

Participation in Albuquerque's Legislative Process

Resident's Toolkit

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Introduction

Objective

Getting involved with your local city government is rewarding and offers the opportunity to have your voice heard on important laws being passed. Local governments make many of the decisions that affect citizen's day to day lives. With numerous ways to have your voice heard throughout the City Council legislative process, residents can be involved no matter the amount of time you want to dedicate, and what issues you want to speak on. Not only can your voice impact the laws of the city, but it helps keep City Council accountable and transparent to the public. The goal of this tool kit is to give residents the proper education and information to have effective participation in Albuquerque's legislative process.

Key Terms

Legislation: Bills that go through City Council that are intended to be made law. This includes resolutions that set City policy and ordinances that create or change the City's regulations.

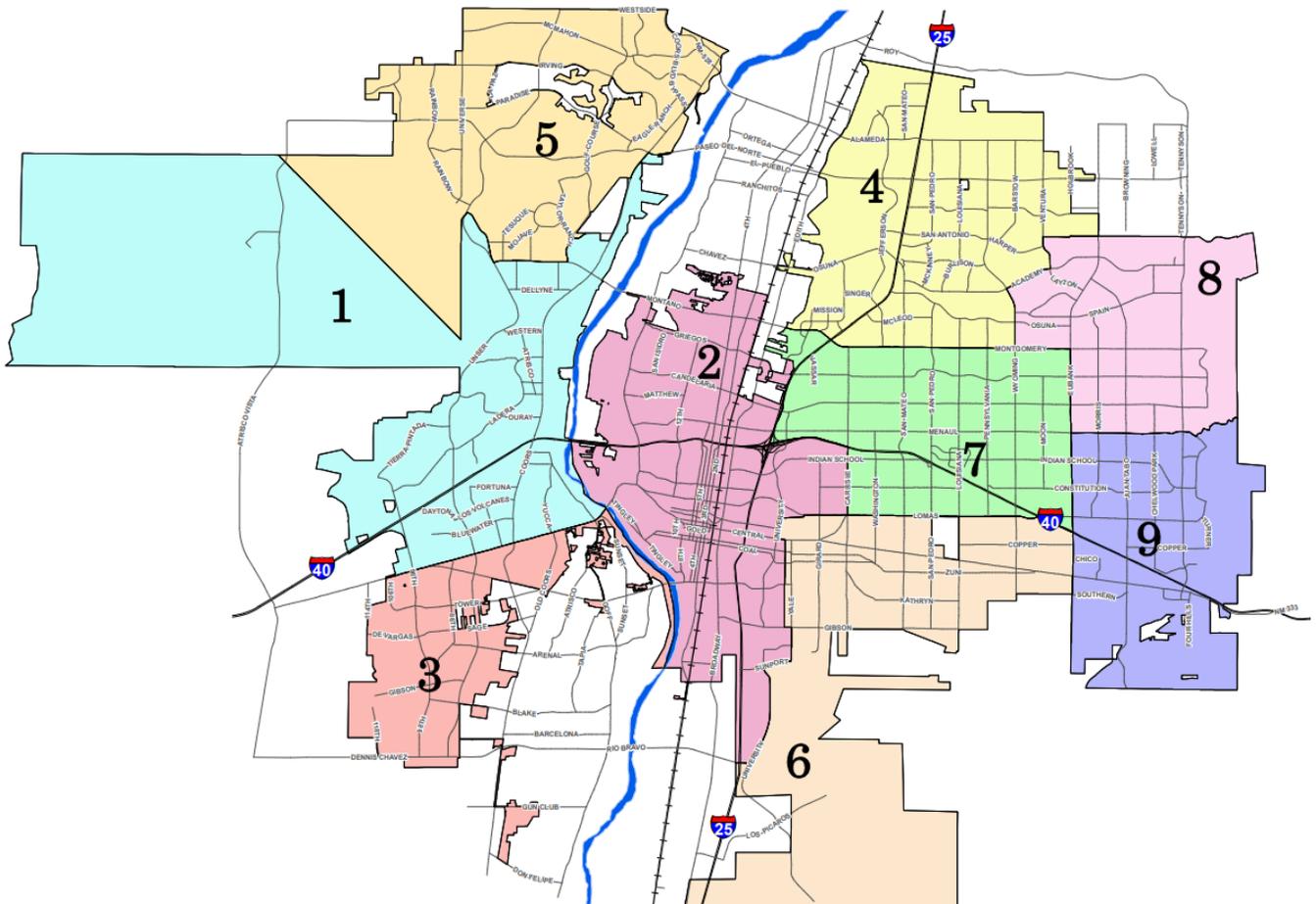
Legislative Process: The action of a bill going through City Council and necessary subcommittees to become a law in Albuquerque.

Public Comment: Input given by the public to the city of Albuquerque, about proposed legislation, during a period set aside and required by law.

Resident: A person living in the city of Albuquerque.

