



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



April 14, 2026

ITEM TITLE

Brown Act Updates (SB 707): Hear a Presentation, Adopt Technology Disruption and Outreach Policies, and Consider Direction to Staff

Report Number: 26-0133

Location: No specific geographic location

Department: City Clerk

G.C. § 84308 Regulations Apply: No

Environmental Notice: The activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines. Therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

Recommended Action

Receive a presentation on Brown Act updates related to teleconferencing and accessibility provisions under Senate Bill 707 (SB 707), adopt the following resolutions, and provide direction to staff, as appropriate:

- A. Adopt a Technology Disruption Policy in compliance with Government Code § 54953.4.
- B. Determine “reasonable efforts” for outreach to encourage participation in City Council meetings under Government Code § 54953.4.
- C. Rescind City Council Policy 104-02, “Remote Council Meeting Participation by Councilmembers,” as state law now governs these requirements, or provide other direction to staff.

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 707 (SB 707, 2025) updates teleconferencing and accessibility requirements under the Brown Act, including new provisions related to remote participation and public access to meetings. By July 1, 2026, legislative bodies must adopt policies addressing technology disruptions and defining reasonable efforts for outreach to encourage public participation, particularly among underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities.

This item includes a presentation summarizing these updates and proposed resolutions to implement the required policies. Staff also recommends rescinding the City’s existing teleconferencing policy to avoid duplication and ensure consistency with current state law, or alternatively, providing other direction. The City Council may also provide additional direction or feedback to staff regarding meeting procedures, as desired.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it will not result in a physical change in the environment. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code § 54950 et seq.) establishes requirements for open meetings of local legislative bodies. SB 707 updates provisions related to teleconferencing, including requirements for remote participation, accessibility, and procedures for addressing disruptions to meeting access for City Council meetings.

Among other requirements, SB 707 requires the City Council to adopt a technology disruption policy and to determine what constitutes reasonable efforts for outreach to encourage public participation in City Council meetings, particularly among underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities. These policies must be adopted by July 1, 2026.

Technology Disruption Policy

Government Code § 54953.4 requires the City Council to adopt, by July 1, 2026, a technology disruption policy. The policy must address procedures for responding to disruptions of telephonic or internet service during a meeting and the efforts the legislative body will make to restore service.

The statute further requires that if a disruption occurs that prevents members of the public from observing or participating in a City Council meeting through the two-way telephonic or audiovisual platform, the City Council must recess the open session for at least one hour and make a good faith effort to restore service. During this time, the City Council may meet in closed session, as permitted by law.

The City Council may not reconvene open session until at least one hour has passed or service has been restored, whichever occurs first. If service has not been restored upon reconvening, the City Council must make findings by roll call vote that good faith efforts were made to restore access and that the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in providing remote access. Alternatively, the meeting may be adjourned.

The proposed policy incorporates these requirements and establishes procedures to ensure transparency and continuity of meetings in the event of a technology disruption during a City Council meeting, while maintaining flexibility to respond based on the specific circumstances.

Reasonable Efforts for Outreach

Government Code § 54953.4 requires the City Council to determine and adopt what constitutes “reasonable efforts” to encourage participation in City Council meetings, particularly among underrepresented communities and non-English-speaking communities.

The proposed resolution establishes the City’s approach to outreach, which may include inviting participation in City Council meetings from media organizations serving the City, including those serving non-English-speaking communities, as well as civic, neighborhood, community-based, civil rights, and good government organizations.

The statute provides the City Council with broad discretion in defining these reasonable efforts and clarifies that failure to provide notice to any specific group does not create a basis for legal action. The proposed policy is intended to provide flexibility while supporting expanded public awareness and participation.

Rescission of Existing Teleconferencing Policy

The City Council adopted City Council Policy 104-02, “Remote Council Meeting Participation by Councilmembers,” on May 28, 2013, which governs City Councilmember participation by teleconference. Since that time, state law has evolved, and SB 707 now establishes comprehensive statutory requirements governing remote participation.

The Brown Act now expressly allows teleconferencing by a member as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as a limited number of instances of remote participation due to “just cause,” which may be used up to five to seven times per calendar year, depending on the number of regular meetings held per month. ADA-related teleconferencing must be provided when applicable legal requirements are met, whereas participation based on “just cause” is subject to the statutory annual limit. “Just cause” includes circumstances such as childcare or caregiving needs; a contagious illness; a physical or mental condition; travel on official business; the need to care for an immunocompromised family member; a personal or family medical emergency; or military service obligations that prevent in-person attendance.

Because these provisions are now addressed in statute, maintaining a separate City policy may create inconsistencies or redundancy. Rescinding the existing policy would ensure alignment with state law and reduce potential confusion.

Alternatively, if the City Council desires to maintain City-specific rules governing when City Councilmembers may participate remotely, it may provide direction to staff to return with a revised policy consistent with current state law.

City Council Direction on Meeting Procedures

While SB 707 establishes baseline requirements, the City Council retains discretion over certain meeting procedures. The Council may provide direction to staff regarding meeting operations and related procedural matters, provided such direction is consistent with applicable law.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff have reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and have determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the real property holdings of the City Councilmembers do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.). Staff are not independently aware and have not been informed by any City Councilmember of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is associated with adoption of the proposed resolutions.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

No ongoing fiscal impact is anticipated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft City Council Policy on Technology Disruption
2. City Council Policy 104-02, Remote Council Meeting Participation by Council Members

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