Date: November 11, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilmember Kristina Duggan, Chair, Government Operations and Efficiency Committee

Subject: **City Council Streamlining Recommendations**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to request City Council approval of proposed Order of Business changes to City Council meetings, as recommended by the Government Operations & Efficiency Committee;

Recommendation to request City Council to direct City Manager and City Clerk to report back with implementation analysis on recommendations that need additional department research; and,

Recommendation to request City Council to direct City Manager and City Clerk to report back on implementation of Senate Bill 707.

DISCUSSION

On October 21, 2025, the Government Operations & Efficiency Committee received and filed a presentation outlining various proposed changes to the Order of Business for City Council meetings, with the intent of encouraging additional civic engagement. The presentation also outlined a number of potential recommendations that require additional analysis regarding implementation and operational impacts. The Committee voted to move three main recommendations to City Council for further direction and approval.

First, the Committee recommends that City Council approve the following Order of Business changes:

- **Expand early public comment:** Allow up to 15 speakers at the start of each meeting to address non-agenda items, while dropping public comment time from 3 minutes to 90 seconds if there are more than 10 commenters.

- **Establish estimated times for high-interest items:** Request Mayor and City Manager to assign estimated start times for high-interest agenda items, when applicable. Mayor would retain all abilities to adjust times as needed.

- **Adjusting times for public comment:** Amend the Municipal Code to allow Mayor,

at their discretion, to set public comment times as follows: 3 minutes if 10 or fewer speakers; 90 seconds if 11-20 speakers; and 60 seconds if more than 20 speakers.

- **Set City Council start times to 3:00 p.m. or later:** Allow City Council meetings to start at 3:00 p.m. or later to cover low-interest procedural items while ensuring high-interest items are heard during ideal times for public engagement.

- **Uphold 5-minute limit on ceremonials and presentations:** Reaffirm and uphold Municipal Code, which allows no more than three ceremonials or presentations per meeting, each lasting no longer than 5 minutes.

Second, the Committee recommends that the City Council direct City Manager and City Clerk to further research the following proposed changes and return with a memorandum outlining the implementation and operational impacts:

- **Amend Divide by 9 sponsorship approval process:** Explore allowing routine community sponsorships under $5,000 to be approved at the staff level, bypassing City Council agenda, while maintaining public transparency of fund transfers through a public posting.

- **Define “urgency” for supplemental agenda items:** Request City Attorney to draft a definition of “urgency” that will qualify supplemental agenda items, requiring any accompanying Statement of Urgency to show that the matter needs action before the next regular agenda, that delay would cause harm or a loss, and that the need is so pressing that temporarily limiting the usual opportunity for public and Councilmember engagement is warranted.

- **Move supplemental agenda submission to Thursday:** Move the deadline for items to be submitted on supplemental agenda to Thursday.

- **Schedule stand-alone study sessions for major topics:** Schedule dedicated study sessions for complex or high-impact issues, and identify dates well in advance to reserve single-topic meetings for matters that demand comprehensive staff reports and in-depth discussion.

- **Tentative public schedule of future agenda items:** Post a tentative public schedule for future agenda items that is subject to change.

- **Expanded and/or pre-recorded staff reports:** Encourage departments to create video briefings or memos posted online before meetings, enabling meetings to skip lengthy presentations and focus directly on question and answer.

Lastly, the Committee recommended that City Council direct the City Manager and City Clerk to prepare a memo for Mayor and City Council outlining the upcoming changes to public meetings through Senate Bill 707.

