

RULE 9 - PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC FORUM

A. Public Comment.

The City Council appreciates hearing from community members about items on its agenda, and desires to set aside time at each Council business meeting where final action is taken. Comments on final action will be taken orally at a meeting, or in writing submitted to the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting to enable staff to compile and distribute written comments to the City Council. Written comments received after this deadline will not be made part of the official record of the meeting.

1. All comments must be limited to items on the agenda. Speakers are asked to identify the specific agenda items they wish to address.
2. To ensure equal opportunity for the public to comment, a speaker's comments shall be limited to up to two minutes per person, per meeting. Where necessary, due to the number of persons who want to address the Council, the presiding officer shall retain authority to limit all persons' remarks to an equal period of less than two minutes. [Comment time may not be added to/donated to other speakers.](#) To further ensure equal opportunity for the public to comment, each person may address the Council only one time during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.
3. Comments may be made at or before every meeting at which final action is taken, including on resolutions, first and final readings of ordinances, and motions. Comments made regarding ordinances forwarded to the Council by the Hearing Examiner for which a public hearing has been held shall not be incorporated into the formal record of the decision pursuant to state law.
4. Written public comments must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office at a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting to enable staff to compile and distribute to the Council.

Written comments submitted according to these Rules shall be considered in the same manner as oral comments.

5. Upon the request of any individual who will have difficulty attending a meeting of the City Council by reason of disability, limited mobility, or for any other reason that makes physical attendance at a meeting difficult, the Council shall, when feasible, provide an opportunity for that individual to provide oral comment at the meeting remotely if oral comment from other members of the public will be accepted at the meeting.

6. Upon the request of any individual who needs information in an alternative format or different language, the Council shall, when feasible, provide options for language access. Individuals using language or sign interpreters will be provided additional time when testifying before the City Council.

76. In the event that the Council, after taking public comment, suspends its rules to include final action on a new resolution, ordinance, or motion on the agenda, public comment will be taken at the time the Council considers the new resolution, ordinance, or motion. Where legislation has been substantially changed at its final reading, a person may speak to the changes.

87. To request to speak during Public Comment, members of the public must indicate they wish to speak as instructed by the Mayor or City Clerk. Those attending in person will sign in at the designated location in Council Chambers; those attending remotely may be asked to click the 'Raise Hand' button or *9 on their phone. The speaker's name or the last four digits of their phone number will be called out when it is their turn to speak.

89. Nothing in these Rules diminishes the City Council's authority to deal with interruptions, puts limitations on the time available for public comment or on how public comment is accepted, or requires the Council to accept public comment that renders orderly conduct of the meeting unfeasible.

B. Courtesy and Conduct.

1. All speakers during Public Comment or Community Forum, in the discussion, comments, or debate of any matter or issue, shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities, or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations in respect to any member of the Council, or any member of the staff or the public, but shall at all times confine their remarks to those facts which are germane and relevant, as determined by the presiding officer, to the question or matter under discussion. All remarks will be addressed to the Council as a whole.

2. Disruptions of the City Council and committee meetings are prohibited. Any person engaging in conduct that disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the Council meeting can be considered a failure to comply with the City Council Rules of Procedure. Disruptions include but are not limited to:

- Failure of a speaker to comply with the allotted time established for the individual speaker's public comment;
- Unduly repetitive or irrelevant remarks that are unrelated to the topic on the agenda or within the City's jurisdiction;
- Use of an allotted individual comment period for purposeful delay, including remaining silent or engaging in other activity without conveying a discernible message; or
- Holding or placement of a banner or sign in the Council Chamber in a way that endangers others or obstructs the free flow of pedestrians or the view of others attending the meeting;

C. Community Forum - ~~Second and Fourth Tuesday.~~

~~On the second and fourth Tuesday of each month,~~Once per month, time shall be reserved ~~during the regular business meeting~~ for community members' comments. These forums may be held in the City Council Chambers following regular business, or "in-district" as a special meeting of the Council or stand-alone event. The purpose of this forum is to ~~assist the Council in making policy decisions; therefore, items of discussion shall be limited to matters over which the City Council has jurisdiction.~~provide a space for community input that informs Council policy decisions, addresses service issues, supports civic education, and helps build trust, transparency, and stronger relationships between residents and their local government.

