



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

1/27/2026

Staff Report Number:

26-011-CC

Regular Business:

Consider and adopt a resolution approving a City Council Policy for public meeting accessibility

Recommendation

Staff is recommending the City Council adopt a resolution approving the public meeting accessibility policy (Attachment A).

Policy Issues

The City Council adopted the Environmental Justice (EJ) Element Sept. 24, 2024. The EJ Element emphasizes equitable civic engagement and multilingual access.

The recommended policy aligns with the EJ Element to conduct City Council meetings in underserved communities at least twice per year (EJ7.D.3) and to incorporate multilingual outreach and offer interpretation services at public meetings (EJ7.D.8). The recommended policy shall align with EJ2.G, which aims to develop incentives to encourage shared commute programs and the alternative methods of travel for city events, meetings, and official business. Therefore, pursuant to EJ2.G, the recommended policy shall offer transportation services to encourage attendance and accessibility to public meetings.

Background

On July 8, 2025, the City Council received an informational item providing the City Council and members of the public with options about future opportunities for City Council meeting transportation, location, interpretation and translation services (Attachment B).

On Dec. 16, 2025, the City Council held a study session and provided direction for drafting a policy and pilot programs (Attachment C).

Analysis

Transportation services included in the proposed policy

The City will continue providing transportation services from the Belle Haven neighborhood with three pickup and drop-off locations to and from City Council meetings held in the City Council Chambers that involve:

- Annual City Council priority setting workshop
- Annual budget public hearing
- General Plan Elements (such as the Environmental Justice Element or Housing Element)

Transportation pick-up and drop-off locations to the City Council Chambers include:
Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC) (ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act, available)
Ivy Plaza
Neighborhood Service Center

Transportation services pilot for City Council meetings

The City will provide transportation from the Belle Haven neighborhood to the City Council Chambers and from the City Council Chambers to the BHCC, by request, via online form or phone call. These requests will be received up to 72 hours before the City Council meeting.

Location services included in the proposed policy

In accordance with EJ7.D.3, City Council meetings will be hosted from the BHCC twice a year. Additional City Council meetings can be hosted from BHCC per City Council discretion. Each Commission will also hold one meeting annually at BHCC. Meetings hosted at BHCC require approximately 20 additional staff hours for facility set up, technology testing and take down.

Interpretation services (live, in-person and/or virtual attendees) included in the proposed policy

The City will continue providing live interpretation using four interpreters (two in-person and two virtual) for City Council agenda items related to annual City Council priority setting workshop, annual budget public hearing and General Plan Elements. Live interpretation can also be made by request by submitting the online form (Attachment D) or calling the City at least 72 hours before the City Council meeting.

Interpretation services pilot

The City will offer virtual Spanish closed captioning for viewing City Council meetings for those participating on Zoom. The online request form will also be updated to include fields to understand the needs of the requester (i.e., audio, visual, public comment).

Translation services (written meeting materials only) included in the proposed policy

The City will continue to provide human certified translation of City Council staff reports for the police department quarterly update and Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) report and items related to General Plan Elements.

Since the Dec. 16, 2025, study session, staff have continued to research AI (artificial intelligence) tools for translating documents that are uploaded to the city website as PDFs (i.e., agendas, minutes, staff reports, public notices, etc.) Staff has identified a vendor, DocAccess powered by Streamline, which will automatically convert, with the use of AI, all existing and future PDFs, making them ADA compliant and translatable. The use of a web-based tool will not replace the human certified translations of the RIPA or General Plan Elements reports.

Policy review period

Staff will return this policy in spring 2027 for review based on community feedback, usage data, best practices and transportation and interpretation service pilots.

Impact on City Resources

The total budget amount will be approximately \$48,700 per calendar year (Table 1). Staff will begin implementing this policy upon adoption and include the full amount in planning for the fiscal year 2026-27 budget. Full implementation is expected by July 2026.

Table 1: Meeting accessibility approximate annual budget		
Service	Annual (calendar year) cost estimate	Notes
Transportation services	\$1,100	\$220 for one vehicle making one round-trip with pickup and drop off, five meetings per year
Interpretation services	\$32,800	\$3,000 for four interpreters, seven meetings per year \$1,800 for potential cancellation fees
Certified human translation	\$4,800	Approximately \$400 per staff report and attachments, six reports per year \$2,400 for potential expedited service (increase from \$0.10 per word to \$0.20 per word)
Web-based ADA and translation tool	\$10,000	
Total	\$48,700	

Environmental Review

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution approving City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meetings Accessibility
- B. Hyperlink – July 8, 2025, Staff Report #25-109-CC:
www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2025-meetings/20250708/i3-20250708-cc-sr-cc-meeting-accessibility-options.pdf
- C. Hyperlink – Dec. 16, 2025, Staff Report #25-192-CC:
www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2025-meetings/20251216/i1-20251216-cc-meeting-accessibility-policy.pdf
- D. Hyperlink – City Council Meeting In-person Spanish Interpretation Request Form:
us.openforms.com/Form/9654e74b-d174-4a47-ae38-56ed5a663488
us.openforms.com/Form/a8a5ee83-b21f-40d4-ba56-d6478148260e