Respectfully submitted,

Government Operations and Efficiency Committee



Councilmember Kristina Duggan, Chair

Prepared by:
Tamela Austin

Attachment

CITY OF LONG BEACH

Memorandum

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From: Councilmember Kristina Duggan, Chair, Government Operations & Efficiency Committee

Subject: **City Council Streamlining Recommendations**

Recommendation

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Respectfully submitted,

Government Operations & Efficiency Committee



Councilmember Kristina Duggan, Chair

ATTACHMENT



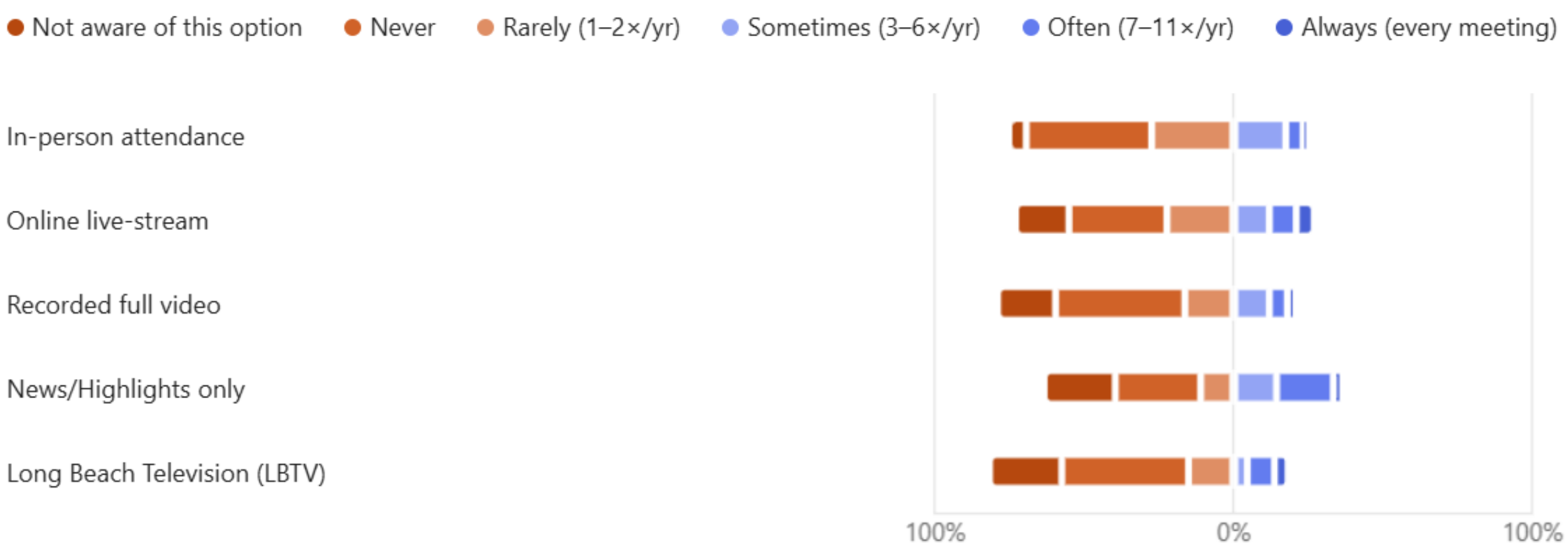
Making Our Council Meetings More Welcoming and Accessible

