

June 2021

neighbors who notice

SDCI's Guide to Neighborhood Notices and Commenting

What Do Seattle's Land Use Notice Signs Mean to Me?

When you see a Notice of Proposed Land Use Action sign, it is an invitation to be involved in your community's development! This public notice is your opportunity to comment on the proposed project. When the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) receives a land use application for a proposed project, SDCI may post:

- Large white 4 x 8-foot signs, known as Large Notice Signs, for proposals with Design Review or State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review
- Small yellow 18 x 24-inch signs, known as Land Use Signs, for other proposals, including variances, conditional uses, subdivisions, and most shoreline projects
- Smaller white 11 x 14-inch signs, known as placards, for public meetings and certain proposals



SDCI also mails notice of certain land use applications to property owners and tenants within 300 feet of the proposed project. Some exceptions apply.

Please note, many projects do not require public notice. Those projects will not have signs posted and they do not have a comment period.

Who Can Comment?

Anyone! Residents, students, employees, and business owners. Anyone who is affected by the proposal.

Why Solicit Public Comments?

The City recognizes that people have unique knowledge about the areas in which they live and work. SDCI collects comments to help us understand your concerns and interests regarding a specific project, identify potential impacts, and find solutions within the scope of our review as established by the Land Use Code. It is also an opportunity to make suggestions that could alter a project's design.



When Can Comments Be Made?

Land use signs and other forms of public notice clearly state the beginning and end dates of the official comment period. However, SDCI will consider any comment that is received before the decision is made, regardless of whether it comes within the official comment period. Please keep in mind, submitting your comments early is the best way to ensure that we will have time to consider them in our analysis.

Who Reads My Comments?

The land use planner assigned to review the project will read all comments and consider those that are within the scope of our review. SDCI uploads all comments into our permit tracking system, known as the Seattle Services Portal, under the record number. All public comments are public records, which means they can be viewed by anyone.

What Comments Are Considered?

SDCI only considers comments within the scope of our review as established by the Land Use Code. For instance, we cannot address comments regarding a project's impact on property values or private views. For more information, see "How to Effectively Comment" on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/comment-on-a-project.

How Can I Receive Updates?

You may request to receive future notices about the project if you submit a written request for this information and provide an e-mail or street address. You can also include this in the content of your comment letter.

How Can I Make Effective Comments?

- Explain your interest in the project.
- Review the project file and plans.
- Provide additional site or context information you think is important.
- State your concerns, interests, or preferences clearly and concisely.
- Reference the applicable criteria, policies, or guidelines specifically relevant to the application.
- Propose alternatives or ask for studies that have not been provided.
- Identify specific project features that you support and think should not be changed.
- Provide your contact information so we can notify you of decisions and/or public meetings.

For specific examples of effective comments, visit our Comment on a Project website at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/comment-on-a-project.

What Prompts a Public Meeting?

Some projects require a public meeting as part of the review process. For other projects, a public meeting may be held when SDCI receives a request from at least 50 people. SDCI provides notice of public meetings in the Land Use Information Bulletin, on a sign posted in the vicinity of the property, and in a notice mailed to anyone who commented on the project.

Can I Make a Difference?

Yes, you can. Public comments have prompted developers to modify the scope of their project or change the design to better respond to community concerns or interests.

The land use planner assigned to review the project carefully reviews all public comments before SDCI publishes the decision.



What Are Appeals?

Most projects that require signs to be posted will also include an opportunity to contest SDCI's decision without having to go to court. This is called an appeal. Information on how to file an appeal is included in our notice of decision. Most appeals are heard by the City Hearing Examiner.

Beyond Appeals

If either side to an appeal disagrees with the outcome, they can challenge the Hearing Examiner's decision in court.

For More Information:

To make comments:

Submit your written comments using our public comment tool, www.seattle.gov/project/comment, or via mail to: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Attn: Public Notice, P.O. Box 34019, Seattle, WA 98124-4019.

To receive notice of land use applications, decisions, and meetings:

Visit our website, www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/who-we-are/public-resource-center, and subscribe to our Land Use Information Bulletin.

For property information, maps, and historical records:

Use our online services at www.seattle.gov/sdci/resources or visit the PRC located on the 20th floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Avenue.

To track a permit:

Use our Seattle Services Portal, <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/>, to find the status of a permit.