



## INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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### CITY COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

Date: May 29, 2025

To: Cupertino City Council

From: Tina Kapoor, Acting City Manager

Re: Hybrid Commission & Committee Meetings Recommendation Update and Comparison of the Current and Proposed Models for Supporting Hybrid Meetings

#### **Background**

The City is committed to increasing accessibility and transparency in public meetings, and staff is fully supportive of expanding the hybrid meeting model to all Commissions and Committees. However, doing so requires additional staffing, training, and technical resources to ensure consistent implementation and legal compliance—especially under the Brown Act.

While livestreaming has served as an effective interim solution, moving to a full hybrid format introduces greater complexity. Ensuring high-quality, reliable broadcasts and smooth facilitation of public comment—both in-person and remote—requires coordinated effort. Staff are ready to support this shift and have identified the resources needed to successfully implement a sustainable hybrid model across all Commissions and Committees.

#### **Recommendation**

To ensure effective hybrid Commission and Committee meetings and support the associated increase in administrative and operational needs, staff recommends adding a full-time Administrative Assistant position. This role would provide necessary support to ensure consistency, standardization, and compliance with Brown Act protocols—areas currently challenged by the varying familiarity and capacity of existing liaison staff.

#### **Structure and Cost Comparison Between Current and Proposed Staffing Models**

Current Staffing Model:

Across departments, administrative assistants—and in some cases, management analysts—currently spend an average of 5% of their time supporting Commission and Committee-related tasks. With 14 active bodies, this equates to roughly 70% of a full-time position. To accommodate evening meetings, these employees accrue overtime or adjust their schedules, which can impact overall department operations. The shift to a hybrid meeting format may lead to continued or increased overtime costs for departmental administrative staff. The Clerk's Office also incurs overtime to manage the growing logistical demands of existing Commissions and Committees. This burden will increase with the addition of the Economic Development Committee, Legislative Review Committee (LRC), Disaster Council, and the added complexity of supporting a dynamic hybrid meeting model.

Meeting coordination involves a wide range of responsibilities: preparation and review, packet distribution, scheduling, attendance tracking, transcription, minutes creation and publication (including agendas, cancellations, and affidavits), onboarding/offboarding, recruitments, commissioner training tracking, staff training, compliance checks, and issuing attendance warnings. The recent addition of livestreaming further compounds this workload. Staff are stretched thin, resulting in burnout, inconsistent practices, and repeated re-training. These operational cracks highlight the urgent need for dedicated, centralized support—precisely what this position is designed to provide.

#### Challenges of the Current Staffing Model for Hybrid Commissions and Committees:

##### *Training and Standardization Are Not Currently Covered*

The Clerk's Office is not resourced to facilitate ongoing training for commission staff and liaisons, especially not with a focus on hybrid meeting practices. Yet such training is essential to ensure all Commissions and Committees follow consistent procedures around public comment, quorum maintenance, and meeting structure. Without centralized coordination, the risk of procedural noncompliance increases. This position will take ownership of that training and continuity of efforts, something currently missing from our organizational structure.

##### *Hybrid Meetings Require Procedural, Not Just Technical, Support*

While I&T provides the technical infrastructure, connectivity, and troubleshooting for hybrid meetings, the real-time facilitation—such as managing public comment queues, enforcing meeting procedures in dual formats, and training staff and commissioners on hybrid-specific protocols—falls outside I&T's scope and squarely within administrative operations. This support is not currently being provided at scale, and the expectation that existing Clerk or liaison staff can absorb this added burden without degradation in service has proven unsustainable.

#### Current Decentralized Staffing Model:

Approximately \$146,710 (or 100% of a full-time Administrative Assistant salary). This estimate reflects the combined cost of the current staffing approach, which includes the cumulative 5% of administrative time per department spent supporting Commission and Committee meetings, hybrid meeting-related potential overtime, and the anticipated addition of new bodies such as the Economic Development Committee (EDC), Legislative Review Committee (LRC), and Disaster Council. It also accounts for the Clerk's Office overtime required to support both existing and new meetings.

#### Proposed Centralized Staffing Model:

The goal of offering hybrid access is to increase public participation and enhance transparency in government. It is the City's responsibility to develop and maintain a Commission and Committee meeting model that delivers consistent, dependable, and legally compliant results. Staff is recommending this proposed support model through a dedicated Administrative Assistant—to ensure meetings are facilitated reliably and equitably, regardless of the access format. The proposed staffing model centralizes the staffing resources into one dedicated Full-Time Administrative Assistant position. This position will have a schedule tailored to accommodate evening meetings so the City can ensure continuous support during non-standard hours without incurring overtime.

The proposed staffing model for supporting Hybrid Commissions and Committees with an addition of an Administrative Assistant position will allow the City to support these meetings in a seamless and more efficient manner. This position is not being proposed solely due to the addition of a single new responsibility associated with hybrid meetings. Rather, it is a response to a confluence of operational pressures—many of which have been compounding over time and have reached a critical point. These include not only the increased complexity of hybrid meeting facilitation but also the cumulative workload from livestreaming, onboarding new commissions and committees, and growing procedural inconsistencies across meetings that are affecting both staff performance and public experience. The current fragmented and reactive staffing approach is neither sustainable nor efficient and often results in higher overall staff time.

Proposed Staffing Model Cost: A full-time Administrative Assistant salary is \$146,710

#### **Conclusion**

Adding a dedicated position to support hybrid Commission and Committee meetings is a strategic investment for the organization. It reduces overtime costs, boosts productivity, enhances the public's meeting experience, and ensures more seamless operations. This role would also relieve the burden on other staff currently adjusting their schedules to cover evening meetings, helping to maintain a more balanced workload across departments. By adopting this staffing model, the City can strengthen operational efficiency and better position itself for long-term success in a hybrid environment. Ultimately, the return on investment for this role significantly outweighs the ongoing costs of the current decentralized approach.

**Prepared by:** Teri Gerhardt, Chief Technology Officer

**Approved by:** Tina Kapoor, Acting City Manager