

## **City of Minneapolis Legislative Process**

“Legislative process” refers to the established series of steps which constitute the City’s formal decision-making system through which local laws are enacted and public policies adopted to govern the community. In Minneapolis, that process is dictated by Minnesota Statutes, the Minneapolis City Charter & Code of Ordinances, and the City Council’s Rules of Order. Subject to these authorities, the Council transacts official business through the enactment of ordinances and the adoption of resolutions.

The City Charter requires the Council to exercise legislative authority by ordinance. Thus, ordinances are local laws, equivalent to “municipal statutes.” Ordinances are generally enforceable by criminal prosecution, usually as a misdemeanor, or by civil actions such as seeking a court order or injunction. Once enacted, ordinances are codified and published as part of the [Minneapolis Code of Ordinances](#).

Unlike an ordinance, a resolution is not binding law. Instead, resolutions are used to provide policy direction, to set or amend operating policies and procedures, to memorialize administrative actions, to approve contracts and agreements or to settle claims, to appropriate funds, or to submit charter amendments for a referendum election; these are examples of the types of non-legislative matters handled by resolution.

### **Committee Action**

The bulk of the Council’s work is done in its standing committees. Each standing committee has primary jurisdiction over a defined sphere of municipal policy and oversight of the departments and divisions that fall under its purview. Committees provide a public forum where legislative and policy proposals are reviewed and evaluated, perfected through the regular amendatory process, and put in final form for recommendation to the full City Council. Committees also provide the most significant opportunity for the public to engage in the legislative process, through the conduct of public hearings and the acceptance of public testimony or public comments.

All committee meetings are open to the public; however, the meeting—or portions of the meeting—may be closed to the public for purposes allowed under the Minnesota Open Meetings Law. The chair of the committee oversees the preparation of the meeting agenda which contains a listing and brief description of all matters items to be considered. Although this primarily includes those matters referred by the City Council, committees also may consider matters submitted by City officers or by City departments and divisions to facilitate expeditious action. Standing committees conduct public hearings on proposals when required by law or by the direction of the City Council, and for that purpose take public testimony on the proposals. In addition, a standing committee may accept public comments on items even if a formal public hearing is not required.

When a committee has completed its evaluation of each proposal, it forwards its recommendation in the form of a committee report to the full City Council. Committee recommendations are limited to: approve; approve as amended; do not approve; or forward without recommendation.

## Standing Committees

- [Claims](#)
- [Committee of the Whole](#) (includes IT Policy Subcommittee)
- [Community Development & Regulatory Services](#)
- [Elections & Rules](#)
- [Health, Environment & Community Engagement](#)
- [Intergovernmental Relations](#)
- [Public Safety, Civil Rights & Emergency Management](#)
- [Taxes](#)
- [Transportation & Public Works](#)
- [Ways & Means](#) (includes Budget Subcommittee)
- [Zoning & Planning](#)

## Independent Committees

- [Audit](#)
- [Executiv](#)

## Council Action

During the order of *reports of standing committees*, the chairs of each standing committee present the reports on all proposals that had been previously referred, considered, and acted upon by the committee. The City Council may act on all reported items in a single omnibus motion, or may separate individual proposals for formal consideration and action. At this stage of the process, the proposal may be: passed or adopted and transmitted to the Mayor; amended by the City Council and either passed or adopted and transmitted to the Mayor; remanded back to the committee of reference or to another committee for further consideration; or defeated by formal action of the City Council. Final action by the City Council generally requires a simple majority vote, unless a higher threshold is established in state law or the City Charter.

After action by the City Council, the City Clerk engrosses any amendments, adds the final vote tally, and transmits a certified version to the Mayor.

## Mayoral Consideration

Pursuant to the City Charter, the Mayor must approve or disapprove all measures acted upon by the City Council within five days (excepting Sundays). Within that period, the Mayor must either: (1) Approve the actions and authenticate the same by signature; (2) veto the actions and return the same, with stated objections thereto, to the City Clerk; or (3) allow the actions to become effective without signature after the five-day period expires.

When the official actions are returned by the Mayor, the City Clerk attests the Mayor's signature. If the Mayor vetoes a specific matter, it is automatically reconsidered at the next regular meeting of the full City Council. The City Council may accept the Mayor's veto or, by a two-thirds supermajority vote, can override the veto and approve the action(s). If the City Council does re-pass the proposal by overriding the Mayor's veto, it is then considered adopted.

### **Publication & Codification**

Under state law, all ordinances, resolutions, and other actions must be published in the City's official newspaper before becoming effective. Publication generally occurs eight days after Council's final action, in the Saturday edition of the next week. After publication, the Clerk's Office indexes all official actions and prepares the original documents for permanent archival. Ordinances are codified within the proper titles, chapters, and sections of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances. In the case where an ordinance is amending the City Charter, the City Clerk incorporates the new ordinance in the proper chapter and section based on the subject matter.

At the conclusion of each annual session, the Council's journal (its official record), together with all original ordinances and resolutions and an index to all of these together, is printed and bound as the *Official Proceedings of the City Council – City of Minneapolis*. Bound copies of the *Official Proceedings* are distributed as follows: