactive contact with the neighborhood can reduce or eliminate negative comments that could occur later in the public hearing forum.

WHO MUST BE NOTIFIED

Typically, neighborhood contact must be made to **all property owners within 300 feet of the site property lines**. Because each proposed development and the existing, surrounding neighborhoods are unique, this distance must be discussed with the City Planner assigned to the project. It may be necessary to go beyond the 300-foot notification boundary to inform others who may be affected by the development. Nearby Homeowners' Associations may also need to be contacted.

Current property ownership information may be obtained from the appropriate County Assessor's Office and needs to include:

- List of names, addresses, and parcel numbers of all property owners within 300 feet of the site boundaries.
- A map outlining the 300-foot boundary identifying the location and addresses of the property owners' parcels.

The above information and certification from the developer that the required notices were mailed (indicate mailing date) must be submitted to the City Planner for review and approval.

Note: H.B. 1088 (2001) requires surface owners to provide mineral estate owners with written notice prior to the time of any necessary public hearings regarding surface development, zoning changes or subdivisions. It is the responsibility of the applicant, not the City, to identify and notify all mineral estate owners with any interest in the applicant's property.

FORMS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACT

There are two ways for the applicant to satisfy the neighborhood contact requirement. One is to conduct a neighborhood meeting to present the proposed project, answer questions, and address neighborhood concerns. A second is to mail informational packets to the property owners. In addition, some applicants have had success with a combination of the two by mailing an informational packet with the letter announcing an upcoming meeting. Contact the City Planner assigned to review the development proposal to discuss which procedure will be followed (as either may be appropriate), when to schedule a meeting, and who should be contacted. With each of these two notification procedures, be certain to leave adequate time for City staff to review and approve all neighborhood contact correspondence prior to mailing any notifications. Based on neighborhood concerns and comments, subsequent contact(s) with the neighborhood(s) may be necessary.

MEETINGS

The Applicant/Developer will be responsible for arranging a meeting location, mailing required notices, and providing graphic information for the public. City staff will open the meeting with a brief description of the proposal and close the meeting, and answer any questions, as needed. The meeting may be conducted as an “open house” or “lecture” type of meeting, whichever City staff determines is most suitable for the project.

At neighborhood meetings, applicants are required to present a graphic display (including site and landscape plans, as well as building elevations) of the proposed development. Conducting a meeting allows the applicant to present the project, explain various attributes of a proposal, and elaborate on design elements which may help alleviate resident concerns. It also enables the applicant to answer questions and address concerns promptly. The applicant should choose a meeting location that is near the development site and in most cases, should schedule the meeting during a weekday evening to enable working residents to attend.

If a meeting is held, it is necessary to provide at least 2 weeks written notice (at a minimum identifying the purpose, date, time, and location of the meeting) to property owners. **See *example neighborhood meeting notice letter that follows.*** Some applicants also send informational packets with this notice to give property owners details, in advance, about the development. Prior to the meeting(s), City staff will advise the applicant on typical meeting procedures. For instance, staff needs a record of those who attend the meeting. A sign-in sheet for attendees to print their names, addresses and phones numbers needs to be provided at all neighborhood meetings. A City staff member will collect the sheet(s) following the meeting and, if requested, will provide a copy for the applicant.

INFORMATIONAL PACKETS

A second form of neighborhood contact is achieved through a neighborhood mailing. The applicant sends an informational cover letter along with reduced copies of the proposed plans and elevations to the property owners. A detailed letter is crucial for this type of contact since the recipient may not be familiar with, or understand, site plans. When drafting this type of letter, attempt to anticipate what questions might arise and address those in the letter. This helps reduce the number of phone call inquiries regarding the proposal. This cover letter should:

- Indicate the purpose of the letter.
- Describe the development proposal (including location, type of use, building size(s), architectural materials, etc.).

- Identify the development team, contact names, and phone numbers to answer questions (also needs to include the City contact name and phone number).
- Specify the procedures necessary for project approval along with tentative timing.
- Indicate whether the land use proposed is currently permitted on the property.
- Highlight design elements incorporated that may help alleviate residents' concerns.

TIMING

Contact with surrounding neighborhoods is typically made between the first and second plan set reviews. This gives the applicant an opportunity to respond to the City's initial comments and revise the plan accordingly, prior to contacting the neighborhood. In addition, the neighborhood is able to review the plan with enough detail that their questions can be answered regarding such items as landscaping, architecture, site design, buffers, etc. Also, because the initial submittal is the first stage of the development review process, suggestions and concerns expressed by the neighborhood can be addressed by the applicant before the plan is in the final stage and alterations are more difficult.