

**City of Garden Grove**

**INTER-DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

To: Matthew J. Fertal  
Dept: City Manager  
Subject: TIME ALLOTTED FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS AT CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

From: John D.R. Clark  
Dept: City Clerk  
Date: November 24, 2009

OBJECTIVE

To request City Council approval to amend the City Council's Manual of Procedure to reduce the time allotted to each public speaker from five minutes to three minutes.

BACKGROUND

The October 1, 2009, Manager's Memo to the City Council noted that while Garden Grove provides members of the public five minutes to address the Council during Oral Communications and/or Public Hearings, the majority of other cities surveyed allow three minutes per speaker for public comments. Staff previously submitted this issue for City Council consideration on May 31, 2005 (See attached staff report, Attachment 1.) At that time, the City Council chose not to modify the time limit.

The 2009 survey described in the October 1 Memo found the following: 1) Orange County cities: 68% = three minutes per speaker, 32% = five minutes per speaker; 2) statewide cities: 65% = three minutes per speaker, 35% = five minutes per speaker. (See attached 2009 surveys, Attachment 2.)

DISCUSSION

Staff has observed an increasing amount of time devoted to public comment, particularly during Oral Communications at the beginning of the City Council meeting, over the past two years. Although there is natural variance depending on the season and the agenda, public comment in various forms (Housing Authority, public hearings, and study sessions in addition to Oral Communications) frequently consumes at least 45 minutes to an hour each meeting.

While it is entirely a policy decision for the City Council to make, staff feels obligated to present the option of shortening the time allotment per speaker in order to facilitate a more efficient use of time. Lessening the allotment provides more opportunity for discussion and deliberation on substantive action items later in the agenda.

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### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

### RECOMMENDATION

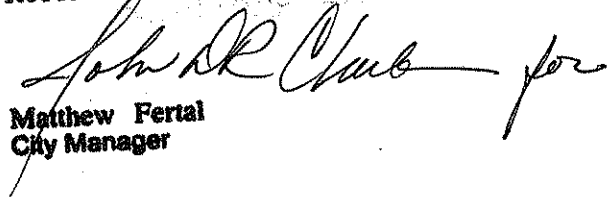
It is recommended that the City Council:

- Approve the attached Resolution amending Procedure D-4, "Time Limitation," in the Manual of Procedure for City Council Meetings, 2007 Edition, to reduce the time allotted to each speaker from five (5) minutes to three (3) minutes.



JOHN D.R. CLARK  
Director of Human Resources

**Recommended for Approval**



**Matthew Feral**  
**City Manager**

- Attachment 1: May 2005 Staff Report-Options for Changing the Time For Public Comments at City Council Meetings
- Attachment 2: 2009 Orange County Cities Survey and 2009 Statewide Cities Survey
- Attachment 3: Resolution
- Attachment 4: Manual of Procedure for City Council Meetings, 2007 Edition