

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: May 6, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Agenda Review Committee
Subject: Responsible Department: Acting City Manger/Assistant City Manager/City Clerk
 Consideration of City Council Summer Recess

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council consider approval of a summer recess and authorize the cancellation of its July 15th 2025 and August 5th 2025 Regular Meetings, and Schedule a regular meeting for August 19th 2025.

SUMMARY:

The City Council, which regularly meets the first and third Tuesday of each month, has, for many years, cancelled one of the two Council meetings in August to allow staff and Council to schedule summer vacations as well as getting caught up with end of year fiscal reporting. Currently, the August 19, 2025 City Council was approved by the City Council earlier in the year for cancellation.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

It has been requested that due to the volume of workload and number of meetings held this year, and the upcoming items that will be completed by July 2025, that the City Council consider what other cities have similarly done and authorize a summer recess for two City Council meetings as suggested below:

- Cancellation of July 15th 2025
- Cancellation of August 5th 2025
- Schedule August 19th 2025 Regular City Council Meeting

The primary concern when cancelling City Council meetings is the impact it has on future meeting agendas. Planning for cancellations early allows staff to mitigate this impact and provides notice to the public in advance. City staff and the Agenda Review Committee reviewed the forward agendas and based on the input from department directors on upcoming agenda items, City staff is not aware of any timely issues that would preclude cancelling these dates. It is anticipated that the following major topics will be concluded by July:

- City Budget; anticipated to be completed by end of June or first meeting in July
- Capital Improvement Budget
- Action Plan for Goals
- Fire Reorganization (assuming successful completion of LAFCO process)
- Transition Completion of Garbage Services
- Consolidation of City Offices (Building Department to move to City Hall for streamlining of permitting processes and cross training of staff)

The past year has included not only regular City Council meetings, but Council and staff have held Special City Council Meetings (Closed Sessions); Standing Committee Meetings; Ad Hoc Committee Meetings; and Town Halls.

Convening During Recess

Cancellation of these regular meetings would not preclude the Mayor from calling a special or emergency meeting on any given date. Special meetings may be called with a minimum of 24 hours' notice. Emergency meetings may be called on shorter notice if a documented emergency exists which requires immediate City Council action.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

City staff has reached out to local Sonoma County cities as well as posted the question to other cities in the State of California and received the following information as attached.

In summary:

- Of the 33 California cities that responded, 15 cities go dark (one month with no meetings).
- Of the 8 Sonoma County cities, 1 city goes dark (one month with no meetings)
- Of the 8 Sonoma County cities, 5 cities cancel one meeting either during July or August

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date. The City has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items. The City will provide the appropriate legal notification of changes.

FISCAL IMPACT: Cancellation of a regularly scheduled Council meeting reduces the cost of staff's time in Agenda preparation and the cost of copying, uploading to the City website, and distribution of the Agenda. There are also savings from IT (audio/visual) in the estimated amount of \$2,850 as well as savings in costs for meetings requiring consultants time for agenda items.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council consider approval of declaring a summer recess and authorize the cancellation of its July 15th 2025 and August 5th 2025 Regular Meetings, and Schedule the regular meeting for August 19th 2025.

OPTIONS:

That the City Council

1. Deny the request and maintain the approved cancellation of the August 19th City Council Meeting
2. Provide direction to staff for consideration of other dates for a summer recess

ATTACHMENTS:

Results of Research of Other Cities

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 4-29-2025

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: 4-29-2025

This action is not subject to CEQA because it is an administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment, and it relates to government fiscal activities that do not

involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. (CEQA Guidelines § 15378(a), (b)(2), (b)(4) and (b)(5)).

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: 4/17/2025

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (if applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 4-29-2025