City Council

What is Albuquerque's City Council?



https://www.cabq.gov/council/documents/CityCouncil_11X17.pdf

City Council is the municipal body in Albuquerque that has legislative and administrative powers, such as passing ordinances and appropriating funds. Albuquerque is split into nine districts, as shown in the map above. Each district is represented by a City Councilor, who is elected by their district for a 4-year term. The terms for Council Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 began January 2022. The terms for Council Districts 2, 4, 6, and 8 began January 2020. City Councilor's are meant to act as the voice of the people of Albuquerque. Talking to your City Councilor is one-way residents can voice their opinions and be involved in the legislative process.

Resident Participation

What is Resident Participation?

Resident Participation can be defined as the active involvement of residents in legislative decision-making processes, allowing them to contribute to decisions that may have an impact on their lives.¹

Why is Resident Participation Important?

Resident participation is a necessary and important step to the local legislation process. There are four key reasons why resident participation is important: collective intelligence (which is when a large group of individuals gather and share their knowledge, data and skills for the purpose of solving societal issues) provides a better understanding of potential impacts and broader range of considerations throughout the legislative process for overall higher quality legislation, more inclusion and representation during legislative decision-making, improved understanding of the role of City Council by residents, and it allows for citizens to directly communicate their interests and concerns.

The Four Key Reasons for Resident Participation

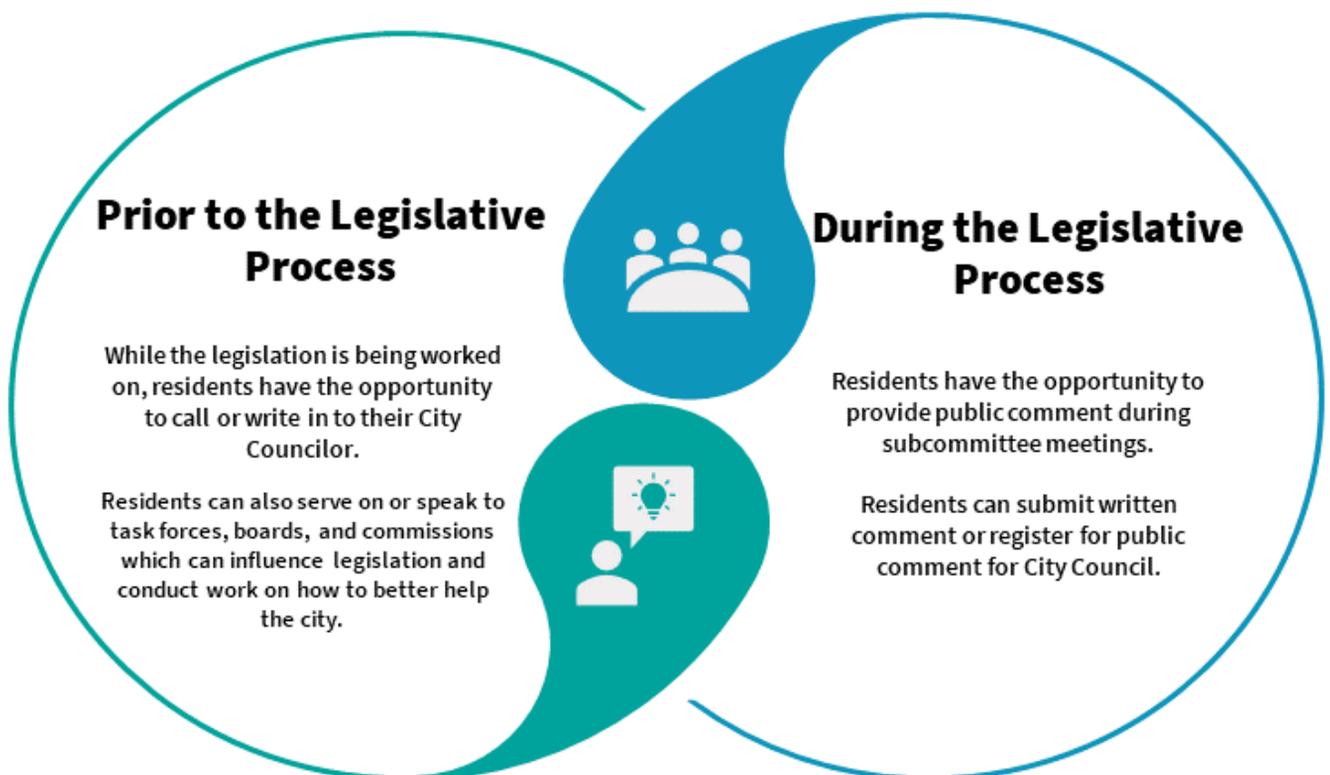


¹ https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/Toolkit_Citizen%20Participation%20in%20the%20Legislative%20Process.pdf

Resident Participation in the Legislative Process

How can residents get involved?

