



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside to Enable In-Person Public Comment, Require Face Coverings

Next meeting, on Friday, will be held in City Council chambers for first time since March 17

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – After two months of holding virtual City Council meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Riverside will enable people who wish to address the Council in person to do so in the Council Chambers, provided they put on a face covering before entering.

The City Council voted 6-1 today (5/12), with Councilwoman Gabriela Plascencia voting no.

“The ability to speak directly to your elected officials is crucial to our democracy,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “I am pleased we are making this option available to people once again.”

The new process will be in place for a meeting at 1 p.m. Friday (5/15). Topics include the second part of a presentation on the Riverside Road to Recovery Framework and a discussion of whether to re-open Mount Rubidoux to walkers and hikers.

City Council members can attend in person or continue to participate virtually. Members of the public must wear a face covering to attend a City Council meeting.

The public also can call the live meeting public comment line -- (951) 826-8600 – at the appropriate time during the meeting. The best way to determine when to call is by watching the meeting via engageriverside.com, RiversideTV cable channels, or City social media live feeds.

Residents who do not wish to call in can continue to make their comments by email, through the e-comment function at engageriverside.com or by sending a card or letter.

“All comments receive equal weight, regardless of how they reach us,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “People who wish to speak in person can do so, while others can comment in other ways.”

The City Council last met as a group in the chamber on March 17 before switching to virtual meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Riverside’s first virtual meeting was March 31, shortly after the declaration of a local emergency. “Drive-up public comment” was conducted in the parking lot outside City Hall. Residents could drive or walk up to a camera and speak to the City Council about specific items on the agenda.

The following week, on April 7, the City switched to a phone call-in system, with a five-minute, one-time public comment at the beginning of the meeting.

Today the City returned to the public being able to speak for three minutes each on individual items. That process remains in effect – whether observed in the chambers or online -- for general public comment, a workshop, items on the discussion calendar, a public hearing, and items removed from the consent calendar.

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19