

Civic Petitions



Where can I obtain further information?

Please contact the City Clerk's Office if you have any questions:

In Person: Office of the City Clerk
2nd Floor, Tom Davies Square
200 Brady Street
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 5K3
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Mail: Office of the City Clerk
City of Greater Sudbury
P.O. Box 5000, Station B
Sudbury ON P3A 5P3

Telephone: (705) 671-2489 | Fax: (705) 671-8118 | E-mail: clerk@city.greatersudbury.on.ca



Civic Petitions

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a petition?

It is the fundamental right of citizens to petition their elected representatives. Petitions are one way citizens can bring grievances or concerns to the attention of City Council.

A petition is basically a written request signed by citizens that asks City Councillors to do something within their power about a particular issue. Instead of many people writing individual letters to Council, it is much easier to create a petition. One letter is written and people sign it to demonstrate their support.

Even when a petition does not result in an immediate or obvious resolution, petitions are important because they communicate your opinion to Members of Council and other citizens. Petitions are one way to bring public concerns to the Council agenda.

Who can petition City Council?

Anyone who is at least 18 years old and a resident of the City of Greater Sudbury, including businesses and unincorporated associations where the majority of the membership consists of City residents, may petition Council.

Should you petition?

Petitioning Council may not always be your first course of action. Some matters which are operational or administrative are sometimes best resolved by the appropriate General Manager with the City of Greater Sudbury.

When no other remedies are available, or when you feel your concerns have not been addressed by City staff, you may wish to petition Council.

What are the rules governing petitions?

Various rules govern petitions. If your petition does not conform to procedural by-laws, your petition may be returned. Rules help ensure the authenticity of petitions and help protect both petitioners and City Council.

Council's Procedural By-law requires that a petition be addressed to Council, and printed, typewritten or legibly written in either English or French.

At a minimum, a petition must contain the following:

- A statement of purpose. This statement of purpose must be repeated at the top of each page.
- The signatures of a least two citizens currently residing in the City of Greater Sudbury.
- The local addresses of each citizen signing the petition.
- The name of a spokesperson (or "principal petitioner") including their mailing address, street address and telephone number.

What topics are suitable for a petition?

The subject of any petition must be a matter over which Council has the power to act. In other words, the topic must be a municipal responsibility rather than a Provincial or Federal matter.

Petitions may also be used solely to express public opinion to Council without requesting a resolution.

Your petition will not be accepted by Council if the matter must be referred to the Courts or to a Provincial or Federal Tribunal. This restriction also applies when you have a statutory right of appeal or a pending legal action.

If your petition is similar to a petition already considered by Council over the past year, your petition will be considered only if it contains substantial and material new evidence.

If you have questions regarding Council's authority to deal with your petition, please contact the City Clerk's Office.

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How can I get a petition presented to City Council?

There is no provision for petitions to be placed directly before Council by the petitioners. All petitions should be submitted to a Member of Council who will then file the petition with the City Clerk and present the petition on behalf of the petitioners to Council.

The Clerk will record in the Minutes of the Meeting the name of the Member of Council who presented the petition, who the petition is from, the number of signatories and a short summary of the action requested by the petitioners.

If Council directs the petition to a particular member of staff, then this will also be recorded in the Minutes, including any direction given to staff.

When a petition is presented at a Council Meeting, the Clerk will check the petition to ensure it complies with rules governing petitions. If the petition has not been properly prepared, it may be returned to the Councillor who presented the petition.

If a petition refers to a specific by-law or motion which is due to come before Council for debate and consideration, the petition may be presented when the matter comes up for debate.

A delegation, addressing Council on a specific by-law or motion, may also file a petition with the City Clerk at the conclusion of their presentation.

It should be noted that a petition can be given to any Member of Council for presentation. The Councillor does not necessarily have to represent your Ward.

Presenting a petition does not mean a Councillor agrees with its intent. A Councillor is not obliged to present a petition.

It is very rare that any debate takes place at the time the petition is presented to Council.

What happens to the petition after it is presented to City Council?

After a petition has been presented, the terms of the petition and the name, address and telephone number of the principal petitioner or spokesperson are forwarded to the appropriate General Manager.

The Clerk writes to the principal petitioner and to the Member of Council who filed the petition informing them that the petition has been received and its terms forwarded.

Once a General Manager has received the terms of a petition, the General Manager can choose the way in which to proceed unless otherwise directed by City Council.

In some cases, the General Manager may order administrative action to be taken in response to a particular grievance.

