

# Governmental Processes Committee

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: GOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES COMMITTEE      DATE: October 2, 2024**

**FROM: CHAIR FALCONE      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: SUNSET REMOTE/CALL-IN PUBLIC COMMENT PARTICIPATION  
OPTION**

**ISSUE:**

Review remote/call-in public comment participation to determine if this alternative is no longer necessary and therefore consider sunsetting this option of public comment participation during governmental meetings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Governmental Processes Committee consider sunsetting the remote/call-in public comment participation option and return to only in-person public comment participation during governmental meetings.

**BACKGROUND:**

Initiated during the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a remote/call-in public comment option was established as a method for members of the community to participate in providing public testimony during governmental meetings since the Council Chambers were closed to the public.

On January 25, 2021, the California Department of Public Health lifted the COVID-19 pandemic regional stay-at-home orders, and the California State of Emergency officially ended on February 28, 2023. Since then, Riverside City Council Chambers have been open for the public's in-person participation during all governmental meetings. As a result, the option to participate through remote/call-in has concluded its natural purpose in finding an alternative for community members to provide public testimony during a governmental meeting. Governmental meetings must revert to the previous model that did not allow remote/call-in public comment participation that existed decades prior.

Other cities in the region have also recently reviewed their policies regarding remote/call-in public comment. Cities who have done so either ended or are in the process of discontinuing remote/call-in public comment.

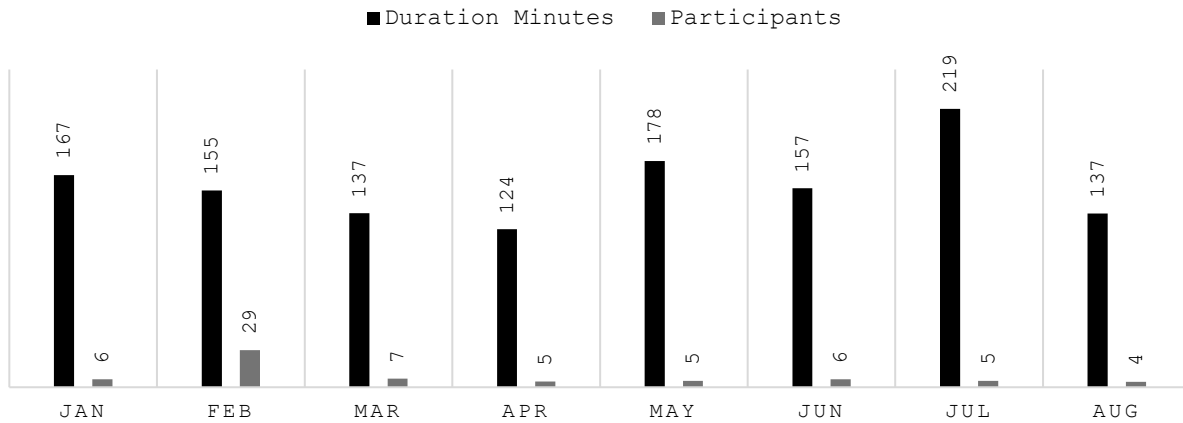
### Cities that no longer provide remote/call-in public comment

<b>Anaheim</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or email participation
<b>Bakersfield</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person participation
<b>Claremont</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person participation
<b>Fresno</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or email participation
<b>Jurupa Valley</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or mail-in participation
<b>Long Beach</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or email participation
<b>Norco</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person participation
<b>Moreno Valley</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person participation
<b>Perris</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person participation
<b>San Bernardino</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or email participation
<b>Stockton</b>	Call-in participation option no longer available; only in-person or email participation

City of Riverside staff have not seen an increase in public comment using the remote call-in option. This remote process has considerable lag time in prompting callers to speak and staffing technical needs without an ample return on the investment.

<b>2024 Averages</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>AUG</b>
<b><u>Duration Minutes</u></b>	167	155	137	124	178	157	219	137
<b><u>Participants</u></b>	6	29	7	5	5	6	5	4

### AVERAGE MEETING DURATION VERSUS PARTICIPATION (2024)



Resources for special transportation through Riverside Connect continue to be provided by the City as a transportation service for seniors and persons with disabilities. Riverside Connect ensures accessibility for all to provide public testimony in-person during a governmental meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Governmental Processes Committee is requested to consider sunsetting the remote/call-in public comment participation option and return to only allowing in-person public comment participation during all City of Riverside governmental meetings.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The Governmental Processes Committee consideration of sunsetting remote public comment contributes to:

***High Performing Government*** – Providing world class public service that is efficient, accessible, and responsible to all, with the following goal:

Goal 5.3 - Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

The Governmental Processes Committee reviewing and bringing forth revisions to the remote public comment participation process with the Envision 2025 Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. Fiscal Responsibility – Riverside is a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City’s financial resources while providing quality public services to all. The City Clerk’s Office annual budget includes funding to support the annual code review and outreach efforts.
2. Sustainability and Resiliency – Riverside is committed to meeting the present needs without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City’s capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during fluctuating times alike. It is essential to review the Code of Ethics and Conduct annually to maintain sustainable and resilient processes and monitor promoting innovation for a more sustainable future.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** One part-time position at \$22/hour – working meetings for the City Council, Subcommittees, Boards, and Commissions. The cost to the City including only the City Council and Subcommittee meetings, is estimated at over \$10,000. This estimate excludes board meetings, commission meetings, and employee benefits. (Hours vary depending on the duration of meetings)

Prepared by:



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