Crossing for Change

Identify legal ways to influence a local decision

USG.C.8.3.B "Identify legal methods to advocate and influence policy (e.g., voting, peaceful protests, petitioning, contacting government officials, use of the Freedom of Information Act)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each distinct legal action residents can take to influence the crossing decision. Circle the records-request method that applies to a federal agency.

A Longer Signal

1. At a busy intersection near a city bus stop, riders wait beside a crosswalk with a short signal. Several neighbors want the city to give people more time to cross. The city council controls the local budget, so residents can email council members with observations and ask for a longer signal. They can also speak during the council's public comment period, following its time limits. Eligible voters can look up candidates' transportation plans and vote in the next city election. Voting helps choose officials, while direct messages ask current officials to act before the election.

2. Neighbors might gather signatures on a petition asking the council to study the crossing and publish a plan. Each signer shows support, but the petition does not force the council to agree. Residents can also hold a peaceful protest on a public sidewalk, using signs to call attention to the crossing while leaving a path for pedestrians. They should follow applicable rules for using public spaces. A protest makes the issue visible, while a petition delivers a specific request backed by names. Neither method requires residents to wait until election day, and both can bring more people into the discussion.

3. To support their case with evidence, residents want to know whether a federal transportation agency awarded money for a nearby safety project. Under the Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, anyone can request existing federal agency records, such as grant award documents. The agency may withhold information covered by legal exemptions, and FOIA does not require it to create a new report. If residents instead want city records about the crossing, they must use the applicable state or local public records process. Records can help residents make a precise request when they contact officials or organize a petition.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which method lets eligible residents help choose future city officials, and which lets residents ask current officials to change the signal?

2. Which method could residents use to show support with names, and what does it not guarantee?

3. Which method could make the issue visible at the crossing without waiting for an election? What two conditions for using it does the passage give?

4. Residents want existing federal grant award documents. Which method should they use, and why would it not be the right request for city crossing records?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your city is considering closing the public library on Saturdays. In three sentences, propose two different legal ways to influence the decision, explain what each would accomplish, and state one rule or limit that applies to one of your methods.

ANSWER KEY

Crossing for Change

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.8.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each distinct legal action residents can take to influence the crossing decision. Circle the records-request method that applies to a federal agency. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which method lets eligible residents help choose future city officials, and which lets residents ask current officials to change the signal?	**Voting helps eligible residents choose officials. Emailing or speaking to council members lets residents ask current officials to act.**
2	Which method could residents use to show support with names, and what does it not guarantee?	**They could gather signatures on a petition. It does not force the council to agree.**
3	Which method could make the issue visible at the crossing without waiting for an election? What two conditions for using it does the passage give?	**Residents could hold a peaceful protest on a public sidewalk. They should leave a path for pedestrians and follow applicable public-space rules.**
4	Residents want existing federal grant award documents. Which method should they use, and why would it not be the right request for city crossing records?	**They should make a FOIA request to the federal agency. FOIA covers federal agency records, while city records require the applicable state or local public records process.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask library users to sign a petition requesting Saturday hours, so the city council can see how many people support keeping them. I would email council members with examples of how families use the library on Saturdays, giving them reasons to keep it open. The petition cannot force the council to keep the library open.

Accept other legal methods supported by the passage when students explain how they fit the question. For the open task, check for two distinct methods, a purpose for each, and an accurate rule or limit.