GOE

committee

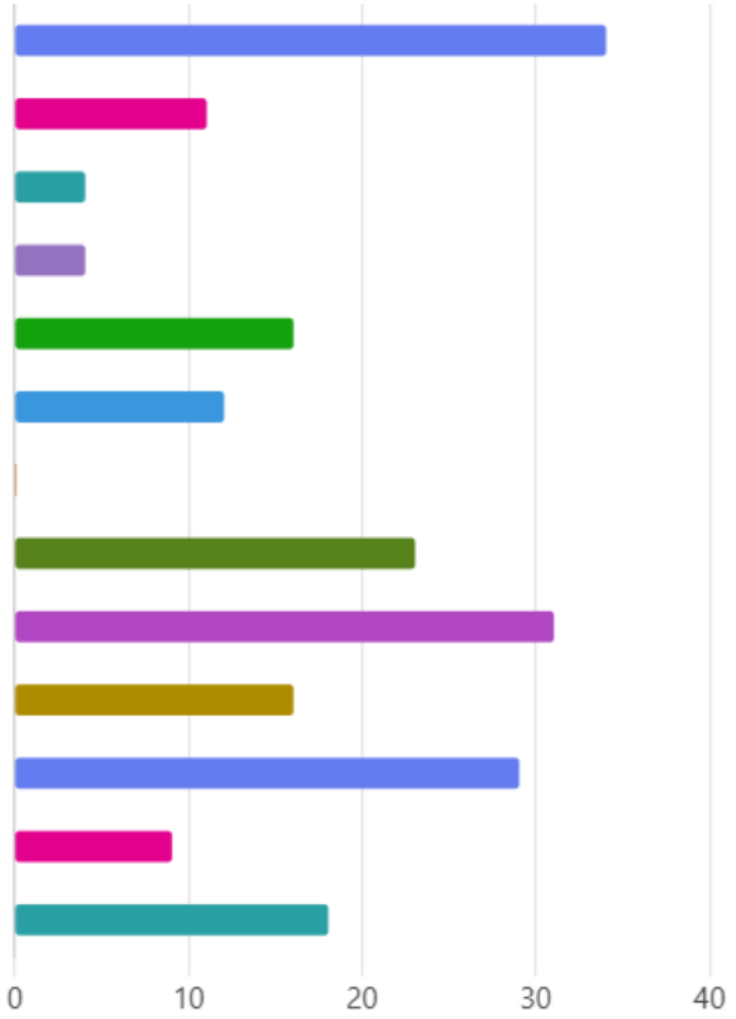
City Clerk Survey Results

1. How have you participated in City Council meetings in the past 12 months, and how often?



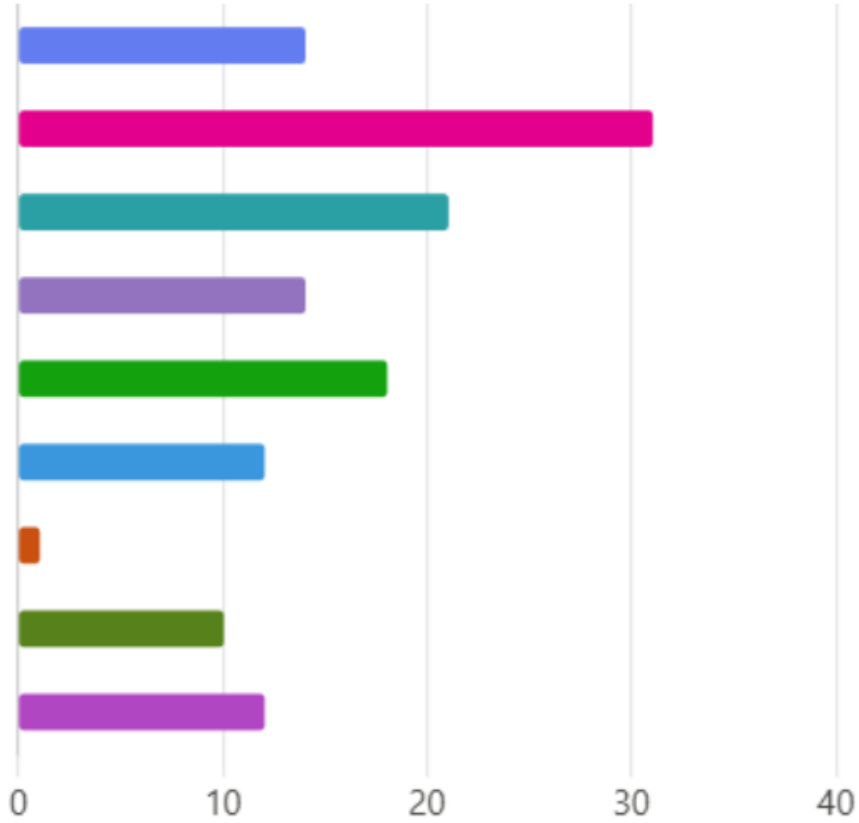
2. Which of these barriers keep you from attending in person? (If so please, select all that apply)

