

City of Allen Park Ordinances

Adoption of an Ordinance (How a City Law or Rule is made)

A City Law or Rule is called an Ordinance. Local Ordinances are generally broken down into four (4) categories, Traffic Ordinances, Criminal Ordinances, Building Ordinances (Building and Construction Codes) and Miscellaneous Ordinances (such as Trash Collection, Snow Removal etc.).

The City Charter specifies the legal requirements on how a proposal becomes a City Ordinance. The Charter specifies only the minimum requirements for the adoption of an Ordinance and the Mayor and Council can require or add certain requirements for any proposal. The discussion below is a review of only the minimum requirements specified by the City Charter and does not discuss the Referendum process or how the public can place a proposed ordinance on a Ballot for an Election. For more details on both processes, please review the appropriate sections in the City Charter. You may access those sections by clicking this link, [City Charter - Ordinance Adoption](#).

An Ordinance starts as an idea proposed to the City Council. This idea may be put forth by the Mayor, a City Councilperson, City Department Head, the City Attorney or arise due to public comment at a City Council Meeting. The idea is put into written form by the City Attorney. The Ordinance is now considered a proposed ordinance.

The proposed ordinance is put on a Council agenda to be discussed at a Council meeting. If the Council believes the proposed ordinance has merit and wants to consider it further, the proposed ordinance will have a First and Second Reading at the Council meeting. This does not mean the proposed ordinance is read aloud to the public two times. To complete the First and Second Readings, the Council only needs to announce the proposed ordinance by its title or general subject matter and pass a resolution to approve the First and Second Reading. If the Council elects not to continue consideration of the proposed ordinance, the Council will not support the First and Second Reading or will vote against the First and Second Reading. Unless there is further desire by the Council to continue to discuss or consider the proposed ordinance, the proposed ordinance would be dropped at this point.

Once the Council passes or accepts the First and Second Reading by Council Resolution, the City Attorney finalizes the proposed ordinance and may make changes as suggested by the Council. The proposed ordinance is also published in a news paper that is generally circulated within the City. Usually this means the proposed ordinance is published in the News Herald, although it could be published in another local paper.

The City Charter does not require that the entire ordinance be published and in most instances, a summary of the proposed ordinance is only published. This summary usually contains the general headings and sections of the proposed ordinance. However, if the Council or City Attorney believes that more of the proposed ordinance needs to be published so that the general public will know what the proposed ordinance is about, a more detailed publication would be done. The Charter does require that if just a summary is published, a complete copy of the proposed ordinance must be available in the City Clerk's Office for review by the general public. The newspaper summary also advises the public that a copy of the proposed ordinance is available for review.

No sooner than ten (10) days after the proposed ordinance was published, the proposed ordinance can be sent back to the City Council for adoption. This step is called the Third and Final Reading. Again, the proposed ordinance is not actually read aloud. If the Council still believes the idea of the proposed ordinance is appropriate, a Resolution calling for the ordinance's adoption will be made by a Councilperson. A Roll Call Vote will be taken on the proposed ordinance. This means that each Councilperson, and the Mayor as a member of the Council, will have to publicly indicate whether they are for or against the proposed ordinance. If the proposed ordinance receives a simple majority vote of the Council, it passes and becomes law.

The adopted ordinance must now be published again in final form within ten (10) days. The publication process is the same as for the proposed ordinance, including the review copy in the City Clerk's Office.

An ordinance may also be adopted as an Emergency measure. When a proposed ordinance is adopted as an Emergency measure, it is adopted at the same Council meeting as it is originally proposed. So instead of having just the First and Second Reading, the Third and Final Reading are done at the same time. Additionally, the proposed ordinance is not published as a proposed ordinance, it is only published after it has been adopted.

Finally, a proposed ordinance may be changed many times before it is finally adopted. Some ordinances may have as many as fourteen (14) or twenty (20) versions before it is finally adopted. It is not required by the City Charter that each new version be published. Generally, only the latest version at the time of the First and Second Reading and the Final Adopted versions are published. This reduces the cost to the City for the newspaper ads.