

MOTION

Public notice and hearing requirements for discretionary land use matters exist to inform community members about proposed projects in their neighborhoods, and to enable them to provide input to decision-makers. The City of Los Angeles uses three primary methods for informing the public about proposed projects: mailings to property owners and/or residents within a specified distance of the project site, which provides notice to a limited number of people; making information available on City websites, which often requires pre-existing civic engagement and planning expertise; and on-site posting of hearing notices in advance of public hearings.

On-site postings for land use entitlements are potentially the most effective form of notice. Unlike a single mailing, a posted sign provides multiple exposures, increasing the likelihood of gaining people's attention. Signs can be viewed by anyone who passes by a site, including those who pass by on a regular basis and may have an interest in the project, and thus can have greater reach than a radius mailing. Because they do not require technical expertise or access to technology, they can be democratizing and enhance participation by people and groups who are historically underrepresented.


However, the City's existing posting requirements fail to achieve their full potential. They are posted for a limited time (10 days in advance of a hearing); are relatively small and easy to miss; are not designed to attract attention; and usually contain little information other than technical land use planning jargon that can make it difficult for the general public to understand the project.

Other jurisdictions have more effective posting rules and regulations, especially for significant projects, that include much larger signage that can be noticed even by those who drive past a site; much longer posting periods; visual renderings of proposed projects; and/or plain, non-technical language to summarize and describe the project, and the land use entitlements being requested. These jurisdictions include nearby California cities such as West Hollywood, Burbank, Glendale and Oceanside; and large cities in other states, including Seattle, Washington.

The City should examine other jurisdictions' posting requirements and modify its own procedures to better provide actual notice to the public and enhance opportunities for public participation. At the same time, the City should explore whether its mailed notices can and should use plain language and less technical jargon.

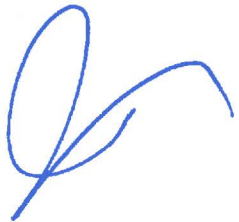
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Planning Department, in consultation with the City Attorney, to report with recommendations for more effective requirements for on-site posting and mailed notices of proposed discretionary land use actions, including larger sizes, longer posting periods, renderings where and when appropriate, and use of plain language; and to base those recommendations on notices and procedures already established in other jurisdictions; and to thereby provide all interested stakeholders with fully transparent notices.

PRESENTED BY: 
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SECONDED BY: 

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