



DATE: May 6, 2026

TO: Council Policy and Procedures Committee

FROM: Lenka Wright, Chief Communications Officer
Kimberly S. Thomas, Deputy City Manager

VIA: Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Council Policy A-13b Community Engagement in Public Meetings

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 707, signed into law in October 2025, amends the Ralph M. Brown Act by adding California Government Code § 54953.4, which requires cities to adopt a formal written policy establishing new requirements for community engagement in public meetings.

The state statute mandates the adoption of such a policy no later than July 1, 2026, for the City to establish procedures to make reasonable efforts to engage the community in the governmental process across a variety of communication channels and promote broad and inclusive participation in public meetings by individuals and groups that have been historically underrepresented.

The City Council adopted an associated Council Policy A-13a mandated by this statute concerning the Disruption of Telephonic or internet Service During City Council Meetings on April 14, 2026. The proposed Council Policy A-13b - Community Engagement in Public Meetings will ensure the City meets the entirety of the state mandate.

ANALYSIS

The City Manager's Office developed a policy with updated guidelines to encourage residents to participate in public meetings, including City Council meetings, in accordance with California Government Code § 54953.4. Specifically, section 54953.4(b)(3)(C)(i) requires an eligible legislative body (the City Council) to define reasonable efforts, as determined by the legislative body, to invite groups that do not traditionally participate in public meetings to attend meetings. Accordingly, staff recommends this policy to the Committee, with adoption recommended thereafter by the City Council.

The policy builds on the extensive communications and engagement strategies the City Communications and Outreach Division has implemented for many years. It establishes clear

procedures for the City's community outreach efforts to (1) make reasonable efforts to engage the community in the governmental process through a variety of communication channels, and (2) promote broad and inclusive participation in public meetings, with particular attention to underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities.

The policy ensures the City makes reasonable efforts to engage the community in the governmental process through a variety of communication channels. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, providing public notice and encouraging public participation through the City website, Ask MV service request and FAQ platform and mobile app, City print publications and e-newsletters, social media, email notifications and subscriptions, government access television channel, and media outreach.

The policy ensures the City makes reasonable efforts to increase participation in public meetings by individuals and groups that have been historically underrepresented. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, outreach at City-sponsored events, participation in community and neighborhood association meetings and events, implementation of the City's Multicultural Engagement Program, adoption of the City's Language Access and Multicultural Community Engagement Administration Instruction, and posting public meeting agendas, including City Council agendas, on the bulletin board outside City Hall.

Without approving this policy, the City would not meet the statutory requirements for encouraging community engagement and participation in public meetings. City Council approval of the policy will ensure the City remains in compliance with the Brown Act while continuing to encourage broad and inclusive participation in public meetings, with particular attention to underrepresented and non-English-speaking communities.

RECOMMENDATION

Should the Committee determine that additional engagement measures are needed, staff will incorporate them into the final recommendation for City Council adoption.

Staff recommends the Committee approve the new Council Policy A-13b - Community Engagement in Public Meetings to ensure the City remains in compliance with the Brown Act while continuing to provide reliable and transparent public meeting access.

Attachments

1. Council Policy A-13b - Community Engagement in Public Meetings