



Public Outreach and Engagement Committee

April 28, 2020

2 pm

AGENDA

Sign on to GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/977314669>

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1. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Nordvig
 - a. Statement regarding Virtual Meetings for PlanRVA: Ms. Heeter
 - b. Roll Call of Attendees: Mr. Kumar
2. Action Items & Updates
 - a. Appropriately Positioning PlanRVA for Public Engagement: Ms. Heeter
 - i. Social Media, Virtual Meeting & Webinar Tools, Content Tools & Information Sharing
 - b. Procedures for Virtual Meetings- PlanRVA & RRTPO: Ms. Heeter
 - i. Memorandum and Draft Procedures
 - ii. Opening Statement Template
 - iii. Guide to Attendees
 - c. Social Media Comment Guidelines: Mr. Kumar
 - d. Updates on Outreach Activities
 - i. [ConnectRVA 2045](#): Mr. Kumar
 - ii. [DontTrashCentralVirginia](#): Mr. Kumar
 - iii. [TogetherOneRegion](#): Ms. Heeter
 - iv. On the Horizon: Mr. Kumar & Ms. Heeter
3. Next Steps and Follow Ups
 - a. Commissioner Contact Forms, Profiles, Bios and Matching: Mr. Kumar
 - b. New Commissioner Orientation: Ms. Heeter
 - c. Increasing Public Engagement Capacity (FY2021): Ms. Heeter



Month	Activity	Notes
February May	Update Commissioner Roster and Complete Bio Sheets	Committee advises what information would be useful
February May	Kickoff Commissioner and Staff Spotlights	Staff Member: Sarah Stewart Commissioner:
February/March April/May (Virtual) August/September (In Person)	Schedule New Commissioner Orientation Sessions	Invite anyone to participate To cover overview of PlanRVA, programs and responsibilities; ways to connect and support
March/ April	Develop Social Media Policy/Guidelines	For Committee Review
April May/June	Draft PlanRVA Collateral Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Menu of Services & Programs - Value of Regional Planning - Strategic Planning Framework
April/ May	ID Specific Investments for FY2021	Training, Software, Subscriptions, Professional Services
May September/TBD	Identify List of Speaking Opportunities and Ongoing Partners for Outreach	Schedule for remainder of calendar 2020
June	Develop Newsletter Strategy	Audience, Frequency, Metrics



Memorandum

To: Members of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (PlanRVA), Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) and standing subcommittees

From: Martha Heeter, Executive Director for PlanRVA

Re: Electronic Meeting Procedures for PlanRVA and RRTPO

Background

PlanRVA has been coordinating with Eric Gregory, legal counsel to the Regional Commission to identify the best path forward for conducting agency public meetings in light of the March 12, 2020 State of Emergency Declaration by Governor Northam, recommendations from the federal and state government regarding social distancing and limitations on gatherings of 10 or more individuals to support the national, state and local efforts to reduce the spread of the Corona Virus, COVID-19 during the current pandemic. We recognize the importance of the public bodies to which we provide staff support in the decision making and approval process for federal and state administered programs.

The following memorandum provides a brief overview of the recent action taken by the General Assembly and the implications for continued convening of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization to which the PlanRVA staff provide support and the respective committees of both organizations during the State of Emergency Declaration.

General Assembly Action, Summarized

On April 22, 2020 the General Assembly approved legislation that allows all public bodies, including regional public bodies, to meet virtually during Governor declared emergencies. The measure describes the circumstances in which virtual meetings are permitted without the requirement to convene a physical quorum during the current COVID-19 declaration and future declarations that merit its intent.

The following conditions must be met in order to exercise the provisions of this measure:

1. The nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location;
2. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body... and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities;
3. The public body shall make available a recording or transcript of the meeting on its website; and
4. The nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means, and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held shall be stated in the minutes of the public body.



Further, the new authority requires the following public notice and access:

1. Notice to the public using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the public body;
2. Arrangements for public access to the meeting through electronic means including to the extent practicable, videoconferencing technology. If the means of communication allows, provide the public with an opportunity to comment; and
3. Public bodies must otherwise comply with provisions of [§2.2-3708.2](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Relevance to PlanRVA and the RRTPO

We have reviewed various assessments of current provisions in Virginia Code and the more recent guidance provided following the General Assembly's actions on April 22, 2020 and consulted with our legal counsel to make the following determination and recommendations to the members of PlanRVA and the RRTPO.