The General Manager may decide to seek further information from the principal petitioner or spokesperson. The principal petitioner may be asked to provide information regarding the specific nature of the petition. This can be done either in writing or by meeting with the principal petitioner, the Ward Councillor, City staff or other interested parties.

After consideration of the intent of the petition, the General Manager may report back to Council with a written report containing recommendations or no recommendation at all. If the General Manager makes no recommendation to Council, no further action will be taken on the petition.

If the matter warrants further consideration by Council, then the General Manager will bring a report to Council for resolution or the enactment of a by-law. This may be necessary if the petition requires a new City Policy, an amendment to an existing City Policy or approval for an unbudgeted expenditure. At that time, the General Manager may also arrange to bring the petitioners before Council as a delegation.

Is a petition a “public” document?

On presentation to Council, a petition becomes a public document and can be viewed by Members of Council, citizens and the news media.

The information contained in the petition will not be used by the City for any purpose other than ensuring that the petition meets Council’s requirements for a valid petition and to ensure contact with the principal petitioner or spokesperson.

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How do I prepare a petition?

Spokesperson or Principal Petitioner

The “principal petitioner” or “spokesperson” is the person who has initiated or organized the petition on behalf of citizens, businesses or organizations.

If the petition is from a business or organization (unincorporated body), then a duly authorized officer of the business or organization should sign the front page of the petition on behalf of the business or organization. That person’s position within the organization (i.e. owner, president, secretary, treasurer, etc.) should also be included.

This person will be the main contact for the petition. Ensure that the spokesperson’s name is clearly printed and that their mailing address, street address (if it differs) and their telephone number are provided. Please include a daytime telephone number where the spokesperson can be reached between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. You may also wish to include the spokesperson’s fax number and an e-mail address.

Style of petition

Petition forms are available from Members of Council and the City Clerk. Forms are also available in Adobe Acrobat format on the City’s web site at www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca.

You are not required to use the official form, but you should make sure that your petition:

- is addressed to City Council,
- asks City Council to take some action on the subject matter or concern of the petition,
- identifies the principal petitioner or spokesperson,
- includes the signature and local address of each petitioner, and,
- if signatures are affixed to more than one sheet, then the intent, grievance or action requested of the petition must be repeated at the top of each signature sheet.

Language of petition

Petitions must:

- be in English or French,
- use respectful and moderate language, and not contain irrelevant statements.

When a petition is received in the French language, the City Clerk is responsible for translation of the document.

Collecting signatures

Although a petition requires a minimum of only two signatures to be accepted, the petition will be more representative of public feeling if it is signed by many people.

It is important to make sure the petition is properly prepared, following the rules governing petitions, before gathering signatures.

Signing the front page of a petition:

In most instances, the first signature will be that of the principal petitioner or spokesperson.

Remember, if you are signing on behalf of a business or organization you should include your position (i.e. owner, president, secretary, treasurer, etc.).

Rules for signatures on additional pages:

- Additional pages with signatures must include the petition’s statement of purpose at the top.
- All petitioners must sign their own name; signatures on behalf of a second party are not acceptable. If a petitioner is incapacitated and unable to provide a signature, the circumstance should be noted beside the petitioner’s name.
- Signatures must be original. Photocopied, faxed, scanned, pasted or otherwise transferred signatures are not acceptable.
- Each petitioner must include the address of their primary residence within the City of Greater Sudbury.

Attachments

Do not attach letters, affidavits or other documents to the petition.

PETITION

We, the

Identify, in general terms, who the petitioners are: for example: residents of Ward, Residents of Street, Residents of Community of, citizens of the City of Greater Sudbury.

Briefly state the matter or argument in support of your petition.

This is to be included on each signature page.

State the specific request for action you wish Council to undertake.

This is to be included on each signature page.

**NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER
OF THE SPOKESPERSON OR PRINCIPLE PETITIONER:**

Here follows the Signatures

Signatures <i>(only original signatures are permitted-if signing on behalf of a business or organization you should indicate if you are the owner, president, secretary, treasurer, etc.)</i>		Addresses <i>(your residential address in the City of Greater Sudbury)</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

Once submitted to Council, this petition becomes a public document and is available for viewing. The information provided on a petition is not considered to be confidential information and may be seen by anyone requesting to see copies of the petition. This information will not be used by the City for any purpose other than to ensure it meets Council's requirements for a valid petition and ensure to contact with spokesperson or principal petitioner.

PETITION

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