

Memorandum

Date: January 16, 2025

To: Applicants Requiring Land Use Public Hearings

From: Tanya M. Washington, AICP *TW*
Director of Planning

Subject: **Guidance on Community Engagement for Land Use Applications**

Land use applications often have impacts on various communities and stakeholders. We have found that those applicants that engage with the community early and often see their application move through the review and hearings processes more quickly and efficiently as a result of the engagement. To help ensure that land use Applicants engage with impacted communities and local stakeholders prior to the Planning Commission public hearing and to provide an opportunity for community feedback to inform the final submission before the Planning Commission public hearing, the Planning Office has established guidance on community engagement for land use applications seeking legislative approval.

This memorandum updates guidance provided in the Planning Office [memorandum](#) dated March 15, 2024, regarding community, Magisterial District Supervisor and Planning Commissioner engagement by Applicants.

Effective Date: This guidance is effective January 16, 2025, and applies to new land use applications submitted on and after the effective date and to applications already undergoing review that have not yet been scheduled for Planning Commission or Board public hearing.

Scope:

This document provides guidance on community and stakeholder engagement by land use Applicants. This guidance applies to all land use applications seeking Prince William Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) approval for development projects, including, but not limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments. This includes rezonings, special use permits and amendments, and proffer amendments. It does not apply to a public facility review.

Applicants should conduct community meetings with impacted community members prior to the Planning Commission public hearing. The intent is to help ensure that impacted community members are aware of the proposed development and have the opportunity to provide feedback to inform the final submission that will go to Planning Commission public hearing. This proactive engagement will help facilitate more efficient and productive Planning Commission and BOCS public hearings on land use applications and provides the opportunity to shape future development in Prince William County with community input.

1. Engagement with Impacted Communities:

Applicants should meet with community stakeholders that are impacted by the proposed application prior to the Planning Commission public hearing. This may include, but is not limited to, residents, homeowners associations, civic associations, business owners, and other local organizations within the area of impact, as applicable. Which community stakeholders with whom Applicants should meet will depend on the proposed project, its location and area of impact. While the area of impact includes adjacent property owners (APO), the outreach area may extend beyond the APO and may include nearby residential communities, as applicable. Applicants may consider contacting the offices of the District Supervisor and any other Board member whose District is impacted by the application for information on additional potential impacted community members or stakeholders.

Applicants are encouraged to begin community outreach following submission of an application for rezonings, special use permits, and proffer amendments. Community engagement can occur in person and/or virtually. While Applicants should meet with impacted HOAs and civic associations in the vicinity of the proposed project (if applicable), Applicants are also encouraged to contact and engage with impacted community members/property owners directly. This direct outreach could occur, for example, through postcards, letters, and/or email meeting invitations. This will help ensure wider community awareness and feedback opportunities about the proposed development.

If an impacted HOA or Civic Association declines to meet with an applicant, Applicants should provide documentation of the meeting request and any subsequent correspondence as part of the final submission. This documentation will help make the Planning Office aware of the applicant's outreach efforts.

2. Magisterial District Supervisor and Planning Commissioner Engagement:

Prior to the final submission of the application for the Planning Commission public hearing, Applicants should meet with the Magisterial District Supervisor and the Planning Commissioner for the district where the proposed development is located to discuss the project. If the impacts of the project involve more than one Magisterial District, the Applicant should also meet with the other impacted Supervisor(s) and Planning Commissioner(s). Applicants could also consider meeting, as needed, with the BOCS Chair and the Chair's Planning Commissioner. Early and regular engagement with Board members and Planning Commissioners is encouraged.

3. Documentation of Community Engagement:

When Applicants submit their final submission for the Planning Commission public hearing, they should provide the following documentation of community engagement conducted:

A. Meeting Notices:

Applicants should provide evidence of notification to the impacted communities, civic associations, HOAs, and/or other community stakeholders, as applicable. This includes copies of meeting notices, emails, postcards, or letters sent to invitees, as well as any public postings.

B. Meeting Summary and Attendance Records:

Applicants should provide a summary of each meeting, including feedback received during the meeting. The meeting summary, along with in person or virtual attendance records, should be maintained and submitted as part of the final submission.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation to help ensure that land use applications proceed efficiently through the public hearing process and development opportunities in Prince William County can move forward towards implementation. If you have any questions regarding this guidance, please contact the Planning Office at 703-792-7615 or Planning@pwcgov.org.