

CITY COUNCIL POLICIES



POLICY NAME: Disruption of Telephonic or Internet Service During City Council Meetings

POLICY NUMBER: TBD

Effective Date: TBD
Status: Active

Last Revised Date:
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I. BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 707 (2025) amended the Brown Act to require the City Council to adopt, on or before July 1, 2026, a policy addressing how the agency will respond to disruptions in telephonic or internet service that prevent members of the public from attending or observing a City Council meeting remotely. This policy is adopted to comply with that requirement and to ensure continuity of public participation during technical disruptions.

II. PURPOSE

This policy establishes procedures for responding to a disruption in the telephonic or internet services that provide two-way remote public access to meetings of the City Council, as required by the Brown Act (Gov. Code § 54953.4). The policy ensures transparency, public participation, and continuity of government during technology disruptions.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

“Disruption” means a disruption of telephonic or internet service that prevents members of the public from attending or observing the meeting via these remote access services.

“Remote access services” means the two-way telephonic service and/or two-way audiovisual platform used to provide real-time remote public attendance and observation of meetings.

IV. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all open and public meetings of the City Council at which remote public participation is offered or required under the Brown Act.

V. PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A SERVICE DISRUPTION

1. Response to Service Disruption

If the Presiding Officer or City Clerk becomes aware of a disruption to the agency’s remote access services that prevents members of the public from attending or observing the meeting remotely:

- a. The Presiding Officer or City Clerk shall immediately announce the disruption to the public.
- b. The Presiding Officer may then call for a recess of the open session or convene the City Council in closed session, consistent with the Brown Act.
- c. Staff or designated contractors shall begin efforts to diagnose and restore the disrupted service.

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- d. The meeting shall remain in recess for at least one hour or until service is restored, whichever is sooner. The recess period may be extended if restoration efforts are ongoing.

2. Efforts to Restore Service

Staff or designated contractors shall make good faith efforts to restore remote access services, which may include:

- Troubleshooting platform or teleconferencing software
- Resetting or replacing audiovisual equipment
- Attempting alternative connection methods
- Contacting necessary support staff or service providers
- Switching to back-up equipment or platforms, if available

The City Clerk, in consultation with staff or designated contractors from the Information Technology Services Department, shall document the restoration efforts undertaken.

VI. RECONVENING THE OPEN SESSION

1. Timing

The open session may be reconvened after at least one hour has elapsed from the time of disruption or as soon as service is restored, whichever occurs earlier.

2. If Service is Restored

If the remote access service is restored before or at the time the meeting reconvenes, the meeting shall continue as normal.

3. If Service is NOT Restored

If service has not been restored after one hour, the City Council may reconvene and:

- a. Adjourn the meeting; or
- b. Continue the meeting in open session by adopting, by roll call vote, the following, or a substantially similar, finding:

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“City staff have made good faith efforts to restore telephonic or internet service in accordance with the adopted City Council policy, and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.”

Upon adoption of the finding, the City Council may continue the open session despite the fact that remote access services have not been restored.

VII. RECORDKEEPING

The City Clerk shall enter a brief statement into the meeting minutes, including the following:

- The nature and time of the disruption
- The restoration efforts undertaken
- The time the meeting was reconvened (if applicable)
- Any finding adopted pursuant to Section VI

VIII. RECORDKEEPING

This policy may be amended by the City Council at a noticed public meeting in open session, not on the consent calendar.

HISTORY

DATE	ACTION	RESOLUTION NO.
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