



S.B. 707: The Ralph M. Brown Act Overhaul

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BROWN ACT GENERALLY:

- ❖ The key to the Brown Act is its requirement that virtually all local government meetings shall be ***noticed, open and public*** .
- ❖ In addition to requiring the People’s business be conducted in open, noticed meetings, the Brown Act also extends to the public the right to ***participate***.

“All meetings of the ***legislative body*** of a local agency shall be open and public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the legislative body of a local agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.”

Cal. Govt Code § 54953(a)



“LEGISLATIVE BODY” DEFINED

❖ Under the Brown Act, “legislative body” means, in relevant part:

“(a) The governing body of a local agency or any other local body created by state or federal statute.

(b) A commission, committee, board or other body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision making or advisory, created by charter, ordinance, resolution, or formal action of a legislative body. . . .”

Cal. Govt Code § 54952(a)-(b)



BROWN ACT & S.B. 707

- ❖ California's first major Brown Act modernization in decades.
- ❖ According to the bill's author: "This act is necessary to modernize the Ralph M. Brown Act to reflect recent technological changes that can promote greater public access to local officials."
- ❖ Shifts the focus of the Brown Act from **access** to **engagement**, including hybrid public participation, language translation of agendas, and encouraged expanded community outreach.

S.B. 707 CATEGORIES: THREE TRACKS

❖ Clarification and expansion of Teleconferencing Rules

- On April 20, 2026, we will discuss teleconferencing rules for: 1) traditional application; 2) reasonable accommodation for members of the body; 3) emergency situations; 4) Just Cause accommodations for members; and 5) City subsidiary bodies.

❖ Miscellaneous changes for all Brown Act meetings

❖ “Eligible Legislative Body” Changes

ELIGIBLE LEGISLATIVE BODY

❖ A subset of “legislative body” as defined in the Brown Act.

“ ‘Eligible legislative body’ means any of the following:

(A) A city council of a city with a population of 30,000 or more.”

Cal. Govt Code § 54953.4(e)(2)(A)

❖ In the City, only the City Council is an “eligible legislative body.”

➤ The S.B. 707 requirements discussed in the following slides ***only apply to*** City Council.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ Provide *access and community opportunity* to meetings via either:
 - *Two-way telephonic service* (dial-in service, no internet required); or
 - *Two-way audiovisual platform* (online platform with video conference and telephonic service; must activate automatic captioning function).
 - City Council *shall* provide public comment opportunity for those participating remotely and ensure the public comment time period for remote participants is the same time period as those appearing in person.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ City Council must adopt a ***policy on disruption of service***, including good faith attempts to restore service, for at least one hour and recess the meeting while the good-faith attempts are being made.
- ❖ Council cannot approve this disruption of service policy on consent calendar.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ City Council must reasonably assist translation/interpretation requests from the public into any language.
 - City **shall** create and publicize instructions on how to request translation/interpretation assistance.
 - City can use digital service and is **not** responsible for the content or accuracy of any interpretation/translation



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ City must *translate and post City Council agenda*, including remote attendance information, into any language spoken by more than 20% of the City's population that also speaks English less than very well.
 - Agendas translated into language(s) spoken by more than 20% of the City's citizens who also speak English less than very well, must be posted.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ The City must maintain an accessible webpage, dedicated to public meetings, that details the public meeting process and outlines public participation methods.
 - Webpage shall be translated into all applicable languages, and each translation shall be accessible through a prominent direct link posted on the City's primary home page or City Council home page.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING REQUIREMENTS

JULY 1, 2026

- ❖ The City must create and implement a system for electronically accepting and fulfilling requests for and/or providing copies of City Council meeting agendas and agenda documents through email or an integrated agenda management platform.





QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS