



City of Arts & Innovation

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City of Riverside Unveils Transparency Measures, Makes Government More Open

Highlights include easier access to documents, more time to digest upcoming issues

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside today unveiled a host of new measures designed to increase transparency in local government by providing residents with easier and faster access to documents and meeting agendas, as well as more live, online broadcasts of government meetings.

The changes should give residents more time to digest upcoming issues, a greater ability to find information about how their government is being run and the option to view meetings of some city boards and commissions without having to drive to City Hall.

“Riverside has been a statewide leader on government transparency, and we are kicking it up a notch,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “There’s a direct connection between transparency and trust in local government, and we’re continuing our commitment to that cause.”

The City has broadcast its City Council meetings for years and more recently has begun broadcasting meetings of the Council’s standing committees. The City’s transparency portal – www.EngageRiverside.com – already hosts more than 4 million pages of public records, meeting minutes and financial information.

But the measures being proposed by City Manager John A. Russo, City Clerk Colleen Nicol and City Attorney Gary Geuss take those efforts even farther. Scheduled for consideration by the Riverside City Council on Tuesday, the measures include:

- Posting agendas 12 days in advance for the City Council, Board of Public Utilities, Planning Commission and Community Police Review Commission, when only 72 hours notice is required.
- Creating a new position of Public Records Advocate, who will be responsible for shepherding requests for public documents through City Hall and ensuring that such requests are fulfilled in a timely manner.

- Automating Public Records Act requests through the EngageRiverside portal, enabling the public to quickly and easily make official requests for public records while also seeing the request of others, and the results of those records requests to avoid duplication.
- Broadcasting live on the Internet the meetings of Board of Public Utilities, Planning Commission and Community Police Review Commission. The City already broadcasts City Council meetings and City Council committee meetings.
- Retaining video of the meetings for five years instead of the existing policy of 90 days.
- Gathering all records from all boards and commissions in a central location and making those records search-able for the first time.

“Nothing we accomplish at City Hall will mean anything unless the public has confidence that we are reaching these decisions through a process that is open and inviting,” City Manager John A. Russo said. “When we operate in a transparent manner, the public wins because our actions have been conducted out in the open, with adequate time and opportunity for input.”