



PLANNING REPORT

TO: Ordinance Revisions Committee

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DATE: July 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Additional and Expanded Information and Notices of Development Activity;
Potential Amendments to Section 5.28.2 Public Notices and Section 5.28.4
Community Participation

This memo responds to discussion regarding recent amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC) related to notices and participation information, in particular pending amendments to Section 5.28.4 [Citizen Participation](#) and Section 5.28.2 [Public Notices](#). An overview of the previously and currently required information and notices is provided as well as research on physical format and timing of information sharing by other communities. Staff seek feedback from the Ordinance Revisions Committee (ORC) on when additional information should be provided and its format considering how the current requirements have been amended.

COMPARISON OF CHANGES TO INFORMATION AND NOTICES

Several forms of information and notices are required based on the type of development activity and the approval procedures for the activity. Recent proposed amendments would change when information must be shared, the kind of information to be shared, and timing. Below is a comparison of how community members are currently, versus would be, informed about projects. Changes would take effect pending passage of UDC amendments to be considered by Council on July 21, 2025 – which occurs after publication of this memorandum.

PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED	CURRENTLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED
BEFORE OR NEAR TIME OF APPLICATION	
Meetings (Community Participation Type 1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weeks prior to application• PUD zoning district and PUD site plan• Rezoning• Site Plan w/ than 80 dwelling units• Site Plan w/ more than 65 feet in height• Site Plan w/more than 50,000 square feet in floor area• Special Exception Use• Written invitations mailed within 100 feet of site• Planning Department webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two weeks after application• Planning Commission actions that require a public hearing (rezoning, special exception use)• Written invitations mailed within 1,000 feet of site• Planning Department webpage

PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED	CURRENTLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED
Postcards (Community Participation Type 2)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One week after application Planning Commission actions that do not require Type 1 Postcards mailed within 500 feet of site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two weeks after application Planning Commission actions that do not require a public hearing (site plans)
AT APPLICATION	
STREAM Real-time information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> online project and permitting system of all applications, using ‘search public records’ feature The Hub (engage.a2gov.org) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> online engagement platform to track Type 1 and other projects of likely high interest Map of Planning Petitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.a2gov.org/publicplanmap Website to capture geographic breadth of petitions of all kinds, links to STREAM information Has permanent entry on www.engage.a2gov.org for ease of access, and is also linked from www.a2gov.org/planning 	
NEAR TIME OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING	
Mailed notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days prior to public hearing Postcards mailed within 300 feet of site For any site-based actions (all site plans, rezonings, SEU) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days prior to public hearing Postcards mailed within 300 feet of site For discretionary approval (SEU) and recommendations for site-based legislative action only (rezoning)
Published Notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days prior to public hearing Ad in Washtenaw Legal News For any site-based actions and text amendments (all site plans, rezonings, SEU, text amendments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 days prior to public hearing Ad in Washtenaw Legal News For discretionary approval (SEU) and recommendations for legislative action (rezoning, text amendments)
Posted Notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 days prior to public hearing Sign posted at site For any site-based actions (site plans, rezonings, SEU) By city staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 days prior to public hearing Sign posted at site For any discretionary approval (SEU) and recommendation for site-based legislative action only (rezoning) By anyone
Other	
City online calendar and packet system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City website ‘meetings and agendas’ link to Legistar 5 days before meeting Email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To subscribers During week prior to meeting (delivery dependent on timing selections of subscribers – immediately, daily, weekly)	

PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED	CURRENTLY REQUIRED OR PROVIDED
NEAR TIME OF COUNCIL MEETING	
Mailed Notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 days prior to public hearing • Postcards mailed within 300 feet of site • Rezoning, PUD, Site Plan for City Council Approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 days prior to public hearing • Postcards mailed within 300 feet of site • Site-based legislative actions (rezoning)
Published Notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 days prior to public hearing • Ad in Washtenaw Legal News • Rezoning, PUD, Site Plan for City Council Approval, Text Amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 days prior to public hearing • Ad in Washtenaw Legal News • Legislative actions (rezoning inc. PUD, Text Amendment)
NEAR TIME OF APPROVAL	
Mailed Notice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcards mailed within 300 feet of site • For land divisions about to be approved 	

Summary of Changes

(Assumes approval as presented of [ORD-25-24](#) and [ORD-25-25](#))

- Before application, community participation meetings will no longer be held for site plans (unless the site plan is associated with rezoning). Instead, postcards with information that a site plan was submitted will be sent to addresses within 500 feet of site two weeks after an application. Addresses more than 501 feet but less than 1000 feet of a site plan site will no longer receive any direct information about a pending or submitted application.
- Community Participation meetings will now occur two weeks after application rather than two weeks prior.
- Mailed notices will no longer be sent 15 days prior to a Planning Commission meeting for a site plan (unless the site plan is associated with rezoning) because a public hearing will not be held.
- Published notices, 15 days prior to a Planning Commission meeting, will no longer include site plans (unless the site plan is associated with rezoning) because a public hearing will not be held.
- Posted notices, 7 days prior to a Planning Commission meeting, will no longer be placed on sites with a site plan (unless the site plan is associated with rezoning) because a public hearing will not be held.
- Mailed notices to addresses within 300 feet of land divisions about to be approved will no longer be sent (ORD 25-20).

