
- + • **A GUIDE TO HYBRID PROJECT PUBLIC MEETINGS & DESIGN HEARINGS**
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ACEC/MA TALC MEETING

September 22, 2021

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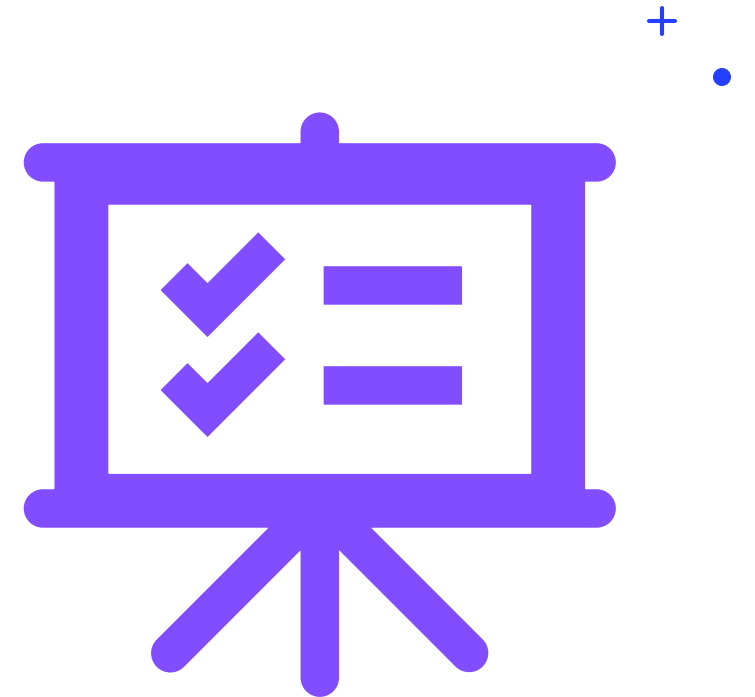
Timeline for Hybrid Meetings

Steps to find suitable safe in-person meeting places

Checklist for virtual and in-person meetings

Overview of VPI at MassDOT/MBTA

- Process was initiated in March of 2020
- Goal: to train staff and institutionalizing Virtual Public Engagement at MassDOT/MBTA during and post Pandemic
- Internal cross agency team – consistent approach for public participation
- Internal training for producers and project managers
- Materials and instructions for planning and executing meetings and hearings



What is Completed

Updated Training materials – Learning Hub

SOPs for Hearings - draft under review

Scripts

Surveys/Polls

Templates for presentations and instructions for Producers to insert into presentations for both meetings and hearings

On-Boarding Producers

Purpose of Project Public Meetings & Hearings

- Project Public **Meetings** enable us to engage the public to better plan, design and construct projects for maximum safety and public benefit.
- Public **Hearings** are necessary to document outreach, engagement, and user and impacted populations needs, impacts and comments.
- ***Purpose of Public Meetings is to Serve the Public. It is critical that we remove any barriers to participation*** to allow impacted populations, especially the underserved, to learn about the project and inform us of their concerns and ideas.



Compliance

- Project meetings & design public hearings (planning, design and construction) are not subject to the Open Meeting Law.
- The guidance on virtual and hybrid meetings is in conformance with the Governor's Executive Order and FHWA and align with agency SOPs (under revision)
- Meeting locations must meet public health guidelines to protect vulnerable populations and civil liberties (CDC, Governor)

References

Governor's Directive

[COVID-19 Updates and Information](#)

<https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/updated-guidance-on-holding-meetings-pursuant-to-the-act-extending-certain-covid-19-measures>

FHWA

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/coronavirus/process_mpo.cfm

Hybrid Meetings will always have a virtual component

Separate Hybrid Meeting

- Conduct a minimum of *two* meetings – one in-person and one for more virtual.
- Hold a virtual meeting (or two) prior to holding the in-person hearing.
- Survey participants in advance of notice to get an estimate for the number of in-person attendees and chose a location to safely accommodate participants
- *As there will be virtual meetings prior to the in-person meeting, technology requirements are minimal*
- Need to plan for overflow in the event that more people show up than expected.
- Staff need to comply with CDC and Governor's directive for PPE and site layouts.

Combined Hybrid Meeting

- Both the Virtual and In-person meeting are held at the same location at the same time.
- Similar to Separate meetings, need to advance survey to gauge the number of attendees, select appropriate sized site, visit site to confirm capacity and overflow space.
- Technology needs for combined meeting panelist and audience interaction.
- Technology needs to be able to capture audience feedback for virtual attendees.

