



SB 411 Frequently Asked Questions

Government Code Section 54953.8

Last Updated December 2023

Helpful Terms & Definitions

Term	Definition
Hybrid	A quorum of the board meets in-person within the Neighborhood Council's boundaries, and the rest of the board members join the meeting via teleconference
In-Person	All board members meet within the Neighborhood Council's boundaries and all board members attend in-person
In-Person With Hybrid Option for the Public	All board members meet in-person at a location within their boundaries and offer the option for only the public to join the meeting virtually (allows for public comment in-person and via teleconference).
Teleconference	All board members meet virtually with at least a quorum of the board meeting from locations within the Neighborhood Council's boundaries
Just Cause	Individual board members can participate remotely when caregiving of a family member, a contagious illness, a physical or mental disability, or LEA-related travel prevents them from appearing in person. Just cause may not be used for more than two meetings per calendar year per Board member.
Emergency	Individual board members can participate remotely when there is a physical or family medical emergency that prevents them from appearing in person. The board member must describe the emergency in approximately 20 words without disclosing any personal medical information. Board must take action to approve the member's request. A board member may not claim emergency circumstances more than three consecutive months OR 20 percent of the regular meetings within a calendar year.

SB 411 Overview

What is SB 411?

SB 411 is a bill passed through the California State Government that allows Neighborhood Councils to meet virtually through teleconferencing. This bill was signed by California Governor Gavin Newsom in October 2023, and was approved by the Los Angeles City Council in November 2023. You can read the complete bill language [here](#).

When will SB 411 expire?

The provisions in SB 411 expire on January 1, 2026.

Taking Action on SB 411

What is the required number of votes for the approval of a virtual meeting?

If a Neighborhood Council wishes to opt for virtual meetings conducted via teleconference, it must secure a 2/3 majority approval of the total board seats as specified by the Neighborhood Council's bylaws. For example, if the council has a total of 9 board seats, a minimum of 6 board members must vote "yes" to meet virtually. This 2/3 majority vote aligns with the current legislative requirements.

Will the Department provide exact verbiage for a motion to secure a 2/3 majority vote in favor of teleconferencing?

Yes, you can use the following language:

“Discussion and Possible Action to authorize the use of teleconferencing for Neighborhood Council meetings, including board meetings and committee meetings, in accordance with the rules established by Senate Bill 411.”

In the motion, please include a justification for why you will be using teleconferencing i.e., increased accessibility, and more community engagement.

What is an appropriate justification?

Justification for why the Neighborhood Council will be using teleconferencing can include increased accessibility, increased community engagement, health and safety of the participants, etc.

Is there a scenario or justification from a Neighborhood Council (NC) that would be deemed unacceptable by the City Council for hosting virtual meetings?

Following the approval of a motion with the provided justification, according to the language of SB 411, the City Council reserves the right to deny approval for virtual meetings. Noteworthy, justifications such as a desire for reduced meeting participation may result in disapproval by the City Council. It's crucial to emphasize that clear violations of the law will not be deemed acceptable justifications for conducting virtual meetings.

If the Neighborhood Council has previously acted, securing a 2/3 majority vote of the entire board in favor of teleconferencing before the passage of SB411, is it necessary to revisit this decision in light of SB411 now being in effect?

Yes, for consistency and to ensure that the entire (i.e. all seats of the board) board had 2/3 vote in the affirmative with justification consistent with the language in the Government Code.

Is it a requirement for the Neighborhood Council to specify which meetings will utilize teleconferencing through a formal vote? After deciding to incorporate teleconferencing, is a subsequent vote necessary to convene an in-person meeting?

It's important to note that SB411 exclusively pertains to virtual meetings and does not impact in-person gatherings. Therefore, a 2/3 vote is not required to conduct meetings in person.

Although not required, as a good practice, a Neighborhood Council and its committees can consider approving a meeting calendar for the year so that all members and stakeholders are clear about when and how they can expect to join a meeting. The board may consider adding the calendar to their website.

Agendas for all teleconference meetings shall follow appropriate notice protocols.

