



Mount Tolmie Community Association (MTCA)

Suggested Public Meeting Guidelines for Development Applicants

Public acceptance or support for a development proposal may assist applicants at various stages of consideration of an application. **Early public engagement is encouraged** as a means of informing the public of the project and identifying any thoughts the public may have about the proposal.

Refer to *"Information for Applicants Proposing Development within MTCA"* found on the MTCA website for information as to how these Public Meeting Guidelines may fit into the overall process.

Purpose of Public Meetings

Why hold a public meeting as there will likely be a public hearing held later in the process by Saanich? There are two primary reasons to approach the public earlier in the process:

1. A lot of time and financial resources are invested in developing a proposal. If you wait until a public hearing there could be a risk of adverse public opinion potentially negatively affecting the proposal. If the public is approached early on in the process you have the opportunity to bring information forward, hear comments, make adjustments and hopefully resolve any adverse concerns.
2. Saanich refers all application to the applicable community association for comment early in the process and generally before any planning reports are prepared. The role of the MTCA is to foster community engagement and liaise with Saanich. As a non-profit society, we do not have the means to inform and solicit public opinion. We rely on you, the applicant, to hold community meetings in consultation with us so that we can hear public comment and your response to such comments. We can then inform Saanich in response to their referral to us.

Notice of Meetings

1. A common criticism that the MTCA hears from the community is that insufficient notice has been provided regarding development proposal meetings. **We strongly encourage applicants to post at least two advertisements** in a local newspaper not less than two weeks before the meeting date. It should be clear that all interested persons and the community are invited to attend and include the date, time and location of the public meeting together with contact information and an outline of the proposal.



2. We encourage hand delivery or mailing of a copy of the notice of meeting or a letter containing similar information to surrounding properties at least two weeks prior to the public meeting. While Saanich requires written notifications within 90 metres of a property for public hearing notification, it may be advantageous to modify the notification area based upon the potential interest in the proposal and the characteristics of the surrounding neighbourhood. MTCA can discuss a suggested area of notification with you based upon our understanding of the community.
3. For rental properties it is suggested that you advise in your letter that all tenants of a property should contact their landlord and notify them of the meeting. Alternatively, you can identify the property owners through the Land Titles Office or BC Assessment Authority. If you cannot access an apartment building, contact the building manager and ask to leave notices in the building or ask the manager to post the notice in the building if access is not available. Note that many tenants and homeowners will have notices not to receive “junk mail”. You may wish to find ways to ensure notices are still delivered. You can identify area properties by examining the Saanich GIS map available at the Saanich website.

Meeting Format

1. There are many formats for public consultation. Some applicants hold an open house format. The **open house format** is useful to convey information on a one on one basis but does not allow for much collective community discussion or clarification of issues to the broader community. Another option is a **community meeting format** where the applicants present their proposal to the attendees as a group. **Options following the presentation** might include a question and answer format or breaking into smaller groups depending upon the size of the crowd for more focused discussion (perhaps with a facilitator) followed by presentations by those groups to the larger venue. A third option could be an open house to provide information and a subsequent public meeting where questions can be asked and community opinion obtained.

MTCA, given its knowledge of the community and area, is available as a resource to discuss the best community engagement process and the pros and cons of any option.

2. Examples of questions that that may be asked at a meeting include:
 - I. What is the current and proposed zoning for the property (if applicable) and how do the zones differ in terms of permitted uses and other requirements?
 - II. Do you have a development proposal for the site and at what stage of design of the development are you at? Explain how the proposal fits with the existing neighbourhood character.
 - III. Do you have a timeline for completing the development?



- IV. Are you seeking any variances to zoning regulations? e.g. parking standards, setbacks from property lines, height requirements etc. Are any covenants proposed for the development?
- V. How does the application comply with the Saanich Official Community Plan, Shelbourne Local Area Plan and the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan if applicable? Refer to specific policies and maps or illustrations in these documents in your response.
- VI. What amenities are you proposing as part of the development? Refer to the various Plans for guidance on such contributions.

Post Public Meeting

Following the public meeting, amendments may be required for the proposal. If such amendments are made, it is **encouraged to share the changes** with the MTCA as soon as they are available. If amendments are substantial it may be of value to provide notice and hold another public meeting.

Following this process MTCA can then advise Saanich as to the community consultation process and the public opinion that was expressed. Saanich generally asks MTCA to comment as to whether there are no objections; no objections but suggested changes or concerns; or if MTCA does not support the project and to state reasons why there is no support.

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