

# Reforming Statutory Public Hearings for Planning

*By: Aaron Moore and Alexandra Caporale*

The planning process in Canada requires public hearings by law. They offer concerned parties the opportunity to comment on proposed developments in front of decisionmakers. However, many have criticized the effectiveness of statutory public hearings and questioned whether they should be reformed or removed altogether. This paper provides four recommendations to improve the public hearing process.

Read the full report: <https://uoft.me/Hearings>

## Recommendations to improve municipal public hearings:

Organize hearings earlier in the planning process (for example, during the application process), when developers might be more receptive to making changes.

Hold hearings in neighbourhoods affected by proposals, rather than at City Hall (or similar out-of-area venues), and schedule them in the evenings.

Move away from the antagonistic, quasi-judicial nature of traditional statutory public hearings in favour of forums that facilitate open discussion among residents, City planners, elected officials, and developers.

Ensure participation by all members of the decision-making body (council or committee) or their representatives.

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