Scheduling conflicts (work, school, family)	34
Transportation challenges	11
Child-care responsibilities	4
Physical accessibility concerns	4
Prefer to watch online	16
Lack of interest in agenda topics	12
Language or interpretation needs	0
Lack of information about agenda topics	23
Feel voice isn't heard anyway	31
Location of the meeting	16
Length of the meeting	29
Safety Concern / Retaliation	9
Other	18



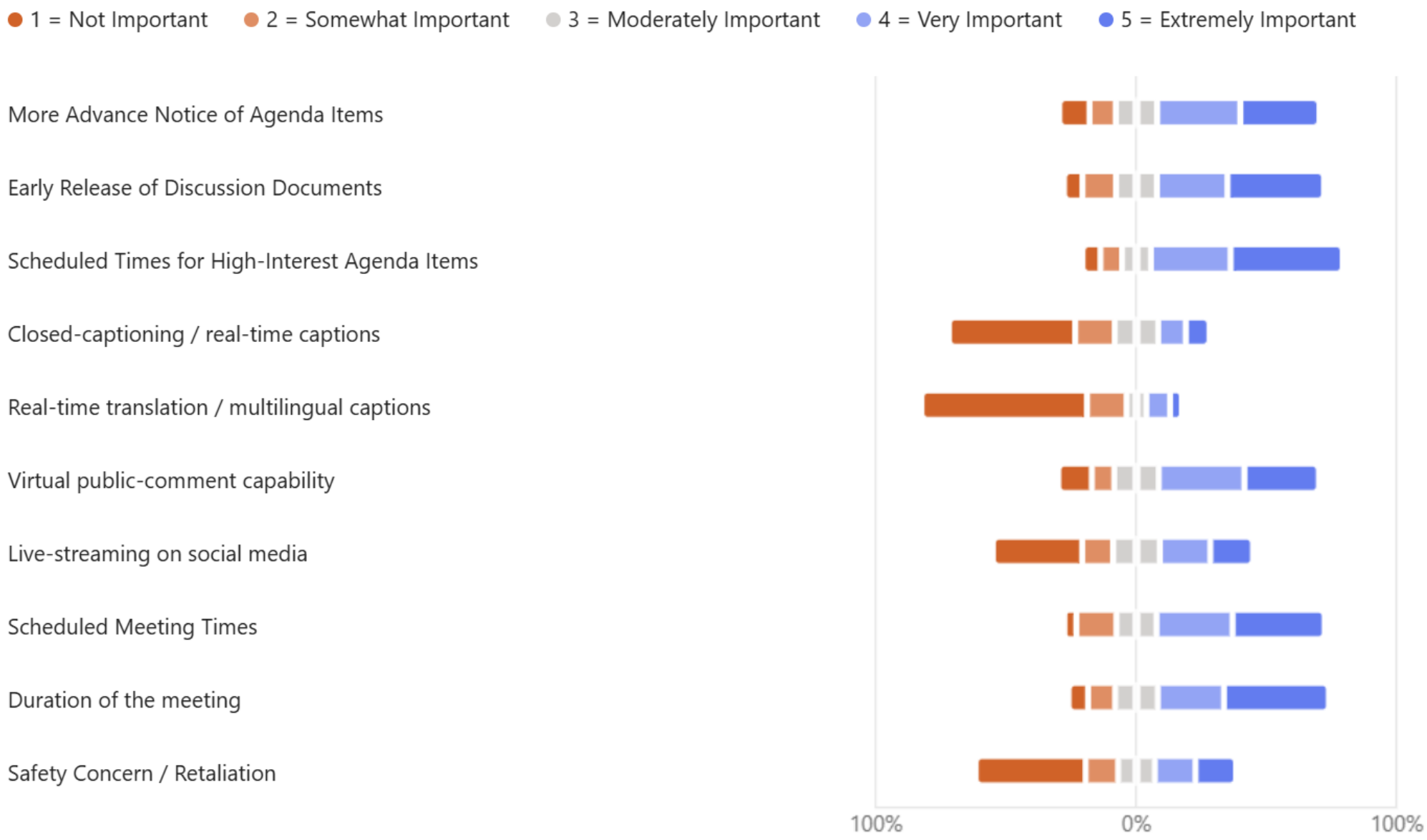
3. How do you usually learn about upcoming City Council meetings? (Select all that apply)

