



# Agenda Item

## Orange City Council

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Item #: 9.3.

6/9/2026

File #: 26-0341

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**THRU:** Jarad Hildenbrand, City Manager

**FROM:** Pamela Coleman, City Clerk Services Director

### 1. SUBJECT

Brown Act Updates (SB 707) Presentation

### 2. SUMMARY

Senate Bill 707 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 a proposed resolution determining reasonable efforts to encourage public participation.

### 3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Receive and file presentation.
2. Determine “reasonable efforts” for outreach to encourage participation in City Council meetings under Government Code § 54953.4.
3. Consider adoption of Resolution No. 11703. A Resolution of the City Council determining reasonable efforts to encourage public participation in City Council meetings pursuant to Government Code § 54953.4.

### 4. FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of SB 707 will result in both one-time and ongoing costs to support public meeting accessibility and remote participation requirements. Anticipated expenses include annual subscriptions for audio conferencing services, installation of public meeting posting boards, and procurement and installation of audiovisual equipment upgrades for the City Council Chamber. Funding for these costs will be identified through the City’s budget process.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3: Enhance Public Communication Strategy and Quality of Life

### 6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

#### 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.

The City Council is an “eligible legislative body” as defined in SB 707. Although the various standing boards, commissions, and committees of the City are each a “legislative body” that is subject to the Brown Act, the new requirements that apply specifically to an “eligible legislative body” do not apply to the City’s various committees.

Among other requirements, SB 707 requires the City Council to adopt a technology disruption policy, which Council adopted on May 26, 2026; 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.

### **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 provides a proposed plan and framework for implementing such reasonable efforts to encourage public participation including:

- Bilingual (English/Spanish) social media posts announcing upcoming meetings and direct links to agendas
- Posting bilingual agendas at ALL libraries (currently the agenda is only posted at Main Library)
- Include upcoming meeting dates and information, such as where to view agendas and how to subscribe to receive agenda notifications in the quarterly Our Orange digital publication
- Bilingual utility bill inserts
- Emailing agenda information directly to the El Modena Resource Center, Friendly Center, and the Hub OC

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.

### **Public Remote Participation**

Effective July 1, 2026, eligible legislative bodies are required to provide members of the public with the ability to attend open and public meetings through either a two-way telephonic service or a two-way audiovisual platform. The legislation further requires that remote attendees be afforded the same opportunity to provide public comment as in-person attendees, including equivalent time limits. If a two-way audiovisual platform is utilized, a telephone call-in option must also be provided, and any available automatic captioning features must be activated. These requirements are intended to enhance public participation and accessibility while maintaining compliance with the Brown Act’s open meeting provisions.

### **Teleconferencing Options**

SB 707 establishes comprehensive statutory requirements governing remote participation in meetings subject to the Brown Act held by eligible legislative bodies. In addition to retaining the traditional teleconferencing provisions, the legislation expressly authorizes teleconferencing as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and permits a limited number of instances of remote participation based on “just cause.”

Remote participation as an ADA accommodation must be provided when the applicable legal requirements are met and is not subject to any annual usage limitation. Whereas, participation based on “just cause” is limited to no more than five times per calendar year, subject to the statutory provisions governing the number of regular meetings held each month.

For purposes of the statute, “just cause” includes circumstances such as childcare or caregiving responsibilities; a contagious illness; a physical or mental condition that prevents in-person attendance; travel while conducting official City business; the need to care for an immunocompromised family member; a personal or family medical emergency; and military service obligations.

### **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.

## **7. ATTACHMENTS**

- Resolution No. 11703