



Tips for Attending and Offering Public Comment at a City Council Session

Attending and speaking at a City Council meeting sounds intimidating. But by taking a little time to prepare, you can go to a meeting and speak effectively. Below are some tips for effective comments.

Please remember, to be most effective, *always be courteous and respectful.*

1. Arrive early.

Plan to arrive 20-30 minutes before the committee start time to sign-up to offer your comments. The sign-up sheet is on the table right outside of Council Chambers on the 2nd floor of [City Hall](#). Once the committee begins, individuals and groups will be asked to come to the podium to testify in the order they are listed.

2. Keep it short & simple.

Comments in public hearings are often limited to 2 minutes or less. Take time to practice write your comments and time yourself. No one wants to be cut-off before they've made their point. Once at the podium, a timekeeper will hold up a sign letting you know how much time you have left and when you have to stop.

3. Be specific.

Be as specific as possible about exactly what you are asking from elected. Let them know exactly what you support or oppose, and your ideas for alternative solutions.

4. Tell your story.

Be sure to tell elected officials who you are and why this is important to you—how does it connect to you as a person or your neighborhood? How, specifically, does it impact you, your community, or someone you know?

5. Send Letters, Email & Phone Calls.

It's always a good idea to send a follow up notes to councilmembers after you make comment to reinforce your comments at the hearing, and ask for a follow-up response. When unable to attend public hearings, you may also schedule a meeting with your elected officials or make phone calls and emails to your elected officials as an alternative.