Link to [file 25-1075](#) (Ordinance 25-24) for amendments related to Public Notices and Hearings

Link to [file 25-0776](#) (Ordinance 25-25) for amendments related to Citizen Participation

Link to [file 25-0838](#) (Ordinance 25-20) for amendments related to Land Divisions

CITY COMPARISON

As portrayed in the table below, cities that utilize new development signage vary widely in their requirements. Portland, Seattle, and Toronto have detailed content mandates and conditions. Portland requires signage before permit or land use review, including project and zoning details. Seattle's signs are triggered by environmental or design review and must include maps, elevation drawings, and contact information. Toronto and Seattle provide a sign template for petitioners to use that requires information such as a project summary, graphics, and contact details.

In contrast, Boise, University Park, and Charlotte all have minimal or no content or posting requirements. Each allow basic signage with few restrictions that are mostly related to size or placement.

While dimensions vary, most jurisdictions regulate size and height, often requiring signs to be large enough to be readable from the street or sidewalk. Also, the signs are temporary for all cities that must be maintained and updated with relevant public notices throughout the duration of the project.

In most municipalities, a notice sign is voluntarily posted by the applicant. Notable communities that do not require a new development sign notice are Madison, WI and South Bend, IN.

Of the cities reviewed, Portland provides the most detailed model for developer notice signage (<https://www.portland.gov/ppd/neighborhood-contact/neighborhood-contact-signs>).

Review of other city notice requirements

City	Trigger Threshold	Duration	Content	Size	Placement	Material
Detroit, MI	Construction site larger than 10,000 sq. ft. in area and that otherwise requires a building permit	Posted within 30 days of receipt of building permit and remain until Certificate of Occupancy is issued; removed within 30 days of Certificate of Occupancy issuance	Site plan, title with building type (ex: commercial, office), expected completion date, contact info for owner, corp, or registered agent, building permit number	Min 4 ft high (from bottom edge of sign) 6 ft wide text letter min one inch in height with color contrast	Along fence on each perimeter facing public street or highway; if not fenced, then sign is fixed into the ground at each perimeter facing a public street or highway	Durable, weatherproof, flame-retardant
Boise, ID	No requirements, allowed in every zoning district	Posted after the issuance of construction permits and removed within 24 hours following issuance of an occupancy permit for any portion of the project	No requirements	One per residential parcel, one per frontage for nonresidential parcel; six sq. ft. for a single residential lot, 64 sq. ft. in residential and office zones, 96 sq. ft. in commercial and industrial zones	No requirements	Non-illuminated
Portland, OR	Future buildings and land divisions	Posted at least 35 days prior to building permit or land use review application submittal. Removed when req. land use review occurs, building permit is issued, or a year from the application triggering the sign	General info: address, number of stories, proposed use, number of dwelling units, zoning district, applicant contact info., nhoo assoc. contact info, website or QR code (optional), meeting info	5 ft x 4 ft, 6 ft in height min 2 ft above ground	Each street frontage, within 10 ft of street lot line, one sign for every 600 ft of street frontage, not req. along unimproved street frontages w/o motor vehicle access. Placed on T-bar, 4x4 posts, or fence	Last at least 6 mo., corrugated plastic or cardboard rec., printed or pressure sensitive adhesive graphics
University Park, TX	No requirements	No requirements	All references to parties involved in the construction	Shall not exceed 20 sq. ft in area or eight feet in height from the ground; no more than one such sign on any one site	No requirements	No requirements

Review of other city notice requirements (continued)

City	Trigger Threshold	Duration	Content	Size	Placement	Material
Charlotte, NC	No requirements	No requirements	No requirements	Residential: one sign per each entry point to development, minimum separation of 200 feet between signs, 42 sq. ft. and five feet height maximum	No requirements	No requirements
Seattle, WA	Applications subject to environmental review and design review	City informs applicant when to post. Sign is removed with 14 days of department approval, or at the time the application is withdrawn.	City provided template including project title, permit application number, parcel map, elevation drawing, number of units, parking, possible demolition or elements changing of existing building, the required approvals needed, project website, and department contact information.	4 feet by 8 feet, 7 to 9 feet above grade	Midpoint of street frontage(s), within 10 feet of property line	No requirements
Toronto, ON, CA	Office Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Draft Plan of Condominium	No requirements	City provided template including summary of change, address, number of stories and residences, rendering, permit number, planner and applicant contact information, weblink to application center, and a decal with public meeting details once available.	4 feet by 6 feet, top of sign should be between 6 and 6.5 feet above grade	Each street frontage and visible from public access	10-12 mm corrugated plastic recommended