City website	14
Mayor and City Council newsletter	31
City newsletter	21
Social media (Facebook, Nextdoor, Twitter/X, Instagram)	14
Community organizations or neighborhood groups	18
Local news outlets	12
Physical signage (posted notices, posted agendas or flyers)	1
Word of mouth	10
Other	12



4. How important are the following features in encouraging your participation? *(1 = Not important ... 5 = Extremely important)*

More details



5. What changes would most increase your likelihood of attending a City Council meeting?

- **Notifications & Transparency:** Advance notice of topics, clearer agendas, reminders via text/social media, earlier access to documents.
- **Accessibility:** Virtual participation (Zoom, livestream), transportation, safer/easier parking, child care, varied times and locations across districts.
- **Efficiency:** Shorter meetings, start on time, place key items earlier on agenda, reduce delays and repetitive commentary.
- **Engagement & Trust:** Councilmembers actively listening, valuing input, allowing more meaningful public comment, casual community conversations.
- **Other Suggestions:** Food options, social media engagement, rotate sites, create more welcoming environment.

6. Any additional suggestions for making City Council meetings more accessible and engaging?

- **Survey Feedback: Improving City Council Meetings**
- **Accessibility:** Livestream with comments, better virtual options, child care, transportation, improved scheduling/location.
- **Engagement:** Listen actively, allow rebuttals, show genuine interest, offer informal meet-and-greets, accept anonymous input.
- **Efficiency:** Shorter meetings, limit repetitive comments, prioritize key items, split long agendas over multiple nights.
- **Accountability:** Improve councilmember attendance, reduce distractions, ensure full participation.
- **Community Priorities:** Focus on safety, infrastructure, and resident concerns over less critical activities.

7. What is your ZIP code?

90803	29	42.0%
90802	12	17.4%
90814	7	10.1%
90804	6	8.7%
90815	5	7.2%
90807	3	4.3%
90805	2	2.9%
90813	2	2.9%
90806	1	1.4%
90808	1	1.4%
90810	1	1.4%

8. Please select your age group

Under 18	0
18–24	2
25–34	6
35–44	8
45–54	10
55–64	18
65–74	14
75+	13

What is the primary language spoken in your home?

English	66
Spanish	1
Khmer	0
Tagalog	0
Other	2

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Order of Business
Proposed Changes

1. Expand Early Public Comment

- **Topic:** Only 10 non-agenda speakers are heard before regular business taking 30 minutes at the start of the meeting while the remaining speakers frequently wait until past 9:00pm.
- **Proposal**
  - Allow up to 15 speakers at the start of each meeting to address non-agenda items. This approach enables more residents to share their concerns without waiting until the late evening and fosters broader participation by providing more equitable access to public comment.
  - The Council could also adopt amendments mirroring public comment for agenda items, which allows for the comment time to drop from 3 minutes to 90 seconds if more than 10 commenters.

1. Expand Early Public Comment

- **Benefits**
  - Enables more residents to share concerns without waiting until late evening.
  - Increases overall participation.
  - Saves minimum of 7.5 minutes at the beginning of the meeting.
- **Potential Tradeoffs**
  - Residents could potentially have less time to provide their comments

2. Establish Estimated Times for High Interest Agenda Items

- **Topic**: Residents are often given 4-hour windows to speak for 90 seconds to 3 minutes on high-interest items.
- **Proposal**
  - Request the Mayor and City Manager to assign estimated start times for high-interest agenda items when applicable.
  - Council offices could submit requests for these designations, which would be labeled on the supplemental agenda. The Mayor would retain all abilities to adjust times as needed, preserving procedural integrity while allowing for flexibility.