After careful review of items that were scheduled for inclusion or are customarily included in agendas of regular meetings of PlanRVA, the RRTPO and their respective bodies' subcommittees, we believe that it is imperative to convene members of these bodies to advance specific decisions that will assure the continuity of operations, functions, and purposes of the organizations.

In light of the current State of Emergency Declaration and ban of gatherings of 10 or more individuals and recommendations to implement social distancing practices where possible, we believe it is imprudent to convene a meeting of the members of PlanRVA or the RRTPO or the respective bodies' subcommittees for in-person meetings to conduct the business of the organizations.

Therefore, we believe it is appropriate to exercise authority provided by the recent General Assembly actions to convene virtual meetings of PlanRVA, the RRTPO, and their respective committees to address essential matters. In anticipation of this newly-granted authority, PlanRVA staff members have been working to deploy tools useful in the administration of virtual meetings and have developed procedures for assuring compliance with the Code of Virginia, the Governor's Executive Orders related to the State of Emergency Declaration, the opinion released by the Office of the Attorney General on March 20, 2020, and our own commitment to open access to and transparency in the conduct of governmental business. We have created the following procedures, practices and guidance documents with the intent of preserving the integrity of open access and transparency in this time and in support of our ongoing pursuit of increased public awareness and engagement in the efforts led by PlanRVA and the RRTPO.

Members of PlanRVA took action on April 9, 2020 to adopt a policy expressly providing for remote participation of members. While the action considered existing provisions of the Virginia Code and Freedom of Information Act, it provided a useful platform for staff to begin exploring options to provide to Commissioners for remote participation in meetings.



PlanRVA now holds a subscription to both GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar which are useful tools to convene virtual meetings. Each with features beneficial to information sharing and meeting facilitation, staff is learning the benefits of both platforms and the likely utility for convening meetings of our public bodies. Staff has provided guidance materials to support access to the platforms for both members of the public bodies we support as well as members of the general public and stakeholders. In addition, we have drafted procedures for conducting virtual meetings that comply with the regulation and guidance regarding electronic meetings which are enclosed.

Requested Action

While we have designed these procedures to suit the individual needs and purposes of the public bodies we support, we have intentionally designed them to be consistent across the agency. We believe this will more strongly support open access among members of the public interested in following the work of PlanRVA and the RRTPO during this time and beyond. This consistency will also aid in our own operational streamlining to assure consistency across the agency in how we conduct our business. We intend to continue the practices that make sense beyond the current State of Emergency Declaration and would like to continue to implement the strategies that encourage public awareness of and involvement in the regional decision-making process. This is consistent with the intent of the PlanRVA Strategic Planning Framework and the vision of the Public Outreach and Engagement Committee as well as the Public Engagement Plan adopted by the RRTPO on XXXXX.

We are submitting these policies and procedures for consideration and approval, as appropriate; the schedule below outlines the proposed timeline for each of the bodies to review and respond to the recommended procedures. We hope that ongoing review and improvement of these procedures will help staff to learn from this new practices and that we can increase opportunities to engage with the public even during emergencies such as we are currently experiencing. At this time, we expect these procedures to be in effect during the current Declaration, through June 10, 2020 and potentially extended beyond the expiration of the current Declaration.



Procedures for Electronic Meetings

Notice of Meetings

Notice of meetings of public bodies supported by PlanRVA will be given in accordance with applicable law and the bodies' Bylaws. In general, notice will be provided at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting and include the proposed agenda and meeting materials, as well as confirmation of the date and time and instructions to access the meeting. This notice will be posted on the PlanRVA website, links to which will be distributed to all members, alternates, interested parties, and our media contact lists, assuring that members of the body and the public are notified concurrently.

Contents of the Notice will include:

- a. Date and time of the meeting
- b. Electronic means by which the meeting will be held and instructions for joining the meeting as a participant or observer
- c. Method by which the meeting agenda and materials can be accessed
- d. Public participation process for meetings including the method(s) by which comments may be provided by members of the public before, during and after the meeting

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Public Participation

Members of the public are invited to participate in public meetings of PlanRVA, the RRTPO, and their respective committees. The following are new ways members of the public can participate in and follow the business of PlanRVA and the RRTPO during this time:

Anyone wishing to participate as an observer in a public meeting may do so. They should register with PlanRVA staff to get access to the meeting instructions and may sign on online or dial in by phone. Anyone wishing to submit comments prior to the meeting may do so by email. Comments received by 5 pm the business day preceding the meeting will be provided to members of the public body and included in the administrative record.

