



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 29, 2021

Contact:

Phil Pitchford
Public Information Officer
951-826-5975
ppitchford@riversideca.gov

City of Riverside to Resume In-Person Audiences at City Council Meetings

Face coverings and physical distancing requirements remain in effect

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Members of the public will be able to attend entire meetings of the Riverside City Council in person again starting on Tuesday (6/1). Seating will be limited to allow for physical distancing and the existing requirement for people to wear face coverings remains in effect.

The move is part of an ongoing process of making public meetings more accessible to members of the public while continuing to observe required and recommended guidelines for slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

“The work to vaccinate Riverside residents and drive down the incidence of COVID-19 is showing results, with businesses getting back to normal and our public enjoying our parks and open spaces more and more,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “This trend will now include our City Council chambers, which will be more available to the public than at any time since the pandemic started.”

The change scheduled for Tuesday increases the amount of time a person can be inside the City Council chambers. In recent meetings, members of the public could enter the chambers to comment on an agenda item but had to leave once they were finished commenting. Starting Tuesday, members of the public can attend the entire meeting, regardless of whether they address the council.

The physical distancing and face covering requirements are in effect regardless of whether someone has been vaccinated. Proof of vaccination will not be required for entry.

Moving forward, the City will continue other practices that have made meetings more accessible during the pandemic, including providing the option for the public to call in by phone on specific agenda items. This practice is expected to continue indefinitely, unless changes to state law make it illegal or impractical.

The state has indicated it will scrap by June 15 the color-coded tier system for regulating what can be open and at what capacity. Regardless, the City must continue to follow guidelines from Cal/OSHA, which may, or may not, mirror the changes planned for mid-June. If Cal/OSHA guidelines are altered

to allow for additional seating and other avenues to increased accessibility, the City will follow the new guidelines.

“We want to get back to in-person meetings as soon as possible, so the public can directly address its elected representatives and closely observe our actions,” Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry said. “But the City also is an employer, so we must act in accordance with Cal/OSHA guidelines.”

The City hopes to be able by July 1 to move other meetings, including City Council committees, Boards and Commissions now meeting virtually, to the City Council chambers. The only exception to that would be meetings of the Budget Engagement Commission which, because of the number of members, would be held in the Mayor’s Ceremonial Room on the 7th floor of City Hall. Such a move would have to comply with all current and future state and Cal/OSHA requirements.

Residents can continue to make an E-comment in advance of any scheduled meeting by visiting EngageRiverside.com.

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