

YOUR 5 MINUTES

HOW TO SPEAK AT THE CITY COUNCIL

★ THE 5-MINUTE SPEECH RECIPE

1

THE HOOK FIRST 30 SECONDS

Don't waste it on "Hi, my name is..." Open with a story, a number that lands, or a sharp question. Make them stop scrolling in their notes.

2

YOUR ASK 30 SECONDS

Be specific. Don't say "I want change." Say *"I'm asking the council to pass the Affordable Housing Ordinance."* Name it. Own it.

3

THREE REASONS 2.5 MINUTES

One reason it helps your group. One reason it helps the whole city. One reason it's just the right thing to do. Use real data when you can.

4

THE PUSHBACK 1 MINUTE

Say what others will argue against you – then knock it down. *"You may hear that this hurts business. Here's why that's wrong."* This is what makes you sound prepared.

5

THE LANDING LAST 30 SECONDS

End with one sharp sentence. Not "thank you for your time." Something they'll remember when they vote.

★ PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

DO

- ✓ Look up – make eye contact with one council member at a time
- ✓ Pause after big lines. Silence is power.
- ✓ Slow down. You will speak too fast.
- ✓ Use "I" and "we" – make it personal

DON'T

- ✗ Read every word off the page – bullet points only
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- ✗ Insult the other groups – beat them with logic
- ✗ Run over 5 minutes – the mayor will cut you off



RENTER • AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO KEEP YOUR APARTMENT

01 PICK YOUR ASK • CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Affordable Housing Ordinance** – % of new units must be affordable ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Adaptive Reuse** – renovate the warehouse instead of demolishing
- ☐ **Mixed-Use Zoning** – apartments above shops, walkable streets
- ☐ **Building Height Limits** – keeps the neighborhood from feeling overrun

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK • PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"Last month my landlord _____."

A number

"Rents in this district have risen _____ %. Mine just went up _____."

? A question

"Where do you expect us to go?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

Renters can keep their homes because...

2

HELPS THE CITY

A mixed-income city is stronger because...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

It's wrong to push people out of

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE



DEVELOPER WILL SAY

"Affordable units kill our economics. The project won't pencil out."

YOUR RESPONSE:



HOMEOWNER WILL SAY

"Affordable housing will lower my property values."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"Boomtown is supposed to be a place where _____. Don't let it become a place where _____."

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HOMEOWNER • AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE

01 PICK YOUR ASK • CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Historic Preservation Ordinance** – protect the warehouse and surrounding character ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Building Height & Design Standards** – nothing taller than 4 stories
- ☐ **Tree Preservation** – keep the old trees on the block
- ☐ **Adaptive Reuse** – renovate, don't demolish

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK • PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"My grandmother bought our house in _____."

A number

"_____ historic buildings have been demolished in the last 10 years."

A question

"Will Boomtown still feel like Boomtown in 20 years?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

Homeowners deserve to keep their neighborhood because...

2

HELPS THE CITY

Cities with character attract more visitors and investment because...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

You can't get history back once it's gone...

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE

RENTER WILL SAY

"Preservation just protects rich homeowners and blocks new affordable housing."

YOUR RESPONSE:

DEVELOPER WILL SAY

"Historic rules make development impossible. The site will sit empty."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"You can build many things in Boomtown. You can't ever rebuild _____."

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SENIOR • AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO BE HEARD ONE MORE TIME

01 PICK YOUR ASK • CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Affordable Housing Ordinance** – protect renters on fixed incomes ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Mixed-Use Zoning** – pharmacy, groceries, doctor walking distance
- ☐ **Adaptive Reuse** – keep the buildings you grew up with
- ☐ **Building Height Limits** – no glass towers casting shadows

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK • PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"I have lived on my block for _____ years."

A number

"1 in 3 seniors are displaced when neighborhoods like this are revitalized."

? A question

"Did anyone on this council ask us what we needed?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

Seniors need to age in place because...

2

HELPS THE CITY

A city for all ages is a healthier city because...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

We built this city. We deserve to stay in it...

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE



DEVELOPER WILL SAY

"Senior services aren't our responsibility. We build housing."

YOUR RESPONSE:



HOMEOWNER WILL SAY

"Adding affordable units changes the character of our neighborhood."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"You will be old someday. Build the city you want to grow old in. _____."

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ENVIRONMENTALIST • AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO SPEAK FOR THE PLANET

01 PICK YOUR ASK • CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Energy Efficiency Building Codes** – all new buildings must meet LEED standards ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Stormwater Management** – rain gardens & permeable surfaces required
- ☐ **Tree Preservation** – protect existing trees, plant more
- ☐ **Green Roof Ordinance** – rooftops as gardens

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK • PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"Last summer, the temperature in the warehouse district hit _____ °F."

