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CITY COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

Date: February 13, 2025

To: Cupertino City Council
From: Kirsten Squarcia, City Clerk
CC: Pamela Wu, City Manager

Re: Analysis of City Council Meetings (2017-2024)

Purpose

This memorandum provides an analysis of City Council meetings from 2017 through 2024, highlighting trends in meeting types, frequency, and duration. The memo also discusses the fiscal impact of conducting meetings, which includes costs for staff time, technology, and public notices, with higher costs linked to longer and more frequent meetings.

Key Points

- The City Council typically meets twice a month, with occasional special meetings for study sessions, closed sessions, workshops, or to address scheduling conflicts.
- Overall, more meetings were held than scheduled, with a notable spike in 2022 (64 meetings).
- The frequency of televised meetings peaked in 2021 (34 meetings) but declined to 24 meetings in 2024.
- The average duration of televised meetings varied, reaching its longest in 2019 (6 hours and 18 minutes) and decreasing to 3 hours and 45 minutes in 2024.
- The frequency of closed sessions, which are not televised, peaked in 2021 and 2022 (26 each) but dropped significantly in 2023 to 4 sessions.

Trends suggest an increase in meetings and discussions in 2021-2022, with a decline in 2024.

City Council Meeting Schedule

The City Council meets regularly twice a month, with meetings scheduled on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6:45 p.m. (Cupertino Municipal Code Section 2.04.010). Special City Council meetings are held on an as-needed basis outside of the regular meeting schedule. These may include study sessions for in-depth discussions on topics or issues, closed sessions that are

not open to the public, and workshops on Council goals. The Council may also hold special meetings to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

Frequency of Televised Meetings

The City broadcasts City Council meetings live from Cupertino Community Hall (10350 Torre Avenue). The following charts show the total number of City Council meetings that were held from 2017 to 2024.

Chart 1, compares the number of actual televised meetings to scheduled. The actual meetings held are closer to the scheduled amount, peaking in 2021 (34 actual meetings). The lowest recorded number was in 2017 (23 meetings), while in 2024, there was a decrease to 24 meetings. The trend has shown a gradual decline from 2021 to 2024, with 2024 having the lowest number of meetings.

Chart 1.

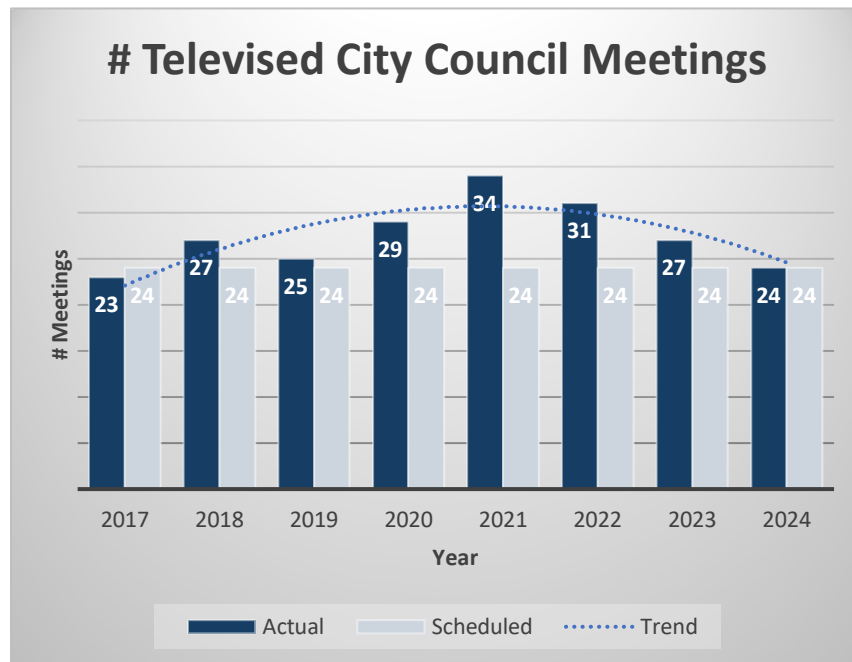
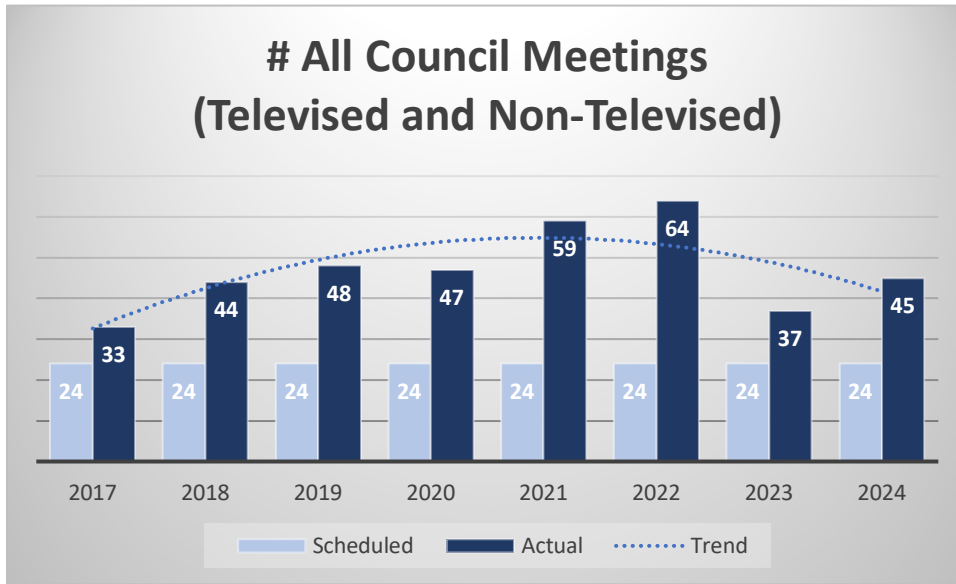


