



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

7/14/2026

Staff Report Number:

26-123-CC

Consent Calendar:

Consider and adopt a resolution amending City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meeting Accessibility

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Council adopt a resolution (Attachment A) amending City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meeting Accessibility (Policy) (Attachment A, Exhibit 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.

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

On Jan. 27, the City Council adopted Policy #CC-26-030, which establishes public access and participation by providing transportation, location, interpretation and translation services in alignment with the EJ Element goals (Attachment B).

Analysis

The Policy outlines transportation and interpretation services as well as meeting locations for City Council meetings. Transportation and interpretation are automatically offered for:

- Annual City Council priority-setting workshop
- Annual budget public hearing
- General Plan Element discussions

Members of the public can request transportation and/or interpretation services up to 72 hours in advance of a City Council meeting via an online form or phone call. Table 1 outlines the usage of these services since the January adoption. Please note that all transportation public requests resulted in members of the public using the service and there are two instances where interpretation services were requested by a member of the public but there was no in-person usage of the service.

Table 1: Services usage		
Service	Meeting date	Notes
Transportation	3/10/2026	Public request form received – transportation provided and utilized
	3/21/2026	Provided per the Policy for annual City Council priority-setting workshop
	4/28/2026	Public request form received – transportation provided and utilized
	5/19/2026	Public request form received – transportation provided and utilized
	6/2/2026	Public request form received – transportation provided and utilized
	6/9/2026	Provided per the Policy for annual budget public hearing
Interpretation	2/10/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided; no in-person usage*
	2/24/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	3/10/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	3/21/2026	Provided per the Policy for annual City Council priority-setting workshop
	3/24/2026	Provided for meeting held at the Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC)
	4/14/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	4/28/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	5/12/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided; no in-person usage*
	5/19/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	6/2/2026	Public request form received – interpretation provided and utilized
	6/9/2026	Provided per the Policy for annual budget public hearing
	6/23/2026	Provided – no requests received – opportunity to test new equipment
Location	3/24/2026	Meeting held at BHCC

*Interpretation provided, but no in-person interpretation participation. The city is unable to determine whether virtual interpretation is used because Zoom does not provide interpretation usage counts for online/virtual participants.

The original budgeting for the Policy assumed up to five transportation requests per year and up to seven interpreted meetings per year beyond the three required meetings (annual City Council priority-setting workshop, annual budget public hearing and General Plan Element discussions). As shown above, to date the city has fulfilled four transportation requests and eight interpretation requests. The City Council approved an annual budget of \$48,700 for meeting accessibility. Based on the current rate of usage, expenditures are projected to exceed this amount by approximately \$12,200 for interpretation and \$470 for transportation. Below are the original cost allocations:

- Transportation – \$1,100
- Interpretation – \$32,800
- Translation – \$4,800
- Web-based ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and translation tool – \$10,000

Staff has continued to research options and tools to provide access to City Council meetings and is recommending amending the transportation and interpretation sections of the Policy.

For transportation, staff is recommending retaining the use of a city shuttle for the annual City Council priority-setting workshop, annual budget public hearing and General Plan Element discussions. The amended Policy recommends including a minimum number of five riders for the 72 hours advance public request.

The current Policy requires the city to provide two in-person and two virtual interpreters. Staff is proposing instead to provide two virtual (human) interpreters and offer in-person personal handheld devices for members of the public to listen to the meeting in Spanish. This approach will reduce interpretation costs by half while still providing the same level of service. The city was able to test the devices at the June 23 City Council meeting. The Policy also allows the use of in-person interpreters if a substantial need arises. A redline copy of the Policy is provided as Attachment C.

Since the Jan. 27 meeting, staff has implemented a web-based tool, DocAccess powered by Streamline, which automatically converts, with the use of AI, all existing and future PDFs, making them ADA compliant and translatable. This tool does not replace the human certified translations of the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) or General Plan Elements reports.

Policy review period

Staff will return this Policy for City Council review based on community feedback, usage data and best practices.

Impact on City Resources

As mentioned in the Analysis, the city is expected to exceed the original budgets for transportation and interpretation services. Based on the number of service requests to date and anticipated future requests, the recommended Policy updates are projected to save approximately \$14,000.

Environmental Review

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Guidelines Sections 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
- B. Hyperlink – Jan. 27 Staff Report #26-011-CC:
www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2026-meetings/20260127/h2-20260127-cc-meeting-accessibility-policy.pdf
- C. City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meeting Accessibility – redline

Report prepared by:

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

Report reviewed by:

Stephen Stolte, Assistant City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK
APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO 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 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

WHEREAS, the City Council of Menlo Park adopted Policy #CC-26-030 Jan. 27, 2026, to provide public access and participation by providing transportation, location, interpretation and translation services in alignment with the EJ Element goals; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council of the City of Menlo Park approves the amendments to City Council Policy #CC-26-030 Public Meetings Accessibility Exhibit A, which updates the Transportation and Interpretation service sections of the Policy.

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

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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 fourteenth day of July, 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 ___, 2026.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

Exhibits:

A. #CC-26-030 Public Meetings Accessibility

PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY

City Council Policy #CC-26-030

Adopted July 14, 2026

Resolution No. XXXX



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 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. - A minimum of five (5) riders is required per meeting request. This requirement may be met by one or more requests that together total five or more riders.
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 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 The use of additional in-person interpreters can be implemented as needed.

Translation services		
Certified human translation provided for written meeting materials (i.e., staff reports): - 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	1/27/2026	Resolution No. 7011
Policy adoption		Resolution No. XXXX

PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY

City Council Policy #CC-26-030
Adopted ~~January 27~~ July 14, 2026
Resolution No. ~~7014XXXX~~

ATTACHMENT C



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 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. • <u>Service offered from City Council Chambers to the Belle Haven Community Campus (BHCC) for meetings held at BHCC.</u> • <u>A minimum of five (5) riders is required per meeting request. This requirement may be met by one or more requests that together total five or more riders.</u>
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: • <u>72-hour advance request via online form or phone</u> <u>The use of additional in-person interpreters can be implemented as needed.</u>

PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBILITY

City Council Policy #CC-26-030
Adopted ~~January 27~~ July 14, 2026
Resolution No. ~~7011~~ XXXX

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<u>Policy adoption</u>		<u>Resolution No. XXXX</u>