

RULES COMMITTEE: 9/3/2025  
Item: B.1  
File ID: ROGC 25-266



# Memorandum

**TO:** Honorable Mayor &  
City Council

**FROM:** Toni J. Taber, MMC  
City Clerk

**SUBJECT:** The Public Record  
August 21, 2025 – August 28, 2025.

**DATE:** September 3, 2025

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## **ITEMS FILED FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD**

### **Letters from Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

#### **Letters from the Public**

- 1-8. Letters from eight members of the public of substantially the same language were received between August 25 – 27, 2025, re: Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings.

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Toni J. Taber, MMC  
City Clerk

TJT/tt



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**Fw: Joseph Lam 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/26/2025 8:38 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 7:13 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Joseph Lam 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Monday, August 25, 2025 11:07 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Joseph Lam 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

I ask you to rise to the challenge rather than cave to bullies intent on stifling the input of disadvantaged communities. The City needs to immediately restore virtual public comment for all City Council, Committee, and Commission meetings.

It is clear there is an effort to silence members of disadvantaged communities. Many residents rely on being able to provide virtual public comment due to reasons of disability, health, work schedules, parenting and other demands of modern life. The strategy appears to be to engage in racist and hateful speech in order to bully the Council into eliminating virtual public comment. The bullies scored a victory when the Council decided to eliminate this option without first seeking community input and not at the bequest from community members.

By eliminating remote access on the heels of restricting access to the council chambers in December, San Jose has fallen from a model of good government dedicated to promoting civic participation to a city displaying troubling behavior and giving the impression that hearing from its residents is a bother. We agree that the comments of a few bad actors are vile and have no place in a community meeting. Rather than using racist and hateful speech as an excuse to cut off community participation and hamper people's First Amendment right to petition their government, however, the City should rise to the challenge of finding solutions to preserve access for everyone while continuing to facilitate public comment by providing a virtual option.

Ending the process of remote participation, is to deny a large segment of the community the opportunity to participate in our democratic process. Some examples include:

- Disabled residents who rely on technology to speak, or who otherwise have to arrange rides with Paratransit.
- Immunocompromised residents who take on unnecessary risks to their health by spending hours in a packed room.
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For example, budget season is the most critical time of year for civic engagement. The ban on remote comments means the people most in need of an equitable city budget will be sidelined throughout the process.

The possibility that the ban on remote comments might only last months is no comfort to those who wish to comment on current City Council, Committee and Commission matters in order to ensure that quality of life in San Jose is maximized. I ask that you immediately restore virtual public comment to ensure that you and the City once again benefit from the voices silenced by your recent decision.

Joseph Lam

95135

You may not use my contact information for any purpose other than to respond to my concern regarding the topic listed above, nor may you share my address with any other organization(s) or individual(s).

—

This mail was sent on behalf of a San Jose resident via District 5 United

<https://www.district5united.org>

Community Working Together

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**Fw: Lisa E Hettler-Smith 95112 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/26/2025 10:28 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

---

**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 10:19 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Lisa E Hettler-Smith 95112 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 10:17 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Lisa E Hettler-Smith 95112 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

[External Email. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources. [Learn more](#)]

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

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Lisa E Hettler-Smith

95112

You may not use my contact information for any purpose other than to respond to my concern regarding the topic listed above, nor may you share my address with any other organization(s) or individual(s).

—

This mail was sent on behalf of a San Jose resident via District 5 United

<https://www.district5united.org>

Community Working Together

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**Fw: Patricia M. Blevins 95118- [REDACTED] - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/26/2025 11:39 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 11:29 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Patricia M. Blevins 95118- [REDACTED] - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 11:28 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Patricia M. Blevins 95118- [REDACTED] - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

I ask you to rise to the challenge rather than cave to bullies intent on stifling the input of disadvantaged communities. The City needs to immediately restore virtual public comment for all City Council, Committee, and Commission meetings.

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Why do the resident/taxpayer/voters (the residents who pay YOUR salary) have NO opportunity to express their

opinions and well researched comments at City Council meetings any longer? I request that you, as representing

your constituents, and NOT developers, realtors and union members, do the right thing and restore remote

access to all City Council meetings.

Patricia M. Blevins

95118-[REDACTED]

You may not use my contact information for any purpose other than to respond to my concern regarding the topic listed above, nor may you share my address with any other organization(s) or individual(s).

—

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**Fw: Dorothy Cassidy 95136 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/26/2025 12:37 PM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 12:35 PM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Dorothy Cassidy 95136 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 12:32 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Dorothy Cassidy 95136 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

[External Email. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources. [Learn more](#)]

Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

I ask you to rise to the challenge rather than cave to bullies intent on stifling the input of disadvantaged communities. The City needs to immediately restore virtual public comment for all City Council, Committee, and Commission meetings.

