



## Planning & Building Department

401 Grove Street  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

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[www.cityofhealdsburg.org](http://www.cityofhealdsburg.org)

## Planning Commission Workshops

*Last Updated: November 19, 2019*

Planning Commission workshops provide an opportunity for project applicants and staff to receive feedback on project proposals. The protocols noted below have been established by the Planning Commission on October 8, 2019.

### Purpose

Workshops are encouraged in order to:

1. Provide applicants an opportunity to have an early dialogue with the Commission about project vision, concepts and any challenges with the existing land use code.
2. Provide the Commission an opportunity to share concerns, insights and feedback on concepts and alternatives early in the process.
3. Provide an opportunity for early feedback on a project concept by the public prior to or immediately after the filing of an application.

A workshop has fulfilled its purpose, if following the workshop, the applicant team (or staff) is able to make suggested refinements in order to help move the project forward smoothly in a public hearing. Workshops are appropriate for a variety of types of projects meeting the criteria noted below.

Planning Commission feedback provided in a workshop may focus on but not be limited to:

- Site planning
- Compatibility with neighboring uses
- Overall consistency (or inconsistency) with the General Plan, other adopted plans, Land Use Code and Citywide Design Guidelines
- Architectural expression, including scale, mass, materials and colors
- Potentially significant environmental impacts
- Appropriateness of variance(s) requested
- Policy clarifications and proposed revisions

### Criteria

In general, a project is eligible to have a Planning Commission Workshop if it involves:

- Large and complex development application, including a mix of uses
- Design which may not completely be consistent with adopted Citywide Design Guidelines, Specific or Area Plans and Neighborhood Plans
- Residential subdivisions of more than 5 lots (threshold for Major Subdivision)
- Projects desiring a zone change to Planned Development (allows for more creative development standards)

- In-fill projects/vertical additions in the downtown
- New policy or amendments to Land Use Code (ordinances)
- Project changes following a Planning Commission public hearing. (example: The Oaks at Foss Creek and 106 Matheson)

To qualify for a workshop, the project concept should demonstrate reasonable understanding of and adherence to applicable Land Use Code requirements and guidelines. Staff may reject project concepts that are over-scaled, require multiple unusual and significant Variances or Exceptions, or that clearly conflict with significant General Plan policies and/or Land Use Code regulations. Refer to the Planning Commission Workshop Submittal Requirements for the materials needed for a Planning Commission Workshop.

### **Scheduling**

Planning Commission Workshops will be scheduled on regular Commission meeting dates (second and fourth Tuesdays, excluding holidays). The start time will be before the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting and in most cases will not be before 4 pm. For shorter discussion types of items, a start time for a workshop may be 5 pm.

### **Staff Report**

Staff will prepare a staff report for the workshop which will provide a brief description of the project and reference attached materials from the applicant. For Design Review and Tentative Map proposals, no analysis of consistency with adopted plans is needed at this stage but the applicant is encouraged to include that in his/her workshop presentation. However, if the workshop is to discuss projects involving zoning amendments, or variance request, the staff report should provide the necessary zoning background to aid the discussion.

### **Public Noticing**

In order to encourage the highest amount of public participation early in the process the following are requirements for a workshop public noticing:

1. Legal ad in local newspaper published 10 days prior to meeting.
2. Mailing notice of workshop to surrounding property owners within 300 feet, 10 days prior to meeting.
3. Requiring the applicant to install a blue sign on property with date, time and place of meeting, prepared by staff (similar to public hearing signs)

### **Meeting Conduct**

The Planning Commission will conduct workshops at the work table inside the Council Chambers (not the dais). To ensure that the public can hear, multiple microphones will be provided at the Commission and staff table.

The prospective applicant is expected to lead the meeting by providing an overview of the project concept, seek input on important discussion items and answer questions from the Planning Commission. The use of a Powerpoint presentation is encouraged so the public can also view the proposal. Staff's role is to respond to any questions from the Planning Commission on process. Because a workshop is not a

formal public hearing, the Planning Commission Chair has the discretion to invite the applicant to return for further comments and questions following initial comments from the public and the Planning Commission. Similarly, the Planning Commission Chair has the discretion to invite additional comments from the public after initial feedback from the Planning Commission has been given. Comments on a workshop item should be directed toward the project proposal. Per the bylaws, all Planning Commission workshops will allow time for public comment which may be before or after the Commission discussion.

**Commission Comments and Feedback**

While a workshop provides an opportunity for Planning Commissioners to identify potential issues or concerns, Commissioners will refrain from making statements of absolute judgment, as these could be considered expressions of bias. Straw votes or polls of the Commission will not be undertaken. Commissioner comments made in the course of a workshop should not be construed as limiting any action that the Planning Commission may subsequently take with respect to a project in the course the entitlement process. The role of the Chair is to solicit feedback from each Commissioner as topics are discussed.



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### **Submittal Materials** (Required for Major Design Review projects, see [HMC§ 20.28.105](#))

Because a Planning Commission Workshop requires effort by staff to prepare the public noticing and staff report, it is important that design related projects present sufficient information about the design intent and concept. Additionally, the applicant team cannot receive feedback on appropriateness of architectural character if basic design elements are not submitted. The materials submitted for the workshop should address the following items below:

- [ ] **Planning Permit Application** form completed and signed by the applicant(s) and property owner(s).
- [ ] **Planning Commission Workshop fee** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Due to the amount of staff time involved in collaborating with the project team and preparing an item for a workshop, Planning Commission workshops are subject to a workshop fee to be established by the City Council in 2019. Alternately an applicant may establish a developer deposit account for staff to charge back time for workshop preparation and attendance
- [ ] **Project Narrative**, including project objectives (11 copies).
- [ ] **Site Plan**, showing the project in the context of its surroundings, including at a minimum, building envelopes on adjoining properties; (1 full size and 11 copies of 11 x 17).
- [ ] **Prospective Renderings** that illustrate all significant design elements from all significant viewpoints and public streets, (11 copies of 11 x 17 in color).
- [ ] **Electronic Copies** of the submitted materials (PDF).
- [ ] **Submittal Materials, Encouraged for Major Design Review**
  1. Preliminary massing studies (using Sketch-Up or similar program) addressing the project and its neighborhood context;
  2. Alternative site plans. Any models used in the preparation of submittal materials should be made accessible at the workshop.