



## CITIZEN PETITION POLICY

Prior to January 2016, the City of Texarkana, Texas, (the "City") had no formal process for residents to submit petitions to the City Council. Recognizing that petitions play a role in the communication between residents and elected officials, the City Council adopted a Citizen Petition Policy which establishes procedures for the submission and recognition of public petitions.

For the purposes of this policy, a petition is a formal written request made to the City Council of the City of Texarkana, Texas. All petitions that meet the standards set out in the Citizen Petition Policy will be presented to the City Council and listed as a communication item on an upcoming City Council agenda. Petitions containing original signatures should be sent to the attention of the City Secretary by mail or delivered in person to Texarkana, Texas City Hall.

A petition is considered a public document at the City and the information contained in it will be subject to Texas Government Code Chapter 552 - "Public Information Act". The petition must include a disclosure statement on each page of the petition so that those who sign the document agree to and are aware of, its open records availability.

For further information pertaining to the "Public Information Act", please visit the website of the Office of the Attorney General at this address: [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us).

### **Policy Statement**

The City is committed to citizen engagement and supports petitions as one tool for citizens to have input into the City Council's decision making process. A petition can be most effective when the information contained in it is accurate, verifiable, and when the petition is recognized and accepted by the elected officials.

### **Purpose of Policy**

This policy outlines the City's procedure for receipt and recognition of public or citizen submitted petitions. This policy applies to all citizen submitted petitions delivered to the City Secretary with the exception of those governed by another Act under state and/or federal law(s).

### **Petition Requirements**

- The petition must be addressed to the City Council of the City of Texarkana, Texas, and request a particular action within the authority of the City Council.
- Petitions must be legible, typewritten or printed in ink (no pencil).

- The text of the petition must be listed at the top of each page for multiple-page petitions. Pages should be numbered and total number of pages indicated.
- The petition must be appropriate and respectful in tone, and must not contain any improper or offensive language or information.
- Each petitioner must **print and sign** his or her own name. A paper petition must contain original signatures only, written directly on the petition.
- Each petitioner must provide his or her full home address.
- For petitions submitted electronically, petitioners must provide name, address and a valid e-mail address.
- The petition must clearly disclose on each page that it will be considered a public document at the City and that information contained in it will be subject to Texas Government Code Chapter 552 – "Public Information Act".

#### **Submission of Petitions**

- Completed petitions containing original signatures should be sent to the attention of the City Secretary by mail, email, or delivered in person to Texarkana, Texas City Hall, 220 Texas Blvd, Texarkana, Texas 75501.
- Electronic petitions may be submitted to the attention of the City Secretary at [j.evans@txkusa.org](mailto:j.evans@txkusa.org).
- All petitions that meet the above standards will be presented to the City Council at the earliest upcoming regular City Council meeting or at an upcoming regular City Council meeting, at the discretion of the City Manager, at which the subject of the petition is to be discussed.
- The City Council has the discretion to accept the petition and the City Council's consideration and decision is final.

#### **Review of Petitions**

The City Secretary will evaluate all petitions to ensure that the requirements of the policy are met. Petitions deemed to be in non-compliance will not be formally presented to or accepted by the City Council.

#### **Retention and Disclosure**

All petitions submitted to the City will be retained in the City Secretary's office and kept in accordance with the retention schedule outlined by the Texas State Library Archives Commission. Petitions meeting the requirements of this policy and therefore presented to and received by the City Council will be available for public viewing upon request.

**SAMPLE Petition Template**

**To:** The City Council of the City of Texarkana, Texas  
 220 Texas Boulevard  
 Texarkana, Texas 75501

**Whereas:** (brief description of issue/problem/ grievance in question)

**I/We, the undersigned, petition the City Council of the City of Texarkana, Texas, as follows:**

**Number of pages:** \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name	Home Address	Signature	E-mail Address (Required for electronic submission of petition)

**By signing this petition, I hereby acknowledge that this petition will become a public document at the City of Texarkana, Texas, and that all information contained in it will be subject to Texas Government Code Chapter 552 – "Public Information Act".**