



City of Lakewood – Referendum Timelines

What is a Referendum?

The referendum process is rooted in the Colorado Constitution; further governed by state statutes, the City of Lakewood Charter, and the Lakewood Municipal Code. This process empowers residents to circulate petitions to gather signatures of registered electors of the city in an attempt to have an ordinance that was passed by the City Council to either be repealed by City Council action or submitted to a vote of the registered electors of Lakewood.

Key Phases & Timelines

1. Filing Window/ Referendum Period (Time period after an ordinance is passed and before it takes effect)	▪ 30 days after adoption (most ordinances) ▪ 45 days after adoption for zoning/rezoning ordinances ○ Timeline does not begin for amended ordinances until the final, amended version is published by the City Clerk's Office.
2. Petition Circulation	▪ Petition forms must be approved by the City Clerk prior to circulation. ▪ Signatures required for successful referendum: 3% of registered voters ▪ Circulators must be at least 18 years old.
3. Protest Period	▪ Any registered elector may file a protest challenging the sufficiency of a petition within 30 days after a signed petition is filed with the City Clerk.
4. Clerk's Review	▪ Initial determination of sufficiency timeline: 20 days of the date the petition is filed. ▪ Final determination of sufficiency timeline: 30 days of the date the petition is filed.
5. Council Action	▪ When presented with a sufficient petition, the City Council must reconsider the ordinance as follows: ○ Majority of Council votes to repeal the ordinance in is entirely → process ends. ○ Ordinance is not repealed → City Council must refer the matter to the voters.
6. Election Process PLEASE NOTE: No referred ordinance repealed by the voters can be subsequently adopted by the City Council for a six-month period from the date of the election.	▪ For Ballot Question: An election must be called 30–90 days after the petition is presented to the City Council. The election can be held at a regular municipal election if one is scheduled within 90 days. ▪ For Ballot Issue: The ballot issue must be submitted at the next ballot issue election, not less than 90 days after the petition is presented to the City Council. ▪ If a majority votes "FOR THE ORDINANCE", the ordinance becomes effective upon the certification of the election results. ▪ If a majority votes "AGAINST THE ORDINANCE," the ordinance shall be repealed upon the certification of the election results.

Questions?

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**The Clerk's Office provides information but cannot give legal advice.*