



WESTMINSTER

COLORADO

CITY OF WESTMINSTER 2023 LOBBYING PROTOCOLS

Official City Position

Throughout the legislative session, the City takes official positions in support of or opposition to proposed legislation that is being considered by the Colorado General Assembly. The City may also take an “amend”, “support, if amended”, and “oppose, unless amended” position on a bill to facilitate greater collaboration, greater negotiating power, and building and maintaining a relationship with a bill sponsor. It is important that policy issues be reviewed with City Council to ensure that they are priorities of the City. Prior to stating any official City position, Staff will review the legislation to determine the potential impact on the City. After thorough review, Staff will provide City Council with a brief summary of the legislation and a recommendation. In order to release an official City position, the majority of City Council must agree upon a position on the legislation or issue. Prior to publishing an official position, Staff will notify Council which members voted in support of Staff’s recommendation and those that voted against it. Alternatively, Staff may agree to work with bill sponsors, as guided by the Legislative Policy Statement, to amend a bill with the goal of City Council being able to take a position on the bill once it has been satisfactorily amended.

Official positions on specific bills frequently have a time sensitivity that requires Staff to utilize emails to City Council. As noted above, Staff will review the legislation, summarize the issue, and provide City Council with a recommendation. It is very important that City Council respond with their position via email to Staff as quickly as possible in order to allow the City to impact the outcome of a piece of legislation. Once City Council takes an official position on a bill or issue, the City’s legislative scorecard will be updated and made available to legislators and the public.

Representing the City at CML, DRCOG, and other groups

Members of City Council serve as representatives of the City for a variety of groups, including the Colorado Municipal League (CML) and Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). At these meetings, Councillors are frequently asked to take positions concerning legislation, and in some cases, legislation for which the City has not yet taken formal action. In instances where an official City position has been agreed upon, Councillors are to vote in alignment with the previously determined position of the entire City Council.

In those instances where the City has not taken formal action on a bill or issue and the bill or issue is clearly aligned with the City's position as outlined in the adopted Legislative Policy Statement, the Councillor should use his or her best judgement in casting a vote that aligns with the Legislative Policy Statement and is representative of City Council's position. In instances where an issue or bill arises for vote that is not discussed within the Legislative Policy Statement or that has not yet been taken up by Council, a Councillor should indicate that the City does not have an official position and that the issue will be discussed with the entire City Council before a position will be shared. As such, Councillors may need to abstain from voting in certain circumstances where an official City position is not clear.

If a Councillor votes in a public forum on an issue or bill that the City Council has not yet taken an official position on, the voting Councillor must report to the entire Council at the next possible meeting the vote that was cast on behalf of the City.

Testimony at the Capitol

Councillors are encouraged to testify on the City's behalf while, Board and Commission members, or Staff are occasionally requested to testify on the City's behalf on various pieces of proposed legislation at the State Capitol. When testifying, City Councillors, Board and Commission members, and/or Staff must notify the City Manager's Office to ensure that City Council has taken an official position on the legislation or issue. Notifying the City Manager's Office ensures that both City Council and the City's lobbyists are advised that a City representative will testify on a particular bill. It is important that lines of communication between Staff and the lobbyists remain open at all times to ensure that the City's lobbying efforts are as effective as possible and that we coordinate our efforts with other groups, including the Colorado Municipal League.

If testimony is not in support of the City's official position on the legislation, the City Councillor, Board of Commission member, or Staff should note that they are testifying on their own behalf and not as a representative of the City.

Lobbyist Interaction

In order to streamline interaction and avoid confusion with City Council, Staff will coordinate all correspondence with the lobbyists through one person designated by the City Manager. This individual will coordinate the tracking of legislation, obtaining City Council's official position, and conducting other miscellaneous research/support as necessary in presenting the official position(s) of City Council. The lobbyists, in turn, will coordinate all of their correspondence with City Council and Staff through the same designee.

Prior to engaging the lobbyists' efforts, City Council will be surveyed to ensure that a majority of the City Council concurs with moving forward with a position on a particular piece of legislation.

City Council may designate a Councilor as the point person on a specific piece of legislation or policy area. The Council designee may communicate and collaborate directly with staff and lobbyists.

In an effort to facilitate communication and education, City Council may communicate directly with lobbyists. It is the lobbyist's responsibility to inform staff of such communications.

Any interaction (whether City Councillors, Board and Commission members, or Staff) with state Senators or Representatives on behalf of the City must have City Council's approval and agreement that the issue is a priority. Staff must be apprised of any contacts made on specific legislation in order to ensure that the lobbyists are well informed to maximize their effectiveness and prevent the occurrence of conflicting messaging.