Community Forum will be limited to ~~sixty minutes~~two hours, and speaker's remarks shall be limited to up to ~~90 seconds~~three minutes per person, per Community Forum. Comment time may not be added to/donated to other speakers. If needed, alternative language can be offered per rule 9.A.6. Where necessary, due to the number of persons who want to address the Council, the presiding officer shall retain authority to limit all persons' remarks to an equal period of ~~less no more than 90 seconds~~two minutes. If there are not enough speakers to last for ~~sixty minutes (one hour)~~two hours, the chair will close Community Forum after the last speaker. To further ensure equal opportunity for the public to comment, each person may address the Council only one time during the Community Forum portion of any meeting. Comment shall not be made in support of or opposition to any matter on the Council Agenda for which the time for public comment has passed. Comments should be limited to those related to legislative policies adopted or under consideration, and services provided by the city. Speakers are asked to identify the topic that their comment pertains to so that the presiding officer can determine if the topic is within the scope of Community Forum.

The City Council will be expected to listen to community comments and may prepare responses at the end of the Community Forum before adjourning.

D. No Use of Public Comment or Community Forum for Campaigns.

No person may use public comment or Community Forum for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition. Further, any direct mention of a candidate's candidacy or a ballot proposition shall constitute grounds for immediate suspension of such person's right to speak at that Council meeting.

E. No Use of Public Comment or Community Forum for Advertising.

No person addressing the Council may use Public Comment or Community Forum for the purpose of advertising. Advertising is defined as "promoting by making known, proclaiming publicly, drawing attention to, or making conspicuous any item, product, service, or thing, for profit or otherwise." This does not prevent or preclude any person addressing the Council from expressing their views or opinions on matters over which the

Council has jurisdiction. Also, this does not prohibit individuals or organizations from promoting public events or causes through public requests for proclamations and presentations as provided in Rule 8, Sections D and E.

F. Transgression and Enforcement.

The presiding officer shall retain authority to determine whether a speaker's remarks fail to comply with these Rules or exceed the scope of the designated forum, and the presiding officer shall have the right to suspend such person's right to speak, subject to the Council's right to overrule such decision.

Should disruptions or conduct render Community Forum unable to continue then the presiding officer may call for a recess of no more than 10 minutes. This can be done without a vote of the Council once. Any further recesses require approval by motion.

If disruption of Community Forum continues or the Presiding Officer determines a recess will not abate the disruption, the Presiding Officer may adjourn the meeting immediately.

Rule 9 Changes

Rule	Description of Change	Alternative
9.A.2	Add “Comment time may not be added to/donated to other speakers” to clarify practice.	Create a practice that time can be donated to other speakers.
9.A.6	Include a new clause for language access to match recent practice. Includes an undefined increase to time for those using translation.	Can set a specific time limit for speakers relying on translation.
9.B	Add new section for disruptions to include examples that the presiding officer can enforce. Is not limited to specific examples but defined examples are helpful for direct reference.	Include additional examples of disruptions that do not infringe on 1 st amendment protections or decline to bullet examples.
9.C	Change frequency to once a month	Retain the 2/month frequency
9.C	Allow for Community Forum to be in Council, or in-district.	Reject change and keep Community Forum in Chambers only
9.C	Amend the purpose of community forum to expand guidelines.	Can reject purpose change or change the broad guiding language.
9.C	Change limit to total time for Community Forum to 2 hours	Set a different time limit or retain the 1 hour limit.
9.C	Change speaker time up to 3 minutes	Set a different time for speaker time or retain the 90 second limit.
9.C	Set a floor limit that the presiding officer cannot lower time below 2 minutes	Reject change and allow presiding officer to set any length for time for public comment or set a different floor number.
9.C	Include reference to rules 9.A.2 and 9.A.6 that would then pertain to Community Forum.	Don’t include prohibition on donating time to speakers or language access time allowances for community forum.
9.C	Added language for suggested limitations to the topics of Community Forum, and language asking speakers to reference the topic they wish to speak to so the presiding officer can confirm it is within the scope and can keep them on topic. This would be the primary enforcement tool.	Give more specific guidance for topics that are allowed and/or remove the direction to provide a topic speakers are addressing.
9.C	Include language that the Council will listen and may prepare responses at the end of forum before adjournment.	Reject the change that sets this expectation.
9.F	During Community Forum, give the presiding officer the authority to recess once for 10 minutes without a vote of the Council to address disruptions.	Reject this authority or amend the time or number of recesses allowed before needing a motion by council.
9.F	During Community Forum, give the presiding officer the authority to adjourn the meeting if disruptions persist or would be unaddressed by a recess.	Reject this authority or amend the situations in which the presiding officer can adjourn community forum.