2. Establish Estimated Times for High Interest Agenda Items

- **Benefits**
  - Reduces public and staff wait time.
  - Provides predictability for high-interest items.
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Create “clunky” meeting procedures
  - Creating expectations for the public in a changing meeting environment

3. Times for Public Comment

- **Topic:** High-interest items often draw large numbers of speakers, which is a positive sign of civic engagement but also pushes meetings late into the evening reducing engagement.
- **Proposal**
  - Amend the Municipal Code to allow the Mayor, at their discretion, to set public comment times as follows:
    - **3 minutes** if 10 or fewer speakers sign up *(currently in effect)*
    - **90 seconds** if 11–20 speakers sign up *(currently in effect)*
    - **60 seconds** if more than 20 speakers sign up

3. Adjusting Times for Public Comment

- **Benefits**
  - Balances meaningful public participation with efficient meeting management.
  - Ensures all voices are heard while keeping meetings on schedule.
  - Reduces late-night sessions, improving accessibility for residents, staff, and Council.
- **Potential Tradeoffs**
  - Potentially reduces time individual residents can speak on items

4. Set City Council start times to 3:00 pm or later

- **Topic:** Late-night Council discussions are no more inclusive than late-afternoon discussions on items of low interest. Prolonged meetings can reduce public participation and place additional strain on the Public, Council, and Staff.
- **Proposal**
  - Allow City Council meetings to start at 3:00 pm or later to cover low-interest procedural items while ensuring high-interest items are heard during ideal times for public engagement.

4. Set City Council start times to 3:00 pm or later

- **Benefits**
  - Prevents late-night deliberations – A 3:00 pm start is more accessible than discussions that extend past 11:00 pm.
  - Prioritizes public engagement – Procedural items are handled earlier so high-interest issues are heard during prime hours.
  - Supports better decision-making – Key votes take place at reasonable times, not in the middle of the night.
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Could potentially have item of high interest unknowingly discussed during normal work offices.

5. Uphold 5-Minute Limit on Ceremonials and Presentations

- **Topic:** Ceremonial segments frequently stretch to 30–45 minutes, pushing policy discussions later in the evening or to be held at unpredictable times.
- **Proposal**
  - Reaffirm and uphold Municipal Code 2.03.040(A)(6), which limits City Council meetings to no more than three ceremonials or presentations per meeting, each lasting no more than five minutes. The City Clerk should display a timer and announce elapsed time to help manage time effectively, while the Mayor retains the authority to extend presentation times. Ceremonial items needing longer than 5-minutes can be submitted as a “Receive and file” item.

5. Uphold 5-Minute Limit on Ceremonials and Presentations

- **Benefits**
  - Keeps ceremonial items concise and focused.
  - Allows for legislative discussions to be heard at predictable times
  - Supports compliance with existing Municipal Code
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Ceremonials and Presentations can feel rushed
  - Uncomfortable cutting off certain ceremonials and presentations



Changes That Need Department Research

1. Amend “Divide by 9” Sponsorship Approval Process

- **Topic:** Routine, small-dollar community sponsorships add extra administrative work and crowd the council agenda with additional items.
- **Proposal**
  - Explore allowing routine community sponsorships under $5,000 to be approved at the staff level, bypassing individual City Council agenda items, while still maintaining public transparency of fund transfers through a public posting. This change would speed delivery of small-dollar fund transfers, shorten agendas, and reduce Clerk processing time so meetings can focus on higher-priority policy matters.