Report prepared by:

Judi A. Herren, Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK
APPROVING CITY COUNCIL POLICY CC-26-030 PUBLIC MEETINGS
ACCESSIBILITY**

WHEREAS, Sept. 24, 2016, the California Senate Bill 1000 – Land Use; general plans: safety and environmental justice required local governments to identify disadvantaged communities in their jurisdictions as well as address environmental justice in their general plans; and

WHEREAS, Sept. 24, 2024, the City of Menlo Park (“City”) adopted the Menlo Park Environmental Justice Element (“EJ Element”) to identify and address public health risks and environmental justice concern, as well as foster the well-being of the City’s residents living in underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Sept. 24, 2024, the EJ Element adopted certain goals including but not limited to EJ2.G, EJ7.D.3, and EJ7.D.8 which, adopted Sept. 24, 2024, emphasizes pollution reduction and improvement of air quality, equitable civic engagement, and multilingual access; and

WHEREAS, EJ2.G requires the develop of incentives to encourage shared commute programs and alternative methods of travel for city events, including public meetings; and

WHEREAS, EJ7.D.3 requires City Council meetings to be conducted in underserved communities at least twice per year; and

WHEREAS, EJ7.D.8 requires the incorporation of multilingual outreach, announcements, and noticing into City procedures for public meetings and hearings, and offer interpretation services at public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the need for public meeting accessibility, including, but not limited to transportation, meeting locations, interpretation and translation services; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of the City of Menlo Park approves the City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meetings Accessibility Exhibit A which aligns with EJ7.D.3 and EJ7.D.8 and expands to incorporate transportation services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

//

//

//

//

//

//

I, Judi A. Herren, City Clerk of Menlo Park, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing City Council Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted at a meeting by said City Council on the twenty-seventh of January, 2026, by the following votes:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Official Seal of said City on this ___ day of January, 2026.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

Exhibits:

A. #CC-26-030 Public Meetings Accessibility

PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY

City Council Policy #CC-26-030

Proposed January 27, 2026



Purpose
To ensure equitable access and participation in public meetings by providing transportation, location, interpretation and translation services in alignment with the Environmental Justice (EJ) Element goals.
Context
- Supports EJ Element goals adopted in 2024: - EJ2.G: Develop incentives to encourage shared commute programs and alternative methods of travel for city events, meetings, and official business. - EJ7.D.3: Conduct City Council meetings in underserved communities at least twice per year. - EJ7.D.8: Incorporate multilingual outreach and offer interpretation services at public meetings. - Recognizes Menlo Park's multilingual community
Scope
Applies to: - City Council meetings regarding transportation, meeting locations, interpretation, and translation - Commission meetings regarding meeting locations
Transportation services
Transportation services are offered from the Belle Haven neighborhood via City shuttle with three pickup and drop-off locations (Belle Haven Community Campus, Ivy Plaza and the Neighborhood Service Center) to and from City Council meetings held in the City Council Chambers for meetings that involve: - Annual City Council priority-setting workshop - Annual budget public hearing - General Plan Element discussions Request for City shuttle option to and from City Council meetings: 72-hour advance request via online form or phone - Service offered from the Belle Haven neighborhood via City shuttle from one of three pickup and drop-off locations (Belle Haven Community Campus, Ivy Plaza and the Neighborhood Service Center) to City Council Chambers for meetings held at City Council Chambers. - Service offered from City Council Chambers to the Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC) for meetings held at BHCC.
Meeting locations
Minimum requirement: - Two City Council meetings annually at BHCC - One Commission meeting annually at BHCC, per Commission Additional meetings at BHCC: - City Council discretion (e.g. for topics with significant community impacts as determined by the City Council)
Interpretation services
Spanish interpretation services are offered for live, in-person and/or virtual attendees and include two in-person and two virtual interpreters for City Council meetings that involve: - Annual City Council priority-setting workshop - Annual budget public hearing - General Plan Element discussions Request for interpretation services for City Council meetings option: 72-hour advance request via online form or phone

PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY

City Council Policy #CC-26-030

Adopted XXX, XX, 2026

Translation services		
Certified human translation provided for written meeting materials (i.e., staff reports): • Menlo Park Police Department quarterly updates and Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) reports • General Plan Element items Web-based translation for other meeting materials • Agendas, minutes, staff reports and public notices		
Review		
Policy to be reviewed for effectiveness and updated based on: • Community feedback • Usage data (transportation, interpretation requests) • Emerging best practices and technology (e.g., AI interpretation)		
Procedure history		
Action	Date	Notes
Policy adoption		Resolution No. XXXX