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 4-29-2025

	A	B	C	D	E
1	SUMMER RECESS SCHEDULES		CITY	RESPONSE	Entire Month
2	RESULTS OF CITY CLERK LIST SERVE				
3			Berkeley	Berkeley City Council does not meet in August.	X
4			Cloverdale	Tried to go dark; but scheduled meetings just in case; may still cancel	
5			Cotati	We only cancel one meeting in July, and which one varies	
6			Healdsburg	Healdsburg goes dark in July. It is discussed every December when the Council approves the meeting calendar for the following year. We have gone dark in July since 2017. We just include a paragraph in our staff report. "It is proposed that Council takes a recess in July. This is consistent with the approach taken the last eight years. The two meetings in July that would be cancelled are July 7, 2025 and July 21, 2025. A special meeting can always be called during that month if the need arises.	X
7			Hercules	Our meeting calendar is discussed and approved at our Council Meeting in December. The Council agreed to go dark in August. hat we have also done in the past, is voted at a July meeting to cancel one or both August meetings. For a long time, we had a couple of Council members that liked having at least one meeting date approved for August.	X
8			Hillsborough	Does not go dark.	
9			Irvine	We go dark the second meeting in August and December, and make other adjustments as part of our annual meeting calendar	
10			Irwindale	We do one summer recess and the 2 nd meetings of November and December.	X
11			Laguna Beach	When our City Council adopts its calendar each year, a 4-week break is baked in...it's been that way as long as I can remember. It used to be the middle of summer, but somewhere along the way it moved to the end of summer, by having only one meeting in mid-August and one meeting mid to late September.	
12			Livermore	Livermore adopts an annual calendar each year. In it, there is one meeting in August instead of two. Unless there is very compelling reason to have it, we cancel.	
13			Manteca	Cancels for summer Recess	X
14			Millbrae	One staff report at the beginning of the year; dark in August	X
15			Mission Viejo	Council Policy on going dark in the summer as well as we only hold the first meetings in November and December.	X
16			Montebello	We request approval from Council - this year = cancellation of APRIL 23, JULY 9, AND JULY 23	X
17			Napa	As part of our annual meeting calendar setting, simply cancel the meeting that occurs the first week in July, so that gives Council a break from Mid June to Mid July.	X
18			Petaluma	We skip the second meeting in August. It's in our charter to have Council approve a list of regular meeting dates at the beginning of the year, so we just leave that date off the list they approve	
19			Rancho Cucamonga	The City Council goes dark one meeting a month in July and August due to summer calendars and holiday conflicts. The City Clerk Services Department will provide the appropriate legal notification of changes.	X
20			Rohnert Park	Our council does not go dark, ever. We do cancel the second meeting in December	
21			Sacramento	Our council has a two week break in the summer and winter typically covering July 4 and December 25. The city charter is silent on how many meetings we have to have or when we have them. It just says that a majority of meetings must be after 5:00 PM. The council adopts there calendar annually which includes these breaks.	
22			San Rafael	We don't have a written policy, but we go dark the first meetings of July & August.	

	A	B	C	D	E
23			Santa Cruz	Our council is dark for all of July and the 2nd half of December. Council approves it when they approve the meeting calendar for the year.	X
24			Santa Fe Springs	The way we addressed this in our city was we created an ordinance that allowed us to set the meeting dates by resolution. Then, we adopted a resolution which sets the council meeting dates in advance. We do this at the end of each calendar year in preparation for the following year.	
25			Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa does not go dark. However, our meeting requirements are 2 meetings a month and not tied to say a pattern of the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, so we do occasionally have a 2-3 week period usually at the end of the year/beginning of the following year that there are no meetings. However, if there are time sensitive items that need to be before Council a meeting is scheduled.	
26			Sonoma	We go dark in July; this used to be the whole month, but now we cancel just the first meeting.	
27			South Lake Tahoe	The City Manager and I set the calendar for the following year. We factor in school holidays and life-work balance. This includes going dark in July	X
28			Thousand Oaks	The City Council observes an annual summer recess as noted on the adopted City Council calendar. This year, the summer recess will span from July 3, 2024, through August 26, 2024. The City's practice during lengthy breaks between City Council meetings is for the City Council to grant the City Manager authority by resolution (Attachment #1) to consider and, where appropriate, approve certain actions needed for the ongoing operation of the City within existing budgetary appropriations. These actions may include agreements, agreement extensions, and contracts.and contracts.consideration, and approvals would be consistent with City guidelines and practices.	X
29			Tiburon	Tiburon historically goes dark in July. We do not have a policy, but the Council adopts an annual calendar of regular meetings every January	X
30			Tulare	We do not currently do this, but our Executive Team just talked about possibly brining up this idea this year	
31			Upland	Cancels the second meeting in August and December.	
32			Vacaille	We cancel the first meeting in July. When we started that practice (probably 10 or more years ago), we began making an annual calendar of meetings for the Council's approval every January. The calendar includes the cancellation of the first meeting in July and any other meeting that fall on holidays or near them	
33			Windsor	Windsor does not "go dark" but we have historically cancelled the first meeting in July when its close to July 4th and either the second meeting in December and/or the first meeting in January. Really just depends on how the calendar falls for the year.	
34			Yucaipa	Every year in December, we take a resolution to Council which sets the calendar year for the following year. Cancel one meeting in July	
35			Menlo Park	Cancels either month of July or August	X