1. Amend “Divide by 9” Sponsorship Approval Process

- **Benefits**
  - Quicker community impact
  - Less daunting agendas for easier review
  - Efficiency with transparency
- **Potential Trade Off**
  - Removing ability for Council and public to preemptively challenge small dollar fund transfers publicly.

2. Define “Urgency” for Supplemental Agenda Items

- **Topic:** Using the supplemental agenda for non-urgent items gives residents less than 72 hours to prepare and make arrangements like securing childcare before the Council discussions.

- **Proposal**
  - Request the City Attorney to draft a definition of “urgency” that will qualify supplemental agenda items. The definition should require any accompanying Statement of Urgency to show that the matter needs action before the next regular agenda, that delay would cause harm or a loss, and that the need is so pressing that temporarily limiting the usual opportunity for public and Councilmember engagement is warranted.

2. Define “Urgency” for Supplemental Agenda Items

- **Benefits**
  - Improves decision-making and transparency
  - Keeps regular meetings efficient
  - Enhances preparation and engagement
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Reduced flexibility for Staff and Council
  - Administrative burden of consistency review

3. Move Supplemental Agenda Submission Deadline to Thursday

- **Topic:** Departments and Offices are have to wait to see if supplemental items are submitted, and certain items require comprehensive Staff research starting Friday afternoon. During furloughs previously, the deadline for supplemental submissions was Thursday, which gave Friday to prepare.
- **Proposal**
  - Move the deadline for items to be submitted on the supplemental agenda to Thursday, allowing for internal review before items are posted publicly.

3. Move Supplemental Submission Deadline to Thursday

- **Benefits**
  - Improves the Quality and Accuracy of Item Discussions
  - Allows for Staff scheduling flexibility
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Reduces Agility on Truly Urgent Issues

4. Schedule Stand-Alone Study Sessions for Major Topics

- **Topic:** Complex topics needing thorough discussion push the rest of the agenda into hurried late-night slots.

- **Proposal**
  - Schedule dedicated study sessions for complex or high-impact issues instead of squeezing them into crowded agendas. Identify dates well in advance and reserve single-topic meetings for matters that demand comprehensive staff reports and in-depth discussion.

4. Schedule Stand-Alone Study Sessions for Major Topics

- **Benefits**
  - Enables deeper Council deliberation and community input on major policy questions.
  - Keeps regular Tuesday meetings on schedule by lifting lengthy briefings off the main agenda.
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Additional time dedications for a part time Council
  - Increase in staff workload

5. Tentative Public Schedule of Future Agenda Items

- **Topic:** The public are notified of a council discussion at most 8 days in advance, whereas the City may know the item is coming weeks before.
- **Proposal**
  - Post a tentative public schedule for future agenda items that is subject to change.

5. Tentative Public Schedule of Future Agenda Items

- **Benefits**
  - Provides the public more time to make accommodations to participant in upcoming Council meetings
  - Allows for time Council offices to engage constituency before discussion
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Scheduling changes can create conflict
  - Administrative burden

6. Expanded and/or Pre-Recorded Staff Reports

- **Topic:** Council and the public often hear complex staff reports only minutes before key decisions, limiting opportunities for thoughtful questions and public engagement.
- **Proposal**
  - Encourage departments to create video briefings or To/From/For style staffing briefings posted online before meetings. These in-depth briefings can be viewed in advance by Councilmembers and the public, enabling meetings to skip lengthy presentations and focus directly on Q&A. This can be piloted with a few departments before broader adoption.

6. Expanded and/or Pre-Recorded Staff Reports

- **Benefits**
  - Improves transparency and supports public engagement through better meeting preparation
  - Skip lengthy presentations and focus directly on Q&A
- **Potential Trade Offs**
  - Could be burdensome on Staff resources

Recommendations:

- Move to approve the proposed changes to the *Order of Business* and refer Recommendations 1–5 to City Council for approval.

- Move to recommend that City Council direct the City Manager and City Clerk to return through a T/F/F with comments and analysis on implementation of the recommendations listed under the *Changes That Need Department Research* section.