

MARICOPA COUNTY



2020

Eye To The Future

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES



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Public Participation Guidelines

Applicant Initiated Development Master Plans and Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Purpose

Public participation is an important component of successful planning. Citizens need and deserve ongoing communication regarding projects and issues that affect their communities. Through these adopted public participation guidelines, Maricopa County demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that applicants pursue early and meaningful citizen input in applications for development master plans and comprehensive plan amendments. Such participation will help an applicant resolve concerns early in the process, and promote goodwill between the applicant, county officials, citizens, property owners, and other stakeholders. While these guidelines establish a formal process for citizen participation, applicants are by no means precluded from incorporating additional elements into their public participation program.

Public involvement might increase the time and cost of the planning process, but it can yield greater returns since the outcome will be based on the expressed needs of the public it serves. While the citizen participation program may not produce complete consensus regarding specific applications, it will encourage applicants to make sound investment and planning decisions by listening to and, where feasible, addressing the concerns of their neighbors.

Guiding Principles

The public participation program follows several principles that help ensure planning efforts obtain sufficient public input and support. These principles are:

- A sound public involvement plan is critical to the success of any planning process. It must include techniques to share information and create lines of communication between interested parties.
- Citizen participation must be a genuine effort to encourage public involvement in the decision-making process by providing public participation opportunities.
- Information must be disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders. This could be achieved through public notices, newsletters, flyers, telephone hotline, newspaper articles, the Internet, and/or other events. Participation opportunities should occur through public workshops, informational meetings, surveys, or other means.
- An effective public involvement process must address issues that arise when planning recommendations do not adequately consider the concerns of the residents affected.



- By hearing what the public expects and responding in the most effective, efficient way possible, an applicant will be respected and supported for their decisions.

Process

The public participation process for applicant-initiated development master plans and comprehensive plan amendments shall consist of several stages. At a minimum, the citizen participation program must provide the following information:

1. A description of the community involvement area.
2. A list of stakeholders that may be affected by the application. While individual circumstances will vary, stakeholders include residents, property owners, homeowners associations, and any others identified within an area agreed upon by the applicant and the Planning and Development Department. The applicant should also include a description of how and when the identified stakeholders will be notified that an application for plan amendment or development master plan has been submitted (proof of notification must be included with the formal application).
3. A description of how the applicant will make information available to interested parties, prior to public hearings.
4. A description of how the applicant will identify stakeholders' issues and concerns.
5. A description of how the applicant will respond to stakeholders' feedback and recommendations.
6. A discussion of how the applicant will keep the Maricopa County Planning and Development Department informed of public participation program progress.
7. A timeline for the citizen participation program.

Stage 1: Preapplication Meeting

Prior to submitting a formal application, an applicant is required to participate in a preapplication meeting with Planning and Development Department staff. Preapplication meetings allow applicants to become familiar with the planning process, and also enable the applicant to obtain guidance with the requirements of the public participation program.

Applicants may submit public participation plans for review at the preapplication meeting, but must submit such plans for review *prior* to formal application. Maricopa County Planning and Development Department staff will review and provide feedback regarding the citizen participation plan within approximately one (1) week of submittal.

Once the applicant and Maricopa County agree upon the citizen participation plan, formal application can take place.



Stage 2: Official Application

Along with the official application for a comprehensive plan amendment or development master plan, the applicant must submit an official copy of the citizen participation plan. Official copies must be submitted in both hard copy form and in an electronic format. In the citizen participation plan, the applicant must present evidence that the identified stakeholders have been notified of the application. The applicant will maintain a database of the stakeholders and a log of notifications to stakeholders. A technical advisory committee meeting will not be scheduled until proof of stakeholder notification is provided to planning and development department staff.

Stage 3: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting

In accordance with an established timeline, staff will schedule the application for review by TAC and notify the applicant of the actual date and time that the TAC meeting will take place. In addition to reviewing the application, the applicant will also be asked to provide an interim report concerning the progress of the public participation plan.

Stage 4: Submit Public Participation Program Results

Prior to Maricopa County providing official notice of public hearing, the applicant must submit a written report that details the results of the public participation program. This report shall include at least the following information:

RECORD OF APPLICANT ACTIVITIES

1. The dates, times, and/or locations of:
 - a. All meetings the applicant initiated with stakeholders.
 - b. Other contacts with affected stakeholders.
2. Description of the approximate number of people that participated in the public participation process, and where they are located in relation to the subject property.
3. Discussion of the results of the public participation process. This discussion should include information about the major issues and concerns identified by stakeholders, how the applicant will address the concerns or issues raised by affected stakeholders, and what concerns or issues the applicant cannot or will not address and why.
4. **Appendix** of information, including mailings, fliers, newsletters, handouts, and other pertinent materials that help describe the public participation program.



