Going Virtual with Public Meetings and Engagement

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You will hear a bit about:

• What we are doing? – virtual meetings – committee meetings – info sharing via webinars – website
• What we are learning? – pro tips, lessons learned
• What we could do more of to improve?
• What we want to do in the future?
Committee meetings: What we are doing

- **Policy Committee Meetings** – Canceled in March/April (action items, attendance, public comment, open meetings laws – consult with legal team)

- **Technical Staff Committees** – Using GoTo Webinar (peer sharing; data analysis & agency business). Been good to generate comfort with online meetings.

- **Training Staff** – assign a team to just “play with the software” – host practice meetings/use it for your own meetings

- **Preparing Committee Members (& Presenters)** – test audio/presentation controls – consider webcam, or slides with their photos & titles to share while they are speaking

- **Training the Attendees**: Tech “tour” at start; ex. tech training for older adults to show them how to use Zoom, including the phone-only option

- **Making it Interactive** – webinar polls, app-based polls like Mentimeter and Poll Everywhere
Sharing information: ARC Webinar Series

Weekly webinar series – sharing data & analysis on impacts of Covid-19
- Covid-19 data analysis tools
- Economic implications
- Impacts on travel patterns
- Municipal operations
- Virtual meetings
- Inclusive community engagement

https://atlantaregional.org/special-covid-19-notice-arc-operations-resources/
Providing tools for local governments

• Peer sharing: online/public discussions between member agencies about their Covid-19 response and current operations (challenges/needs & best practices)

• Sharing agency resources: tools like MS Teams, GoTo Webinar, telework trainings, virtual meeting guides
What are we learning?

• Try new things! (we all are learning)
• A bit of work upfront, but good for long-haul
• Dedicate a team to learning and sharing tech/virtual experience;—producer, plan, promote, training, host/moderator, presenter
• Online can increase attendance!
What could we do more of/improve upon?

- Get more creative -- which we will over time
- Learn from grassroots organizations
- Explore options to be even more inclusive - with our reach, with our audience, our presenters, and tech
What will we try in the future?

- Maintain some type of virtual option for all meetings
- Continue to offer regular webinars
- More online open houses, pairing GIS/map tools & online surveys
- Gather stories from people; via both web and phone
Always Important: define engagement goals

- Determine the purpose of your engagement effort
- Informing public; one-way information
- Collecting feedback on plans and projects
- Crowdsourcing ideas
- Collaborating on outcomes; like advisory groups
Additional Resources

- AMPO Public Involvement Working Group
- ARC’s Virtual Public Engagement Guide
- FHWA Virtual Public Engagement Toolkit
- TRB Public Engagement & Communications Committee – (formerly PI Comm.)
- International Association of Public Participation
- American Planning Association
- Municipal Associations, ICMA, state associations
QUESTIONS?

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