A number

"This site has _____ years of industrial pollution to clean up."

A question

"What kind of city do you want your kids to inherit?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

A clean district means cleaner air & water for all of us...

2

HELPS THE CITY

Green infrastructure saves money long-term because...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

There is no Planet B. Build it once, build it right...

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE



DEVELOPER WILL SAY

"Green requirements are too expensive. They'll kill the project."

YOUR RESPONSE:



COUNCIL WILL SAY

"We can't afford the city contribution to green infrastructure."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"Build green or don't build. You will not get a second chance to _____."

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SMALL BUSINESS • AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO KEEP YOUR SHOP OPEN

01 PICK YOUR ASK • CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Adaptive Reuse** – keep the historic feel that brings customers ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Mixed-Use Zoning** – residents living here = customers walking by
- ☐ **Affordable Housing** – your customers can stay = your business stays
- ☐ **Historic Preservation** – character districts attract foot traffic

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK • PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"My customer _____ has been coming in for _____ years."

A number

"My monthly profit is \$2,500. A 25% rent hike puts me out of business."

A question

"Would you rather have a Starbucks here, or me?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

Small businesses can survive only if rents stay sane...

2

HELPS THE CITY

Local businesses keep tax dollars in Boomtown because...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

A neighborhood without local shops isn't a neighborhood...

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE



DEVELOPER WILL SAY

"New residents bring more customers. You should welcome the change."

YOUR RESPONSE:



COUNCIL WILL SAY

"Chains pay more in taxes than mom-and-pop shops."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"Boomtown without small business is just _____. Don't trade us for _____."

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DEVELOPER · AT THE COUNCIL

5 MIN TO GET YOUR PROJECT APPROVED

01 PICK YOUR ASK · CHECK 1 OR 2 ORDINANCES

- ☐ **Approve Luxury Condos as proposed** – fastest path, highest ROI ★ **best for you**
- ☐ **Adaptive Reuse** – slower but unlocks \$6M in tax credits
- ☐ **Mixed-Use Zoning** – broader appeal, more buyers
- ☐ **Reject Affordable Housing requirement** – protects margins

My main ask is _____

02 YOUR HOOK · PICK ONE AND FINISH IT

FIRST 30 SECONDS

A story

"This warehouse has been empty for _____ years."

A number

"My project will create _____ jobs and add _____ to city tax revenue."

? A question

"Do you want a building, or do you want another vacant lot?"

03 YOUR THREE ARGUMENTS

2.5 MINUTES

1

HELPS US

A profitable project means we'll invest more in Boomtown...

2

HELPS THE CITY

Tax revenue from this project funds schools, parks, services...

3

IT'S JUST RIGHT

An empty warehouse helps no one. Building is the responsible choice...

04 KNOCK DOWN THE PUSHBACK

1 MINUTE

RENTER WILL SAY

"Your luxury condos will price out everyone in this neighborhood."

YOUR RESPONSE:

ENVIRONMENTALIST WILL SAY

"You're not committed to LEED standards. You're cutting corners."

YOUR RESPONSE:

05 YOUR CLOSING LINE

LAST 30 SECONDS

"You can vote 'yes' on Boomtown's future tonight, or you can vote to leave the warehouse _____."

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CITY OFFICIAL • AT THE COUNCIL

YOU DON'T PRESENT. YOU CHAIR, QUESTION & VOTE.

01 OPENING REMARKS • SET THE TONE

2 MINUTES

"Tonight we will hear from six groups. Before we begin, I want to be clear about what this council must balance:"

PRIORITY 1

Fiscal – we have a \$500K surplus, not \$5M

PRIORITY 2

Equity – every group here is a Boomtown taxpayer

PRIORITY 3

Future – what works in 20 years, not just 2

02 SHARP QUESTIONS FOR EACH GROUP • ASK AT LEAST ONE

TO THE RENTER

"If we pass affordable housing rules, who pays for the lost tax revenue?"

TO THE HOMEOWNER

"Are you willing to accept higher property taxes to fund preservation?"

TO THE SENIOR

"What specific service would change your life – and what does it cost?"

TO THE ENVIRONMENTALIST

"If we can fund only one green ordinance, which one and why?"

TO THE SMALL BUSINESS

"How do we help you without picking winners and losers?"

TO THE DEVELOPER

"What's the smallest community concession you can live with?"

03 DECISION CRITERIA • HOW YOU'LL VOTE



Pays for itself?

Tax revenue, fees, grants



Spreads the cost?

No group bears all the burden



Future-proof?

Still works in 20 years

04 YOUR VOTE STATEMENT • EXPLAIN YOUR DECISION

"After hearing every group, I am voting to pass _____ because _____."

"I am voting against _____ because _____."