Members of the public may use the chat feature in the online platform to submit questions or comments during the meeting. These will be recorded and included in the administrative record.

Finally, agendas will be modified to offer two opportunities for members to address the bodies during the meeting: at the beginning to address members regarding agenda items and at the end to raise any other issues not included in the day's meeting agenda, as is customary.

Agenda Format

In order to clearly communicate the electronic means by which the meeting will occur, the Agenda itself will include the following information, in addition to the regular order of business and discussion/action items:



- a. Notification of the electronic means for hosting the meeting including access information
 - i. *The meeting scheduled for [Month Day, Year] of the [Public Body] will be held via [Online Platform] pursuant to provisions of Virginia Code Section [§2.2-3708.2](#) and in light of the Governor's March 12, 2020 State of Emergency Declaration for COVID-19.*
- b. Public Announcement made by the presiding officer, administrator or clerk/secretary at the beginning of the meeting (template script enclosed)
- c. Certification that the procedures were followed to adequately notify the public (following certification of quorum agenda item)
- d. Roll call of those participating as a member of the body in the call and invitation to others to identify themselves
- e. Statement concerning public comments submitted via e-mail or via online meeting platforms will be shared with members of the public body and included in the agency's administrative record.
- f. Open the floor for any member of the public to address the body regarding any matter included on the agenda for the meeting
- g. *All planned agenda items*
- h. Open the floor for any member of the public to address the body regarding any matter germane to the body but not specifically included in the agenda

Voting

At the appropriate time, the Chair will call upon members of the body to introduce a motion addressing the action item. Following a motion and a second, discussion may ensue, ultimately resulting in a call for a vote. Each vote taken during an electronic meeting must be a roll call vote, with each member's name and vote recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes of each meeting shall conform to the normal standards of minutes recorded for the body. Additional documentation should include:

- a. The fact that the meeting was held as an electronic meeting pursuant to the authority and reference the specific disaster Declaration;
- b. The type of electronic means by which the meeting was held; and



- c. Each member of the public body who participated in the meeting. Other participants in the meeting as observers may identify themselves and if so, will be included in the record.

In addition to written record of the meeting, audio/video recording will be posted within 48 hours of the meeting's conclusion on the PlanRVA website (along with the written records, once approved).

The body may approve the minutes of an electronic meeting at a subsequent electronic meeting or one that is held in person.

Expiration

Procedures shall only take effect in the event of a State of Emergency Declaration pursuant to VA Code whereby electronic means of hosting meetings of the public body is the only practicable way to continue the conduct of the organization and achieve other objectives to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community and the body's members and staff.



COVID-19 Public Engagement Update

As we all learn to navigate new challenges presented during the COVID-19 pandemic, PlanRVA is aware of potential limitations for public engagement. Traditional methods for the public to become both aware of and participate in the activities of the agency are not always possible during this time of physical distancing.

At PlanRVA, we are aware of that and have been working for some time to provide means by which the public can engage in our work. We see this as an opportunity to look at public engagement with a fresh lens. There are many ways to be a part of the planning process for the Richmond region and many of those allow participation remotely, via electronic or telecommunications means, which have not been available or as widely utilized in the past.

The Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization, which is staffed by PlanRVA, updated its Public Engagement Plan in late 2019 and it includes many ways to get involved that don't require direct contact with the staff and elected officials or travel to a singular location for a meeting. This Plan serves as a roadmap for all activities of PlanRVA intended to raise public awareness and engagement. Appendix B of the Plan identifies a variety of techniques to make sure YOU can stay involved in our work.

We hope to continue the rollout of new options for the public to be energized and engage in our planning efforts. Our goals are to:

1. Provide Robust and Creative Opportunities to Engage;
2. Inform and Educate the Public; and to
3. Foster Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

We continue to value public engagement and encourage our partners to provide feedback on our work. Our goal is to evaluate the best tools available for maximum participation and accessibility to our meetings and provide those to the public in a transparent manner.

Following action taken by the General Assembly on March 22, 2020, we're launching a new way to follow what's happening with the business of PlanRVA and the RRTPO. Effective immediately, all meetings of public bodies supported by PlanRVA will occur virtually, though the online GoToMeeting or GoToWebinar platforms.