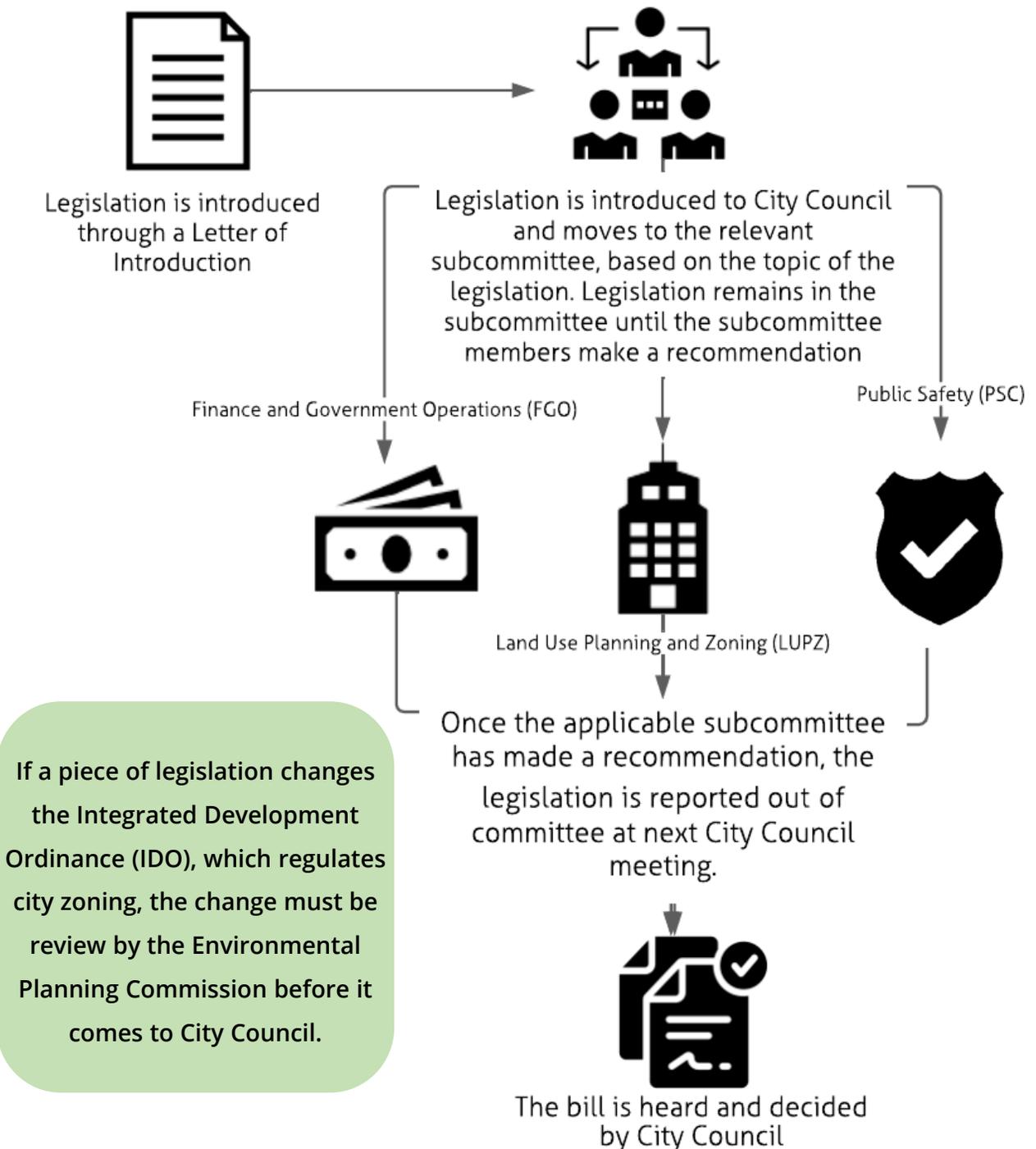
Residents can participate in the legislative process even before it begins by writing or talking to their city councilors about topics that they are passionate about. There are also many opportunities to serve on taskforces, boards and commissions within the city. Once legislation reaches City Council, residents can give public comment during subcommittee and City Council meetings.



For public comment, information is provided on the agenda for how and when to submit comments or register to speak during general public comment.

Albuquerque's Legislative Process

How are laws created in Albuquerque?



Other Information

What are the limitations around public comments during City Council meetings?

Residents may speak during the general public comment segment toward the beginning of each meeting on any topic they wish, it does not need to be an item on the agenda. Residents may also address a specific legislative item on the agenda, in which case they will be called to speak when the item comes up for discussion. In either case you must sign up to speak. Information is provided on the agenda for how and when to submit comments or register to speak during general public comment 72 hours before the scheduled meeting. Residents can select if they require Spanish language interpretation when signing up. The Council President determines the length of time given to each speaker at the beginning of each meeting, typically two minutes. It is important for residents to prepare what they are going to say ahead of time in order to keep their comments clear and to the point within the limited time-frame.

Additional Resources

For more information on resident participation in Albuquerque's legislative process, how to find your city councilor, and sign up for public comments please visit www.cabq.gov/council. All materials related to legislation are all available online for the public to view at <https://cabq.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>.