



City of Oceanside

300 North Coast Highway,
Oceanside, California 92054

Staff Report

File #: 26-1282

Agenda Date: 4/8/2026

Agenda #: 25.

DATE: April 8, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: City Clerk's Office

TITLE: CITY COUNCIL POLICY UPDATES AND REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION TO ADDRESS NEW BROWN ACT REQUIREMENTS PURSUANT TO SENATE BILL 707, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF TWO-WAY REMOTE PARTICIPATION SYSTEM, RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A COUNCIL POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTION OF TELEPHONIC OR INTERNET SERVICE DURING PUBLIC MEETINGS, IMPLEMENTING TRANSLATION REQUIREMENTS, AND INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council take the following actions prior to July 1, 2026, to implement updates to the Brown Act pursuant to Senate Bill 707:

- 1.) Direct staff to implement remote public participation at City Council meetings via two-way telephonic audio system;
- 2.) Direct staff to bring back appropriate policy or ordinance updates to address how public comment sign-up will be handled for all agenda items so that the rules for both in-person and remote public comments are uniformly applied;
- 3.) Adopt a resolution approving a Council Policy addressing Disruption of Telephonic or Internet Service During Public Meetings;
- 4.) Direct staff to implement Spanish language translation for agenda documents and approve policies for how to manage live translation needs; and
- 5.) Direct staff regarding policies for enhancing public awareness and participation in City Council meetings

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Senate Bill 707 (SB 707) amends the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act and establishes new standards intended to expand public access to meetings of local legislative bodies. Among other changes, the legislation updates teleconferencing provisions, requires City Council to allow two-way

remote public attendance and participation at City Council meetings, and establishes certain language access and public outreach requirements. Several provisions of SB 707 became effective January 1, 2026, including a codified provision allowing remote participation of legislative body members as an ADA accommodation, revised alternative teleconferencing provisions, and mandatory distribution of the Ralph M. Brown Act to all elected and appointed officials. This report focuses on those additional operational requirements taking effect July 1, 2026 and identifies the procedural and policy actions necessary for the City to ensure compliance with the law prior to the July 1, 2026 implementation deadline.

As to the operational provisions of SB 707 effective on July 1, 2026, the City Council is the only decision-making body to which the new requirements apply. These requirements would not apply to the City's various Boards and Commissions unless the City Council decided to voluntarily apply them to these other bodies. Accordingly, as of July 1, 2026, the City Council must implement the new operational obligations including providing equitable remote participation at City Council meetings, adopting a technology disruption policy, translating agendas, and promoting public awareness.

Two-way remote participation by the Public

Beginning July 1, 2026, the City must provide the public with a way to attend and comment at City Council meetings through a two-way telephonic or audiovisual platform. Remote participants must be given the same amount of speaking time as those attending person.

To comply with this requirement, staff recommends the City Council direct the implementation of a two-way telephonic system for remote participation.

Staff has prior experience implementing two-way telephonic meetings and has determined that that a Zoom-based telephonic (i.e., audio-only) platform provides the most reliable and secure solution for remote public participation. This reduces service interruption potential and other challenges. Additionally, while audiovisual platforms would allow video access, they have proven to create operational challenges, and present a potential risk of inappropriate visual content being shared during public meetings (e.g., Zoom bombing). A Zoom-based telephonic platform will allow members of the public to listen to the meeting and provide live commentary remotely. Members of the public may participate by calling or logging into Zoom, and may also view the meeting live online or on KOCT Channel 19. Instructions for accessing the telephonic participation platform will be included on each meeting agenda and posted on the City's public meeting web page.

Updating policies or ordinances regarding how public comment is handled

SB 707 further requires that members of the public participating remotely in City Council meetings be afforded the same opportunity to provide comment as those attending in person. In order to comply with this requirement, staff is requesting direction from the City Council regarding procedures for telephonic participation, including registration and public comment processes based upon the considerations and recommendations set forth below.

Option 1. Time Certain Cut-Off to Sign Up to Speak.

Chapter 2 Section 2.1.26 of the City's Municipal Code currently requires members of the public wishing to speak on non-public hearing agenda items (specifically "General Items") to submit a speaker slip at the commencement of the meeting, and for all other items (i.e., items not on the agenda and consent items) prior to the Mayor calling the item. In practice, however, the City has allowed speakers to sign up to speak on any item until any agenda item is called. While this practice provides additional flexibility for members of the public, it presents significant administrative challenges when managing remote participation, particularly for meetings that include high-interest or controversial agenda items where a large number of speakers may be present both in person and online.

The administrative challenge the City Clerk faces is tracking the remote participants wishing to speak on specific items in real time, which could essentially treat each item as a public hearing and complicate the orderly time management of the meeting. In order to ensure the City's procedures remain consistent with SB 707's requirement that remote participants be afforded the same opportunity to participate as those attending in person, and to assist with efficient management of all public comments, staff is recommending that all in-person and remote participants seeking to comment on consent items, general items, or non-agenda public comment be required to notify the City Clerk prior to the Mayor calling the consent agenda items. This provides a clear cut-off point to the public, reasonable administration by the Clerk, and fair, equitable rules for both remote and in-person attendance. An ordinance and policy update would need to be adopted to implement this change.