Chart 2.



This chart compares the overall number of meetings occurring compared to the number of meetings that were scheduled. It highlights a significantly higher number of meetings held than were scheduled, peaking in 2022 (64 actual meetings).

Frequency of Closed Session Meetings

A city council closed session is a meeting that is not open to the public and is held to discuss confidential matters. Closed sessions can be used for personnel matters, litigation, and other sensitive topics. These meetings are not televised. The following chart summarizes the frequency of closed session meetings held from 2017-2024.

Chart 4.

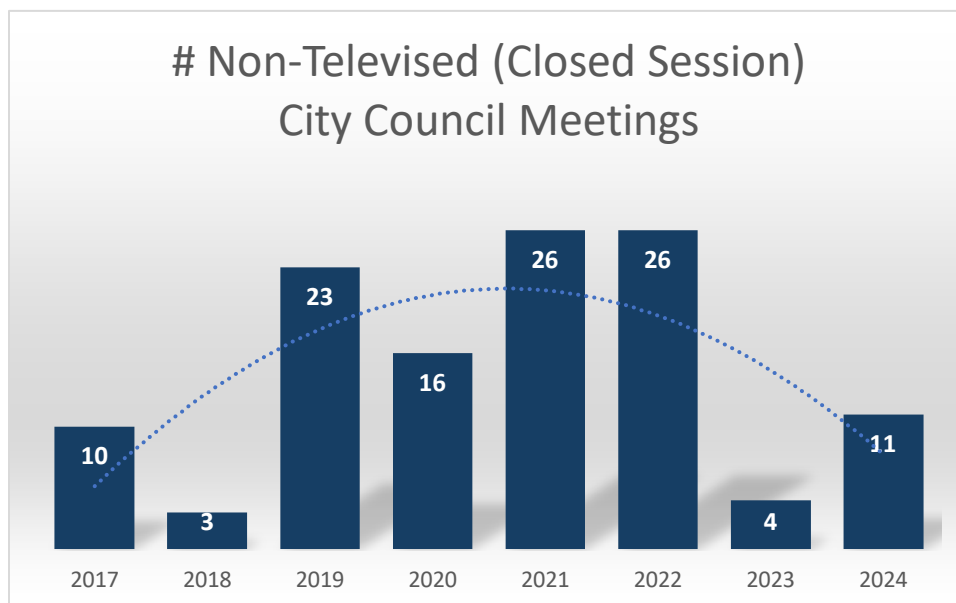


Chart 4 shows that the lowest number of closed sessions was in 2018 (3), while the highest occurred in 2021 and 2022 (26 each). There was an increase in closed sessions from 2018 to 2019, followed by continued high numbers through 2022. A significant drop in 2023 (4 closed sessions) suggests fewer confidential matters requiring private discussions.

Trends and Observations

The highest number of televised meetings occurred in 2021 (34) and the highest number of meetings overall occurred in 2022 (64). There are various potential reasons that could have contributed to this including an increase in Council activities or policy discussions and/or confidential matters during those years. The spike in average meeting duration in 2019 may have been attributed to extended discussions or more agenda items requiring deliberation. The recent decline in both the number of meetings and meeting duration in 2024 may suggest increased efficiency, fewer agenda items, or other external factors affecting meeting schedules.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impacts of City Council meetings include costs related to staff time, technology, and public notices. Technology costs include maintaining online meeting platforms, live streaming capabilities, and recording equipment. The costs associated with noticing include notices in newspapers or mailers to comply with state law. Increased frequency and longer meetings typically lead to higher staff costs, especially for meetings requiring support from the City's Video Division and KMVT Consultants for broadcast services.

Prepared by: Kirsten Squarcia, City Clerk

Reviewed by: Astrid Robles, Senior Management Analyst

Approved for Submission by: Pamela Wu, City Manager