



The City of San Diego

Staff Report

DATE ISSUED: February 10, 2026

TO: Rules Committee

FROM: Council President's Office

SUBJECT: Informational Item and Request for Input Regarding Amendments to the Rules of Council, pursuant to State Senate Bill No. 707

Primary Contact: Abbey Reuter Phone: (619) 236-6611

Secondary Contact: Brian Elliott Phone: (619) 236-6611

Council District(s): Citywide

OVERVIEW:

This presentation will provide an overview of changes to the California Ralph M. Brown Act enacted by State Senate Bill No. 707 (SB707), its impact to the Rules of Council, and an opportunity to provide input on proposed amendments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

This item is informational only.

DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

The California Ralph M. Brown Act, established in 1953 and codified as California Government Code Section 54950 et seq, establishes the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies. In 2025, SB707 was signed into law and created new requirements for Brown Act compliance. Some requirements have direct impact on Council meeting procedures as established in our Municipal Code as the Rules of Council.

Today's information item and subsequent actions are intended to amend the Rules of Council to comply with the Brown Act and the amendments introduced by SB707.

The Council President's office, in partnership with the Office of the City Clerk, will provide an overview of the main impacts to the Rules of Council and our current procedures and request public and committee input to ensure compliance with state law.

1. **Same Time Allotment:**

Government Code Section 54953.4(b)(1)(B)(i) states:

*(B) (i) All open and public meetings for which attendance via a two-way telephonic service or a two-way audiovisual platform is provided in accordance with paragraph (1) shall provide the public with an opportunity to provide public comment in accordance with Section 54954.3 via the two-way telephonic or two-way audiovisual platform, and ensure the opportunity **for the members of the public participating via a two-way telephonic or two-way audiovisual platform to provide public comment with the same time allotment as a person attending a meeting in person.** {Emphasis added}*

The Rules of Council currently allow for individuals in-person to cede time to others in-person, but do not allow for time to be ceded between those participating virtually. With the short time frame for implementation prior to July 1, 2026, the Office of the City Clerk has reviewed potential options and has identified significant technological and budgetary barriers to expanding our current in-person process to include virtual participants. In order to provide the “same time allotment as a person attending a meeting” to those participating virtually, the option to cede time must be revised.

Options include:

- A. Formalizing group presentations for both in-person and virtual participants, in lieu of our current ceding time procedure. *More details are provided in the following paragraph.*
- B. Introduce a temporary Rule of Council to suspend practice of ceding time until the City has an opportunity to further assess available technology and whether they can allow for consistent processing, subject to all applicable laws and budget availability.
- C. End the practice of ceding time in-person during Council meetings.

Proposal to Formalize Group Presentations

In recognition of technological barriers to continuing our current processes and the value of group presentations, the Council President’s Office offers one new approach to meet our legal mandate and maintain options for public engagement.

This proposal would modify the flow of meetings to have group presentations, either in person or virtual, for discussion items after the conclusion of the staff presentation and prior to individual public comment.

To be able to effectively manage presentations:

- All groups who wish to pool their time would need to fill out a form provided by the Office of the City Clerk at least **48 hours** before the start of a regularly scheduled meeting. For any Special Meetings that are posted less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting, the form would need to be submitted 18 hours before the start of the meeting.
- Presentation materials would be due at least **2 hours** prior to the start of the meeting.
- The form will need to be filled out properly and everyone must be present, whether that be all in person or all virtually, during their time to speak. If members of the group are not present at the time of the presentation, the group’s time will be reduced proportionally.
- The practice of pooling time would only be allowed for groups of 5 to 10 people.
- For consistency and clarity, the process would go beyond Brown Act requirements and apply to committee meetings.

A second change, notes that the Rules of Council currently calls for closing the queue for virtual speakers to provide public comment when the last virtual speaker finishes speaking or five minutes after in-person testimony ends, whichever happens first. To ensure equality in time for speakers in person and virtual, as mandated by state law, the virtual speaking queue is proposed to close at the conclusion of in person public comment. Only hands raised at the conclusion of in-

person public comment will be taken. City Clerk and Council Administration staff will have new language to prompt virtual attendees to raise their hand throughout in-person public comment.

2. **Agenda Translation**

SB707 states:

*This bill would, beginning July 1, 2026, and until July 1, 2030, **require the agenda for each meeting of an eligible legislative body, as defined, to be translated into all applicable languages.** The bill would define "applicable languages" to mean languages, according to data from the most recent American Community Survey, spoken jointly by 20% or more of the applicable population, as specified, provided that 20% or more of the population that speaks that language that in that city or county speaks English less than "very well," as specified, and except as provided. {Emphasis added}*

Per the Brown Act definition, the City of San Diego, would need to provide additional translations in Spanish. The City, through the Office of the City Clerk, currently translates the City Council agenda summary to eight different languages: Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, and Vietnamese. The translations to these eight languages will remain.

To incorporate the significant changes in the City Clerk's workload by this requirement, the City Council agendas will be updated to a new form, in compliance with the Brown Act. All the information and backup material shown in the current agenda will comprise the agenda packet and still be available and easily accessible by the public, but not translated, as allowed by section 54953.4(c)(5).

3. **Policy on Disruption of Telephonic or Internet Service**

Government Code 54953.4(b)(1)(A)(i)(I)(ib)(Ia) states:

On or before July 1, 2026, an eligible legislative body shall approve at a noticed public meeting in open session, not on the consent calendar, a policy regarding disruption of telephonic or internet service occurring during meetings subject to this sub-subclause. The policy shall address the procedures for recessing and reconvening a meeting in the event of disruption and the efforts that the eligible legislative body shall make to attempt to restore the service.

This will require the Council to approve, at an upcoming Council meeting, a policy that addresses disruptions that affect remote or in-person public access to Council meetings. The Rules of Council will be amended to require a recess for an hour or until public access is restored, whichever is faster. Pursuant to the language in SB707, the rule would also provide options for Council to take if access is not restored after an hour.

Implementation and compliance are required by July 1, 2026. To meet this deadline, this item will be presented at the Rules Committee meetings in February and March, and to City Council in April for its first reading.

City of San Diego Strategic Plan:

N/A

Fiscal Considerations:

There is no cost associated with this informational presentation.

Charter Section 225 Disclosure of Business Interests:

N/A; no contract associated with the action.

Environmental Impact:

This activity is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as it is an organizational or administrative activity of government that would not result in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment. As such, this activity is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3).

Climate Action Plan Implementation:

N/A

Equal Opportunity Contracting Information (if applicable):

N/A

Previous Council and/or Committee Actions:

N/A

Key Stakeholders and Community Outreach Efforts:

Members of the public who are signed up to receive updates from the Office of the City Clerk and/or Council Administration.

Victoria Joes _____

Chief of Staff, District 1