Option 2. Item Specific Cut-Off to Sign Up to Speak.

Alternatively, the City Council could direct Staff to continue with its existing practice under the existing City Code and Council Policies to set the cut-off for signing up to speak on any item (consent, general, public hearing, and off-agenda) at the time the item is called by the Mayor. This would clarify the nominal discrepancy under the City Code involving consent items. However, as described above, this would present significant challenges to City Clerk staff tasked with managing remote participation and is, therefore, not recommended.

Staff recommends Option 1 for all the reasons stated above.

Additional Recommendation: Elimination of Group Presentations. Staff is also recommending elimination of the group presentation procedures. Currently, the City allows a group of at least four individuals to designate a representative to speak for up to ten minutes on an agenda item. Under the existing practice, all members of the group must be present in the Council Chambers when the item is called and remain present during the group presentation. With the telephonic participation requirements established by SB 707, staff anticipates challenges in administering this process for participants attending remotely. Specifically, it may be difficult for the City Clerk to verify whether all required members of a group are present online at the time the item is called or to ensure they remain present during the presentation. Moreover, given the significant potential for greater remote presentation and longer meetings, Staff expects elimination of the group presentation option will streamline public comment and minimize procedural disruptions related to same. If the City Council

agrees with this direction, an ordinance revision will be prepared and brought forward for City Council consideration. Staff is requesting direction from the City Council regarding elimination of the group presentation option or alternatively how the group presentation process should be administered for telephonic participants in order to ensure the City's procedures remain consistent with SB 707's requirement that remote participants be afforded the same opportunity to participate as those attending in person.

Policy for service disruptions during meeting

SB 707 also requires the City Council to adopt a policy by July 1, 2026 that establishes procedures for responding to disruptions in the telephonic or internet platforms used to provide two-way remote public access to meetings. The attached Service Disruption Policy (Attachment 3) outlines procedures that are consistent with the Brown Act for announcing a disruption, recessing the meeting while staff undertakes good-faith efforts to restore service, and determining whether to adjourn or continue the meeting if service cannot be restored after one hour. Staff recommends adoption the resolution approving the proposed Disruption Policy (Attachment 2).

Direction regarding translation of agendas and other language accommodations

SB 707 also requires that, if certain population thresholds are met, City Council agendas be translated into applicable languages. **The requirement applies to the agenda statement itself; it does not apply to the supporting staff reports and exhibits.** Based on Staff's review of specified census data, Spanish qualifies as an applicable language in Oceanside for purposes of SB 707. As a result, beginning July 1, 2026, City Council agendas must be translated into Spanish and posted in the same manner as the English version. Staff will translate the agenda and post the translated version on our Legistar webpage next to the English version. Our website also offers the public the ability to translate webpages to various languages aside from Spanish.

SB 707 also requires the City to provide a publicly accessible physical location where members of the public may post their own translations of meeting agendas. Staff will install a cork board at the kiosk near the library for this purpose. This is the same kiosk where the City Council agenda is posted. The posting location will be maintained by the City; however, the City will not review or verify the accuracy of translations posted by members of the public as this would present a significant burden on staff time and effort. Materials posted must be limited to translations of City Council agendas and must not obstruct or damage the designated posting area.

The City is not required to provide live language interpretation during meetings. However, the law requires the City to reasonably assist members of the public who wish to translate or receive interpretation services, so long as the meeting is not disrupted. Historically, staff rarely receives requests related to language translation services. Providing live language interpretation voluntarily by the City would require budget allocation and an appropriate procurement process. Live translation services average around \$1,000 per meeting. Instead, to facilitate the reasonable accommodation requirement, Staff recommends the City Council allow individuals to utilize personal electronic devices for translation purposes at Council meetings. Translation software on personal electronic devices is now widely available and often free of charge to the user. Staff will make reasonable space

available for interpreters accompanying members of the public, provided such arrangements do not interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Direction regarding public awareness and participation

In addition, SB 707 requires local agencies to take reasonable steps to promote broader public awareness of and participation in City Council meetings. Staff will continue to maintain a centralized webpage for public meetings and provide electronic access to meeting materials and participation instructions. City Clerk Staff will collaborate with the Library and Cultural Arts Department, Parks and Recreation, and Neighborhood Services to share meeting information through community organizations, neighborhood groups, and other outreach channels that may help inform residents who may not traditionally participate in City Council meetings. Additionally, the agenda will provide information on how the public can contact the City Clerk's Office to participate in Council Meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

While the immediate fiscal impact of this report is minimal, there may be future costs associated with follow-up actions, such as software needs (e.g. Zoom licensing upgrades) and potential kiosk upgrades. Should any such costs exceed the City Manager's approval authority, they would be brought back for City Council approval.

COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE REPORT

Does not apply.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

The referenced documents have been reviewed by the City Attorney and approved as to form. If necessary, based on City Council direction, any additional policy or ordinance revisions will be prepared and returned at a future meeting for City Council consideration.

Prepared by: Zeb Navarro, City Clerk
Submitted by: Jonathan Borrego, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Staff Report
2. Resolution
3. Council Disruption Policy