Any member or alternate of the PlanRVA Regional Commission, its subcommittees, the RRTPO and its subcommittees will be provided information via Outlook calendar invite to participate in your respective meeting online.

Members of the public, including our interested parties and media contacts are also invited to participate as an observer. Recordings of all meetings will be posted within 48 hours of the conclusion of the meeting.



Here are a few pro tips to be sure everyone is practicing good etiquette for online meetings:

- When you join the meeting, please mute yourself in order to keep background noise and feedback to a minimum. You can always unmute yourself to ask questions or speak when called upon by the facilitator.
- Feel free to use the chat feature liberally for comments and questions: it's a helpful tool to feel connected and makes communication easy.
- When interacting with the facilitator or other participants verbally or via the chat feature, address them by name, for the sake of clarity.
- Identify yourself when speaking. This will help us assure our records are accurate.
- We will not record the meeting without first making an announcement. All meetings, whether recorded via audio-visual or other electronic communications means, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and may be posted online or provided upon request to anyone who requests it.
- Dress however you're most comfortable. Be aware that the video feature does capture your image as well as your physical setting.

Other Tips

- If your connection is poor, try logging off and re-joining the meeting. Sometimes everyone joining at the same time slows transfer of audio and video data. Be aware not all connection speeds are the same among participants so delays might occur.
- Use the menus to adjust settings for sound, background features, etc.

See the reverse page for more tips on how to sign into a meeting online or by phone.

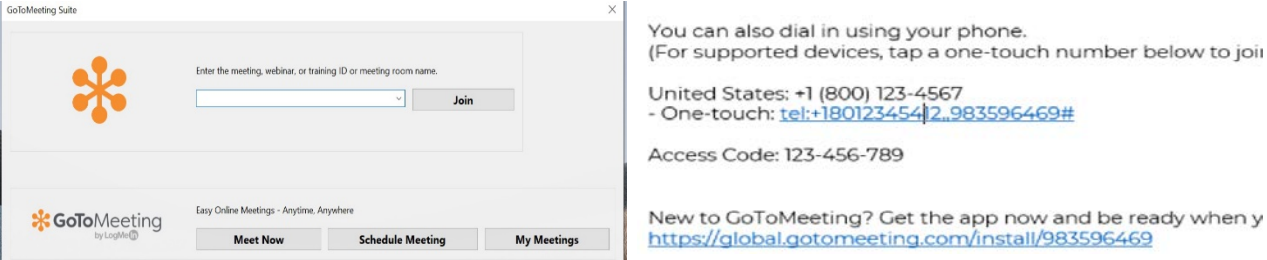
GoToMeeting Quick Guide for Attendees

A few things you need to know before joining your first GoToMeeting online meeting:

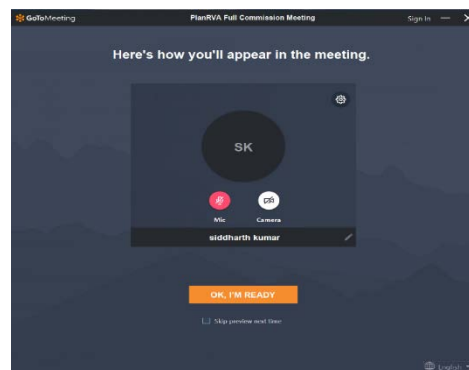
- 1) Download the GoToMeeting app or go to the website below and click join meeting at the top right corner



- 2) Be prepared and join the meeting a few minutes early to make sure you have everything you need. Check if your audio and video works.

- 3) 

- 4) Join the meeting by opening the app and entering the meeting ID you received in an email from the meeting organizer. The invitation will also include instructions for using the phone or your computer's mic and speakers (VoIP) for audio.
- 5) If the option to dial-in is offered and you'd like to use it, call in using the telephone number and access code shown. Enter the **audio PIN if provided**.
- 6) Interacting during the meeting: you can mute yourself when you're not speaking. If you dialed in using a phone, you'll need to use the **audio PIN, if provided** to mute your line via the GoToMeeting controls. If you are muted or don't want to interrupt the speaker, you can use the chat feature to communicate.
- 7) If you are using the app you will see this screen below. You have the option to click mic off or camera off below during the meeting.



If you have any questions, please refer to this youtube video or the support page below:

[GoToMeeting - How to Join a Meeting](#)

[Support page](#)

Opening Statement for Electronic Meetings

Virginia law requires and authorizes local and regional governing bodies and other public entities to conduct their meetings during a public disaster or emergency in manners which are consistent with providing continuity of government and operations in a safe and healthy manner, with the public safety, health and welfare in mind for the governing body and all attendees/interested parties, in compliance with open government requirements.

