

Santa Fe City Charter

The Charter of the City of Santa Fe was adopted by the voters of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico, at a Special Municipal Election held on December 9, 1997; amended by the voters of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico, at a Regular Municipal Election held on March 4, 2008; and amended by the voters of the City of Santa Fe at a Regular Municipal Election held on March 4, 2014.

The following are the seven “policy statements” contained in the City Charter:

Article II. Policy Statements

2.01. Code of ethics.

The proper administration of democratic government requires public officials to exercise a high degree of integrity and honesty, free from undue and inappropriate influence and further requires that government decisions and policy be made in a fair manner, guided by the best interests of the people and the community, so that the public may have confidence in its government. To effect these ends, the governing body shall by ordinance establish standards for the ethical conduct of all elected and appointed officials and all employees of the city, and provide consequences for violating such ethical standards.

2.02. Human and civil rights.

The human and civil rights of the residents of Santa Fe are inviolate and shall not be diminished or otherwise infringed. To that end, no city ordinance, resolution or policy shall be enacted or adopted nor shall any action be condoned which discriminates on the basis of ethnicity, race, age, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, medical condition or citizenship status; nor shall any ordinance enacted or policy adopted protecting or enhancing these rights be subject to the right of referendum or initiative. The governing body shall preserve, protect and promote human rights and human dignity, and shall, through all of its activities, including but not limited to employment, awarding of contracts, housing accommodation, and the provision of city services, prohibit and discourage such discrimination. To effect these ends, the governing body may enact ordinances and establish appropriate commissions with jurisdiction, authority, and staff sufficient to effectively administer this policy.

2.03. Environmental Protection

The natural beauty of Santa Fe, its historical heritage, and its unique architectural style are among the city’s most valued and important assets. In order to enhance the beauty and quality of both the natural and built environment within and around the city, the governing body shall protect, preserve and enhance the city’s natural endowments, plan for and regulate land use and development, manage the city’s growth, encourage source reduction, re-use and recycling of materials, and promote and maintain an aesthetic and humane urban environment. To effect these ends, the governing body may take whatever action is necessary and may enact ordinances and may establish appropriate commissions with jurisdiction, authority, and staff sufficient to effectively administer this policy. Because water quality and availability are extremely important to the citizens of Santa Fe, the governing body shall protect, preserve, and enhance the city’s water resources through regulation, conservation and relating development to water availability.

2.04. Cultural and neighborhood preservation.

The people of Santa Fe derive invaluable benefits from our multi-cultural heritage. The multiethnic and multi-racial residents who have made their homes here over the centuries have each left their unique cultural mark on our city, producing a rich blend of stories, traditions and neighborhoods. The result is a community that treasures a variety of artistic, literary and musical forms, that symbolizes an architectural style, and that celebrates the diversity of those who have chosen to live here. We therefore declare that the multi-cultural heritage and neighborhoods of Santa Fe are essential to the people of this community and that public officials shall at all times exercise their powers with sensitivity to and respect for that cultural and neighborhood heritage.

2.05. Campaign finance and campaign practices.

The escalating cost of campaigning for elective office provides an opportunity for monied interests to control the electoral process of city government. Candidates may be encouraged to put the interests of their campaign contributors ahead of the needs and concerns of their constituents, and the passage or defeat of a measure may be skewed by monied interests to the detriment of the public interest. In order to eliminate financing inequities, conflicts of interest, and the potential for corruption inherent in this situation, the governing body shall enact such ordinances, and may appoint such commissions and take such other actions as may be necessary to make campaigns for elective office more democratic. To this end, the governing body shall facilitate voting, establish ethical standards for the conduct of campaigns, regulate lobbying of city officers and employees, provide methods of voter education that will enhance the possibility for an open, accountable and responsive campaign process, encourage broad-based contributions from the public, and require that each candidate and campaign committee for issues appoint one central committee to coordinate, control and report all financial transactions and make full and timely disclosure of all campaign contributions and expenditures. The governing body shall provide for meaningful public financing of campaigns.

2.06. General plan.

The governing body shall establish and adopt by ordinance or resolution the policies, goals and objectives outlined in the city General Plan. Such policies, goals and objectives shall not be revised or amended without one or more public hearings by the governing body.

2.07. Support for local business and an enduring local economy.

A local economy is critical to a healthy and prosperous community. The governing body shall, as guiding principles, strive to support local business, a strong local entrepreneurial spirit, and an enduring local economy that recognizes the rights of all to earn a living wage.