



# Public Comment During Council Meetings

## Procedures, Guidelines and Tips



The Shoreline City Council values and encourages your input. It is critical for Councilmembers to consider residents' ideas, issues and concerns to arrive at informed and balanced decisions affecting Shoreline.

We hope you'll find this resource a useful guide as you share your opinions, values and suggestions with  
**Your Shoreline City Council**

# Public Comment Procedures

The Council provides opportunities for public comment at every regular meeting. If warranted, the Council may vote to suspend its rules to allow for more public comment.

Regular meetings are designed for Councilmembers to gain information on particular items from staff, discuss agenda items and make final decisions on City issues.

At the beginning of meetings, the public is invited to provide input on agenda items or any topic not on the agenda, which is not of a quasi-judicial nature. Below are the procedures that will be followed for public comment during meetings:

- During the "Public Comment" portion of meetings, members of the public may address the City Council for three (3) minutes on any topic including agenda items.
- The total "Public Comment" period will be no more than 30 minutes.
- If more than 10 people are signed up to speak each speaker will be allocated two (2) minutes.
- Individuals will be required to sign up prior to the start of the Public Comment period and those individuals wishing to speak to agenda items will be called to speak first, generally in the order in which they have signed.
- If time is available, the Mayor may call for unsigned speakers.

**To learn what business the City Council will be conducting at each meeting, visit the City's website at [shorelinewa.gov/councilmeetings](http://shorelinewa.gov/councilmeetings).**

## *eComment - A Convenient Alternative to In-person Testimony*

To provide input on agenda items online via eComment, simply complete the form that is part of the online agenda (located on the Live and Video Council Meetings page at [shorelinewa.gov/councilmeetings](http://shorelinewa.gov/councilmeetings)). Your comments will become part of the official meeting record as public testimony.

## **Campaign Speech**

During election season, no person may use the public comment portion of a meeting to promote or oppose any candidate for public office.

## **Quasi-Judicial Items**

Sometimes the City Council acts on land use requests, such as subdivision requests, street vacations and small rezones. These are called quasi-judicial items since Councilmembers act as judges and consider evidence for and against the proposal. To be fair, the City Council only takes public input on such items during a public hearing.

Often, the City's appointed Hearing Examiner has already conducted a public hearing before the item comes to the Council. In these cases, the Council acts on the record made before the Hearing Examiner and does not hear further public comment.

## **Public Hearings**

Public hearings give citizens a chance to tell the City Council what they think about the subject of the hearing. Some hearings are required by law because of the subject matter and some may be scheduled to obtain as much public input on a subject as possible. After everyone has spoken, the hearing is closed and Councilmembers discuss the issue. They may make a decision at that time or may continue the item to another meeting for the ultimate decision.

## **Guidelines and Tips**

- When your name is called, step to the podium and speak clearly into the microphone. (Please be advised that your comments are being recorded.)
- Give your name and city of residence.
- Remember time limits and make sure you have time for your most important points.
- Speakers are strongly encouraged to write their remarks down and submit them to the City Clerk
- Try not to repeat what others have said, but highlight those issues that have not been already raised.
- If more than five (5) speakers wish to speak on the same topic and hold the same position, pick one or two spokesperson(s) and have all those who agree raise their hands.
- All comments should be addressed to the Presiding Officer, not individual Councilmembers, staff or members of the audience.
- Questions will usually not be answered during a speaker's turn at the podium, but may be addressed by the City Manager at the end of the public comment period.
- Most issues have multiple solutions. Offer constructive suggestions and listen to what the other side has to say.



## Communicating with Your City Council

### Letters to the Council

Letters may be mailed to or dropped off for the City Council at Shoreline City Hall, 17500 Midvale Avenue N, Shoreline, WA 98133.

### ShorelineWA.Gov Contact Us Form

Visit [shorelinewa.gov/ContactCouncil](http://shorelinewa.gov/ContactCouncil) for an online form. Form submissions will be distributed to all Council members.

### Voicemail and Email for the Council

A collective message may be sent to all Councilmembers at (206) 801-2213 or at [council@shorelinewa.gov](mailto:council@shorelinewa.gov). The seven elected Councilmembers are part-time and, therefore, the phone numbers below direct you to their individual voicemail.

## Council Contact Information

### Susan Chang

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### Will Hall

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### Betsy Robertson

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### Keith Scully

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[kscully@shorelinewa.gov](mailto:kscully@shorelinewa.gov)

### To contact the entire council

(206) 801-2213  
[council@shorelinewa.gov](mailto:council@shorelinewa.gov)

*Please be aware that written or email communications with Councilmembers or City staff (including voicemails) are considered public records and are subject to disclosure upon request.*