The convening of the _____ today has been determined necessary in order to continue the necessary business of the organization. We believe the matters included on the agenda address important/essential matters of continuing the work of government and therefore it is appropriate to convene during this time.

The bylaws of the _____ define a quorum of the body to be _____ of the _____ total members. The 2020 COVID-19 virus makes it impractical and unsafe, even potentially life-threatening, for a quorum of this size to physically assemble in one location, pursuant to [Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2\(A\)\(3\)](#). Further, the virus makes it impractical and unsafe, as well as potentially life-threatening, for the public, and the agency's staff, to gather in the same location to participate in this meeting. The health, safety, and welfare of our community is of paramount importance.

Therefore, we have determined the appropriateness and eligibility to conduct today's meeting of the _____ electronically pursuant to the provisions of Virginia Code [§ 2.2-3708.2](#) and related legislation approved by the General Assembly of Virginia, and in light of the Governor's March 12, 2020 State of Emergency Declaration for COVID-19. While we do not know the exact duration of the current practice of electronic meetings, we will continue to function in this manner until such time as it is deemed advisable to return to in person meetings. At this time, we expect meetings to occur in electronic format through the current Declaration, or June 10, 2020.

In order to uphold our commitment to the requirements and intent of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, we have taken care to provide notice of this meeting and the means by which we are virtually gathered to members of the public. Notice was provided on _____ through posting on the PlanRVA website and _____ distribution of email notification to members, alternates, and known interested parties, including the media.

In order to comply with the provisions of Virginia Code and to improve accessibility to the discussions intended for today, this meeting will be recorded. Audio (visual) recordings of the meeting will be posted on the PlanRVA website within 48 hours of this meeting.

Any members of the public wishing to address the _____ were invited to submit comments via email until the close of business one day prior to the meeting in order to be reviewed and addressed during this meeting. Anyone participating as an observer during the meeting today may submit comments or questions at any time during the meeting via email at _____ or by using the online chat functions of the meeting platform. Those individuals who are observing by phone may be called upon to address the _____ with their questions or comments. All comments and questions submitted during the meeting will be reviewed following the meeting and to the extent practical, responses will be provided and posted on the PlanRVA website.

We ask that everyone identify themselves first when speaking so we can more accurately record the activities of the meeting. All lines have been muted by the administrator to minimize additional noise and feedback. You may unmute your line at any time to request acknowledgement from the chair. Those who have signed in to the online platform may request acknowledgement by using the "raise hand" feature in the application. Staff will be monitoring the chat and raise hand functions throughout the meeting to assure we do not overlook anyone wishing to participate in the discussion.

I will now ask our clerk to certify we have followed the approved procedures for appropriate notice of this meeting and the means by which we are convening.

Now, please indicate your presence by saying "AYE" when your name is called during a roll call. Anyone who wishes to identify themselves following the roll call of members will be invited to do so.

Does anyone have any questions regarding the process for assuring effective facilitation of this meeting or for how members of the public may participate?



Profiles questionnaire: Commissioners

1. Tell us about who you are/what you do in 100 words or less
2. What other regional board/committee do you serve on.
3. What is a great example of regional collaboration that you are involved in
4. What is RVA best secret?



Social Media Policies

We encourage questions, comments, and concerns about matters about the Richmond Region by email, telephone, or by submitting comments to posts, however please note these sites are not public forums, but moderated discussion boards reviewed periodically during normal business hours.

Posts that are not allowed and are therefore subject to removal are:

- 1) Comments not related to the site's topics or to government business;
- 2) Comments that contain profanity;
- 3) Content that promotes discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, disability or sexual orientation;
- 4) Content that constitutes personal attacks or threats against other users or individuals (libelous, harassing or abusive statements);
- 5) There can be no submission of personal information or likenesses of other persons without their consent;
- 6) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- 7) Promotions of political campaigns or candidates;
- 8) Posts that promote illegal activity;
- 9) Infringes on copyrights or trademarks;
- 10) Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- 11) Spam or unrelated solicitations.

Material covered by this policy includes not just comments, but also videos, images, and links to other sites. The Richmond Regional Planning District Commission reserves the right to remove any material that, in whole or in part, does not comply with this policy or applicable law.