

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS
ESTABLISHING A POLICY GOVERNING ACCESS TO PUBLIC MEETINGS
AND PUBLIC RECORDS**

WHEREAS, transparency in decision making is a cornerstone of democracy; and

WHEREAS, elected officials, commissions, and other policy bodies of the City undertake the people's business and in so doing commit themselves to the highest principles of transparency so that every citizen can know and participate in democracy at the local level; and

WHEREAS, California has a long tradition of laws designed to protect the public's access to the workings of government, and each generation of elected officials and municipal employees should commit themselves to the principles of transparency and seek to implement new approaches that keep the public informed about policy decisions. Experience teaches that as government evolves, so must the laws designed to ensure that the workings of local government remain visible to all; and

WHEREAS, transparency in governmental policy decisions is paramount and only in rare and unusual circumstances should decisions made on behalf of the people take place out of public view. Those circumstances should be carefully and narrowly defined; and

WHEREAS, openness in government is the basis for accountability, improved decision-making, public trust and informed participation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council enacts this Policy to affirm and expand on a culture of open, transparent and collaborative government in the City of Los Altos; and

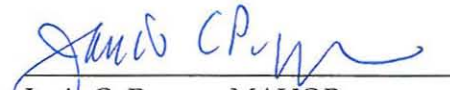
WHEREAS, private entities, individuals, employees and officials of the City have rights to privacy that must be respected. However, when a person or entity is before a policy body, that person, and the public, has the right to an open and public process.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Los Altos hereby authorizes the following:

1. That the "Policy of the City of Los Altos Regarding Openness in City Government" attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by this reference be adopted.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the 13th day of January, 2015 by the following vote:

AYES: BRUINS, MORDO, PEPPER, PROCHNOW, SATTERLEE
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE



Janis C. Pepper, MAYOR

Attest:



Jon Maginot, CMC, CITY CLERK

A POLICY OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS REGARDING OPENNESS IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Section 1 The Brown Act

All meetings of city policy bodies (City Council, Commissions, and Committees) shall be open and public, and governed by the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Sections 54950 et. seq.). The Brown Act serves as a floor, not a ceiling, for transparency and openness. Policies are provided here that go beyond the minimum requirements of law to instill public confidence and increase transparency.

The City will maintain an “Open Government” page on the City website. This policy will be available on that site as well as a brief summary of the Brown Act.

Section 2 Posting of Agendas

At least eight (8) calendar days before a regular City Council meeting, a final agenda and accompanying materials shall be posted on the City’s website. The agenda will be provided to the media. This final agenda shall contain a meaningful description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting and all related items, including staff reports, proposals and contracts that will be considered for action. Agendas shall specify for each item of business the proposed action or a statement the item is for discussion only. The agenda shall also be made available for public inspection and copying at both public libraries and City Hall during normal business hours.

Section 3 Public Noticing

[This section will be updated after review, and recommendations are received, by the PTC and DRC to the City Council in March 2015 (approximately).]

Section 4 Comments on Agenda Items

Members of the public may submit statements and/or comments regarding any item on City Council, Commission, and/or Committee meeting agendas.

Staff responses to questions from Council members as well as statements or comments by members of the public on City Council agenda items will be posted on the City’s website as soon as practical, and no later than noon on the day of the Council meeting, provided the

questions have been received by 9 am on the day prior to the Council meeting. Questions and responses received after this time period will be posted on the City's website as soon as practical. Questions and comments will be posted in a manner that will attempt to protect the privacy of the submitter.

Section 5 Recording of Meetings and Retention of Recordings

All Regular and Special Meetings of the City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission that are held in the Community Chambers shall be video recorded. All regular meetings of Commissions and Committees shall be audio recorded. All other public meetings of the City Council and other Commissions and Committees meetings shall be audio recorded as practical. Each such video and audio recording shall be a public record subject to inspection pursuant to the California Public Records Act. The video recording of meetings of the City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission shall be made available within one week of the meeting by webcast on the City's website and shall remain on the City's website permanently. The audio and video record of all meetings under this section shall be kept permanently.

Section 6 Index of City Records

The City shall maintain a public records index that identifies the types of information and documents maintained by the City and its departments, agencies, task forces, commissions and elected officers. The index shall be for the use of City officials, staff and the general public, and shall be organized to permit a general understanding of the types of information maintained, by which officials and departments, for which purposes and for what periods of retention. The City Clerk shall be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of this records index. The index shall be continuously maintained on the City's website and the two Los Altos libraries.

Section 7 Public Records Requests

Requests for public records, including a brief description of the request, identification of the requester, the date requested, whether the request was granted, partially granted or denied, and the date the request was fulfilled, shall be posted on the City's website. This list shall be updated at least quarterly.

Section 8
Open Government Standing Committee

The Mayor shall appoint two City Council members to serve on an ad hoc Open Government Committee during the piloting of this Open Government policy. Upon adoption of a final policy or an ordinance, the Mayor shall appoint two City Council members to serve on a standing Open Government Committee. The term of each appointed member shall be two years. The Committee shall advise the City Council and provide information to the City Manager on potential ways in which to implement the Open Government Policy. The Committee shall develop appropriate goals to ensure practical and timely implementation of this Policy. The Committee shall propose to the City Council amendments to this Policy. The Committee shall report to the City Council at least once annually on any practical or policy problems encountered in the administration of this Policy.

Section 9
Open Government Policy Annual Review

This Open Government Policy will be reviewed by the City Council at the first meeting in May each year. The review may also be called earlier at the request of the Open Government Committee. The review will include discussion about the cost and impact on City staff of implementing this policy, consideration of additional open government and transparency sections to the policy, and a determination as to when it might be appropriate to adopt the policy as a City ordinance.