Stage 5: Public Hearing Notification

For all development master plan and comprehensive plan amendment applications, the Planning and Development Department will post notification at the subject property 15 days prior to the scheduled public hearing. A minimum of two posters is required on the subject property, with at least one notice for each quarter mile of frontage along the perimeter public right-of-way. Staff shall post the property with sign(s), the size of which shall be determined by the Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission. The signs shall be designed to accommodate the posting for the required public hearings of both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Staff shall prepare a Posting Certificate for the hearing. In addition to notification by staff, the applicant shall notify all of the stakeholders identified in the public participation program, by first class mail, of the public hearings.

Requests for development master plans and comprehensive plan amendments will be published 15 days prior to the scheduled public hearing. Requests will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with state law. In addition, the Planning and Development Department retains the right to use supplemental meetings, such as neighborhood meetings or open houses, for projects as deemed necessary.

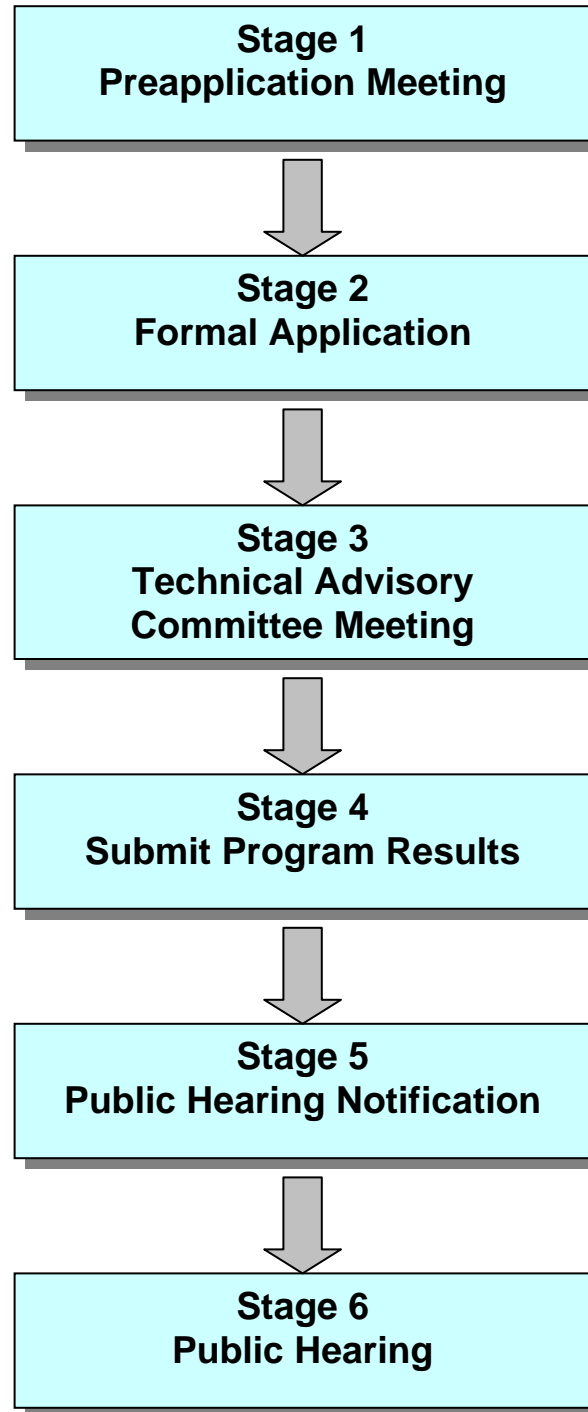
Stage 6: Public Hearing

Pursuant to state law, public hearings before the county Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors are held on a routine basis. These public hearings give residents an opportunity to formally express opinions regarding development master plan and comprehensive plan amendment applications. Formal notification of public hearings is provided according to the guidelines noted in *Stage 4: Notification of Public Hearing*.

Planning and Zoning Commission hearings are held on the first and third Thursday of every month, and Board of Supervisors hearings are held on the first and third Wednesday of every month. Public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors are required for every development master plan and comprehensive plan amendment application.



Public Participation Process: Development Master Plans; Comprehensive Plan Amendments





Contact Agency

If any applicant or resident has questions concerning this program, they are requested to contact Maricopa County at the following address:

**Maricopa County Planning and Development Department
Comprehensive Planning Division
501 North 44th Street, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85008
Telephone: (602) 506-3011**