



PORTLAND PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Tips for Effective Testimony

Thank you for testifying to the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC)! We want to hear what you have to say. Here are some guidelines to make your testimony as meaningful as possible for the commissioners and for staff.

At a Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) hearing:

- The PSC chair calls items from the printed agenda.
- The project team presents a summary of the project or plan.
- If applicable to the project, the chair calls for public testimony.
- Testifiers will be asked to sit at the testifiers' table to provide testimony, which is limited to 2 minutes per person. A video about providing oral testimony can be found online at www.portlandoregon.gov/bps.
- The commissioners may ask clarifying questions of testifiers.
- The chair may continue the testimony until a later meeting if issues require more time, or the chair may close public testimony after all speakers have been heard or announce a later date for submission of written testimony.
- The commission discusses the matter and reaches a decision or recommendation. If more information is needed, the commission may defer action to a later date.

The 1, 2, 3s of Testifying

1. **Sign up to testify.** At a PSC meeting, fill out a testifier card by the door and hand it to the commission coordinator sitting at the end of the commissioners' table.
2. **When the commission chair calls your name,** go up to the table for testifiers. Speak into the microphone, and begin by giving your name and address. If you're testifying on behalf of a group or organization, state that too.

For more information about the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission visit: www.portlandoregon.gov/bps



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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The PSC is committed to effective public involvement. They listen to the reasons you support something or want to see something changed, and that is what you should focus on when you provide testimony. The reasons and information you give them influence their decision, not the number of people who testify for or against something.

- 3. Prepare.** Before you give verbal testimony, prepare an outline of what you want to say or even write it all out. Practice a few times, and check how long your testimony is (testimony at public hearings is typically limited to 3 minutes).
- 4. Be brief.** Make no more than three major points in your testimony. Remember, you can submit letters with more detail. Some things to include in your testimony:
 - What part of the project, plan or proposal are you testifying about?
 - What are the reasons you like something or would like to change something? Support your opinions with facts as much as possible.
 - How does the proposal affect you or your organization?
- 5. Written materials.** If you have written materials, you can give them to the commission coordinator before you testify. Please bring 12 copies of any written materials, photos, etc.
- 6. Group testimony.** Repetitive testimony is not always as effective as a planned, coordinated presentation. If you are aware of other people who plan to testify and who share your feelings, you can organize a few main speakers from your group to speak about different topics related to the project. To convey the amount of support you have, one of the speakers can ask audience members who share similar sentiments to stand.
- 7. Be polite and positive.** The commissioners are your neighbors, and they care that you have taken the time to come and testify before them.
- 8. And finally — relax!** The commissioners understand that most people are nervous about testifying, and they don't expect a perfect presentation.

To submit written testimony if you didn't attend a PSC hearing:

- **By email:** Send comments to psc@portlandoregon.gov with the project name in the subject line.
- **By mail:** Send a letter with your comments to the PSC, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Portland, OR 97201-5380.

Written testimony must be received by the time of the hearing and must include your name and address. To ensure commissioners have ample time to consider your testimony, please consider submitting it at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing.

Special needs

If you require special visual, audio or other accommodations in order to testify, please contact the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability at least five days before the meeting with your request.

- **Phone:** 503-823-7700 TTY: 503-823-6868
- **Oregon Relay Service:** 1-800-735-2900
- **Email:** psc@portlandoregon.gov