Once a board has cast a vote to transition to virtual meetings, is there a set timeline for reauthorization, or does the vote grant permission for virtual meetings indefinitely?

Once the board has taken the initial action to approve virtual meetings, there is no need to revisit and re-approve the motion.

Upon taking action, who are the relevant parties that the Neighborhood Council needs to notify, and what specific information or documents should be submitted?

Upon the Neighborhood Council having secured a 2/3 majority vote to pass a motion to approve teleconferencing under SB 411, the Neighborhood Council must communicate this decision to the City Council. This notification process involves the submission of a Community Impact Statement (CIS) specifically designated for CF23-1114.

Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, and SB 411

Does SB 411 apply or how does this apply to committees? How does it apply to ad hoc committees? Does the board need to have a vote specifically for committees to meet virtually?

The board will determine if their committees are included in a vote to have teleconferencing under SB411. Please note: Standing Committees are subject to the Brown Act. True Ad Hoc Committees are not subject to the Brown Act. To learn more about the Brown Act and Ad Hoc Committees reference [the Brown Act and NC's Guiding Document](#).

Meeting Virtually Under SB 411

Is it necessary to update our agenda template if our Neighborhood Council is meeting virtually?

Yes. You can find a sample template [here](#).

Can Neighborhood Councils conduct a hybrid meeting?

SB411 (Government Code Section 54953.8) allows Neighborhood Councils to have the option to teleconference 100% virtually without complying with traditional teleconferencing rules under the Brown Act. However, for hybrid meetings, specific rules must be followed. SB 411 does not exempt NC's from complying with stringent rules for hybrid meetings outlined in AB2449. Under AB 2449, when a **quorum** of the board convenes in-person at a physical location within the Neighborhood Council boundaries, adherence to the teleconferencing rule established under AB2449 is mandatory (e.g. a limited number of teleconferencing opportunities and only upon a showing of "just cause" or an "emergency"). However, if less than a quorum of a board meets in-person, at a physical location, under SB 411, other board members will be allowed to join virtually without following the teleconferencing rules stated in AB 2449. Neighborhood Councils are strongly advised to engage with their Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate (NEA) and consult with the Office of the City Attorney to ensure compliance with the law.

See Helpful Terms & Definitions above for more information on hybrid meeting, just cause, and emergency.

If the board meets virtually, can the board continue to have an in-person location to broadcast the meeting?

Once a board has voted to have the option to meet virtually following SB411, the NC can decide which meeting they will conduct in-person or virtually. If the meeting is scheduled as a virtual meeting it may be that the board receives a request from a stakeholder who needs special accommodations to join the virtual meeting. In this case, the legislative body should make reasonable efforts to accommodate public requests for participation, which may include providing a publicly accessible location (i.e. public library, recreation center, community room), necessary technology, or information on available resources for participation. Please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment if special accommodations are requested.

In-Person Meeting Requirements of SB 411

SB 411 mandates that the Neighborhood Council must hold an in-person meeting once a year. Is this requirement based on the calendar year, fiscal year, or a 12-month period?

This requirement is based on the calendar year, specifically from January 1st to December 31st. If the council has already conducted an in-person meeting within the current calendar year, there is no further obligation to meet in person for the remainder of 2023. However, in the 2024 calendar year, the Neighborhood Council will be required to hold at least one in-person meeting as part of the annual compliance with SB 411.

If the NC has already met (in person) this year, 2023, is that requirement satisfied?

Yes, if the Neighborhood Council has already held an in-person meeting in the year 2023, then the requirement for an in-person meeting for 2023 is considered satisfied.

Other Questions about SB 411

Is there a possibility for Neighborhood Councils to allocate funds from their budget to facilitate remote meetings, covering expenses such as hot spots, tablets, and internet connectivity?

To initiate this process, the Neighborhood Council will need to collaborate with the Office of the City Clerk's NC Funding division. This collaboration involves updating the inventory to account for any equipment purchases and establishing an efficient check-in and check-out system.

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If you have any questions or concerns about SB 411 not covered in this document, please contact your Neighborhood Empowerment Advocate.