Example notice signage from comparison cities:

<p>Toronto, ON</p>	 <p>The image shows a template for a 'Notice' sign from the City of Toronto. It features the City of Toronto logo and a large 'Notice' header. Below the header, there is a 3D rendering of a proposed building on a city block. To the right of the rendering, there are icons and text indicating the proposed building's specifications: 'XXX Storeys', 'XXXX Metres', 'XXXX Residences', 'XXXX m² Retail', 'XXX Cars', and 'XXX Bikes'. A section titled 'A change is proposed for this site.' explains that the City has received an application to change the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law to allow the construction of a residential building with retail at street level. Below this, the applicant's name 'ABC Holdings Incorporated & XYZ Ontario Limited' and address '123 Any Street & 456 Busy Boulevard' are listed. A 'PUBLIC MEETING' section states that public meeting information will be posted on this sign when available, with the file number 'File # 17 123456 STE 30 OZ'. At the bottom, there are contact details for the Community Planning department, including a phone number, email, and website, along with the 'APPLICATION INFORMATION CENTRE' logo and the '3-1-1' service logo.</p>
<p>Seattle, WA</p>	 <p>The image shows a photograph of a notice sign posted on a chain-link fence at a construction site. The sign is titled 'A NEW 7-STORY APARTMENT BUILDING' and 'Project: 3039246-LU'. It lists 'What is it?' (Units: 120, Parking: 40, Includes: retail, Demolition of existing buildings) and 'Required Approvals' (Environmental Review, Administrative Design Review). It provides contact information for 'Submit comments to' (City of Seattle, Planning Department, P.O. Box 34219, Seattle, WA 98122-4019) and 'More information' (Online: Enter project address at: seattle.gov/development, Send us a question at: seattle.gov/development, Phone: (206) 468-6667 (toll-free)). The sign also includes a map of the project location at '1314 E UNION ST'.</p>

Portland, OR



PROPOSED EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY NOTICE OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Given the smaller audience for meetings held prior to application submittals, the fewer types of activities that require a public hearing and thus have mailed, published and posted notices, and the elimination of notifications for land divisions about to be approved, it may be appropriate to consider additional or expanded information and notice.

Some communities address public information goals in part through requiring on-site information about development activities, which would be visible to passersby. Notice signage is placed along the perimeter of a to-be-developed location or under-construction project to inform community members of proposed and active site development. These notice signs typically include information such as:

- Name of project,
- Permit number,
- Applicant contact information,
- City staff contact information,
- Proposed project dimensions and use,
- Zoning district, and
- Dates, times and locations of upcoming public meetings regarding the proposal.

Other development signs include a site plan, lot dimensions, setback distances, landscape changes, and parking information. Some notice signs include a QR code or website details to direct community members to further information. Signs range from 20 square feet to 50 square feet and face all street frontages associated with the project site along the public right-of-way for easier viewing from a sidewalk or street shoulder.

Staff recommend implementing notice signage for projects involving rezoning which would retain public hearing requirements under ORD-25-25, and some of the Type 1 categories under consideration for elimination, as these are likely to remain of high public interest. Staff suggest this will improve public awareness and provide community members with an opportunity to understand and comment on a proposed project based on their unique knowledge about the place they live, work or frequent.

Topics for discussion and consideration by the Ordinance Revisions Committee:

1. Assumptions: staff assume that regulation for new on-site signage would apply to high impact development, would be one-size-fits-all for the chosen priority petition categories, and would address gaps in community involvement and notice resulting from changes to Section 5.28.4 [Citizen Participation](#) and Section 5.28.2 [Public Notices](#).
2. Applicable Petitions: should the proposed notice signage encompass all the Type 1 projects existing prior to potential adoption of UDC changes, or a modified set of projects? Which projects should be highest priority for this kind of notice, and what projects would be burdened unnecessarily by high signage expectations and should be excluded?

Type 1 projects prior to proposed modifications to UDC Section 5.28.4 include:

- New or amended PUD zoning district and PUD site plan
 - Rezoning
 - Site Plan with more than 80 dwelling units
 - Site Plan over 65 feet in height
 - Site Plan with more than 50,000 square feet of floor area
 - Projects requiring Special Exception Use permit
 - Any project which may require additional participation depending on scope, nature or any unique or unusual characteristics as determined by the planning manager.
3. Signage Content: from the list of items above citing information typically included in comparison city signage, what items should Ann Arbor prioritize as must-have content? Please keep in mind that signage which contains too much information can dilute key messaging and legibility. If adherence to a template provided by the department is required (required in some other cities), staff can fine-tune how petitioners visually prioritize information over time by adjusting the template layout or content.