It is clear there is an effort to silence members of disadvantaged communities. Many residents rely on being able to provide virtual public comment due to reasons of disability, health, work schedules, parenting and other demands of modern life. The strategy appears to be to engage in racist and hateful speech in order to bully the Council into eliminating virtual public comment. The bullies scored a victory when the Council decided to eliminate this option without first seeking community input and not at the bequest from community members.

By eliminating remote access on the heels of restricting access to the council chambers in December, San Jose has fallen from a model of good government dedicated to promoting civic participation to a city displaying troubling behavior and giving the impression that hearing from its residents is a bother. We agree that the comments of a few bad actors are vile and have no place in a community meeting. Rather than using racist and hateful speech as an excuse to cut off community participation and hamper people's First Amendment right to petition their government, however, the City should rise to



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Dorothy Cassidy

95136

You may not use my contact information for any purpose other than to respond to my concern regarding the topic listed above, nor may you share my address with any other organization(s) or individual(s).

—

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**Fw: Robin Hahn 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Wed 8/27/2025 8:29 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 7:48 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Robin Hahn 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 6:29 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Robin Hahn 95135 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

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Robin Hahn

95135

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—

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**Fw: Heidi Gern 95123 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Wed 8/27/2025 8:28 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

---

**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 7:49 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Heidi Gern 95123 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 6:19 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Heidi Gern 95123 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

I ask you to rise to the challenge rather than cave to bullies intent on stifling the input of disadvantaged communities. The City needs to immediately restore virtual public comment for all City Council, Committee, and Commission meetings.

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Please hear and respect the voices of the 5th district community

Heidi Gern

95123

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—

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Community Working Together

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**FW: Janis Gemignani 95112 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

---

**From** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Wed 8/27/2025 2:49 PM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 2:46 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Janis Gemignani 95112 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Janis Gemignani  
95112

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Community Working Together

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**Fw: Sue 95126 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings**

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**From** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Date** Thu 8/28/2025 8:22 AM

**To** Rules and Open Government Committee Agendas <rulescommitteeagenda@sanjoseca.gov>

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**From:** City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 28, 2025 7:53:07 AM

**To:** Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** FW: Sue 95126 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

---

**From:** District 5 United [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 6:21 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

**Subject:** Sue 95126 - Restore Virtual Comments at City Council meetings

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Dear Mayor Mahan and San Jose City Council,

I ask you to rise to the challenge rather than cave to bullies intent on stifling the input of disadvantaged communities. The City needs to immediately restore virtual public comment for all City Council, Committee, and Commission meetings.

It is clear there is an effort to silence members of disadvantaged communities. Many residents rely on being able to provide virtual public comment due to reasons of disability, health, work schedules, parenting and other demands of modern life. The strategy appears to be to engage in racist and hateful speech in order to bully the Council into eliminating virtual public comment. The bullies scored a victory when the Council decided to eliminate this option without first seeking community input and not at the bequest from community members.

By eliminating remote access on the heels of restricting access to the council chambers in December, San Jose has fallen from a model of good government dedicated to promoting civic participation to a city displaying troubling behavior and giving the impression that hearing from its residents is a bother.

We agree that the comments of a few bad actors are vile and have no place in a community meeting. Rather than using racist and hateful speech as an excuse to cut off community participation and hamper people's First Amendment right to petition their government, however, the City should rise to the challenge of finding solutions to preserve access for everyone while continuing to facilitate public comment by providing a virtual option.

Ending the process of remote participation, is to deny a large segment of the community the opportunity to participate in our democratic process. Some examples include:

- Disabled residents who rely on technology to speak, or who otherwise have to arrange rides with Paratransit.
- Immunocompromised residents who take on unnecessary risks to their health by spending hours in a packed room.
- Working people without the ability to arrange their schedules around hours long council meetings.
- Parents with small children who can't take time off to attend City meetings.

For example, budget season is the most critical time of year for civic engagement. The ban on remote comments means the people most in need of an equitable city budget will be sidelined throughout the process.

The possibility that the ban on remote comments might only last months is no comfort to those who wish to comment on current City Council, Committee and Commission matters in order to ensure that quality of life in San Jose is maximized. I ask that you immediately restore virtual public comment to ensure that you and the City once again benefit from the voices silenced by your recent decision.

Sue  
95126

You may not use my contact information for any purpose other than to respond to my concern regarding the topic listed above, nor may you share my address with any other organization(s) or individual(s).

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