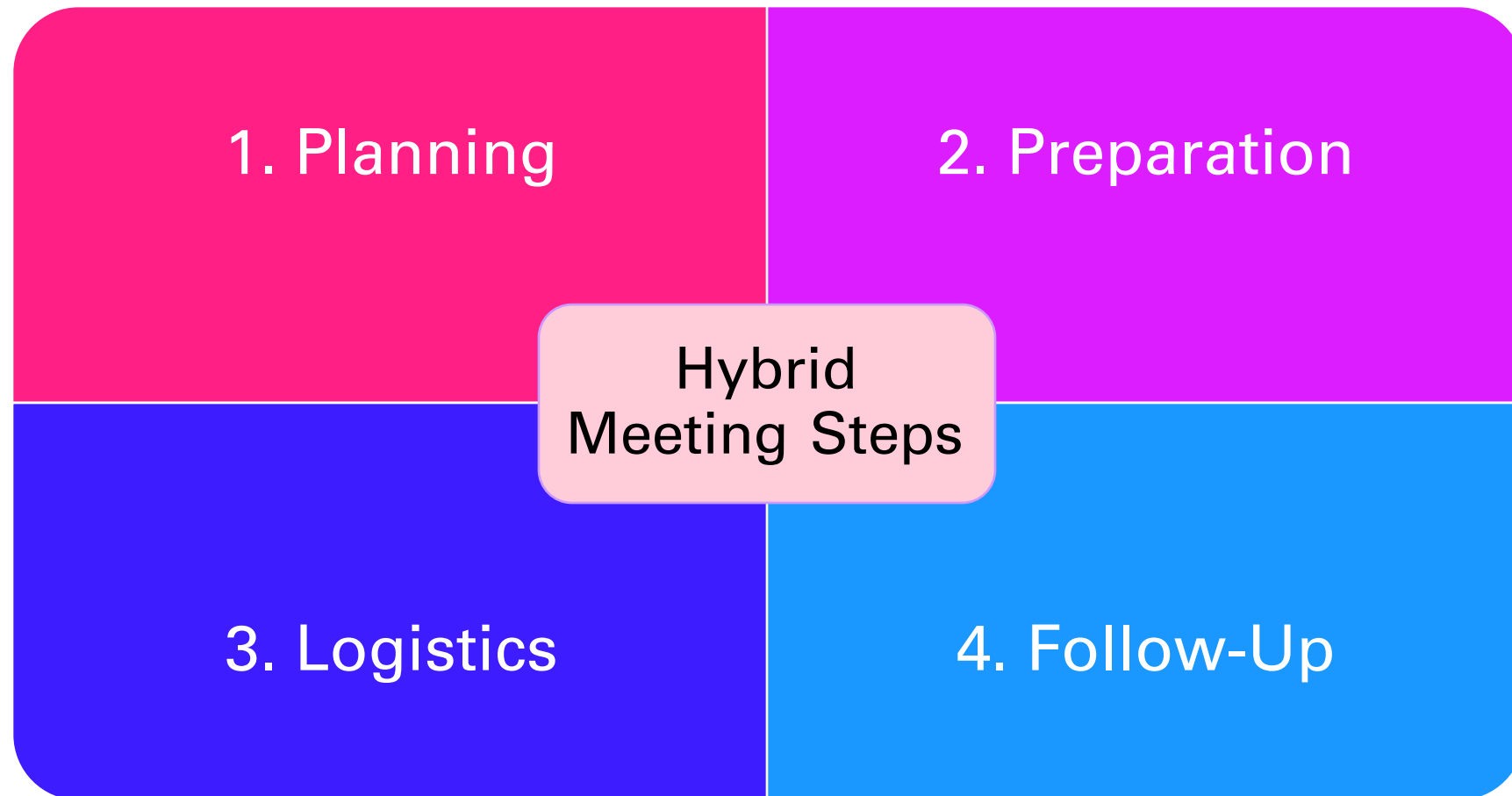
Technology under examination for application

Approach for Hybrid In-Person Meetings

- **Encourage virtual attendance**
- Find accessible location with the largest capacity for the anticipated target population attendees.
- Make sure the room space limit is clearly posted and use proper PPE and CDC guidance
- Still plan for overflow space
- Use partners to support local staffing needs in the event that no consultant or DOT staff are available for in-person
- Location for combined hybrid must be able to support virtual technology



Preparing for Hybrid Meetings



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Time-Line for a Separate Hybrid Meeting: Two Meetings



1. Planning

- Plan for both virtual and in-person
- Notify public of both options – time and place and method
- Execute virtual meeting before in-person
- Identify accessible location for in-person

2. Preparation

- Set up Zoom Platform
- Develop and Distribute Notice minimum of six weeks prior to secure appropriate accommodations.
- Pre-record or conduct Live Virtual Meeting/Hearing
- Prepare materials and develop engagement methods (for meeting or for hearing)
- Post materials on-line

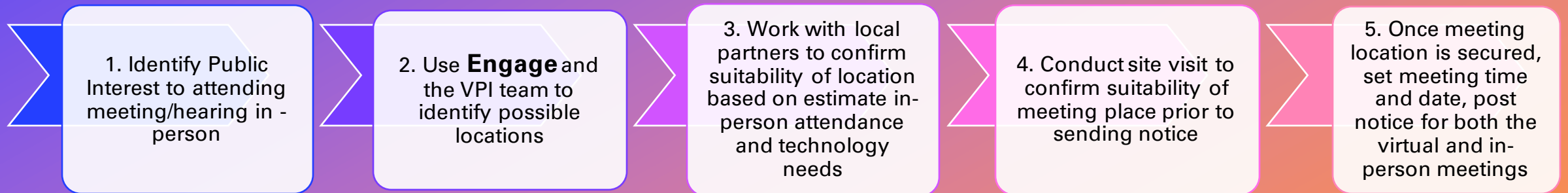
3. Logistics

- Site visit to set up in – person meeting room and location and technology (mic, AV etc)
- Have public comment information from virtual meetings available for in-person meeting proceedings
- Have stenographer if a hearing

4. Follow –Up

- Post meeting Recording
- Post other meeting information (fliers, Q&A etc)
- Evaluate results (on-line survey)/polls for outreach and engagement experience
- Report back on in-person experience at that location

The Steps to Find Suitable and Safe Location for In-Person Meeting

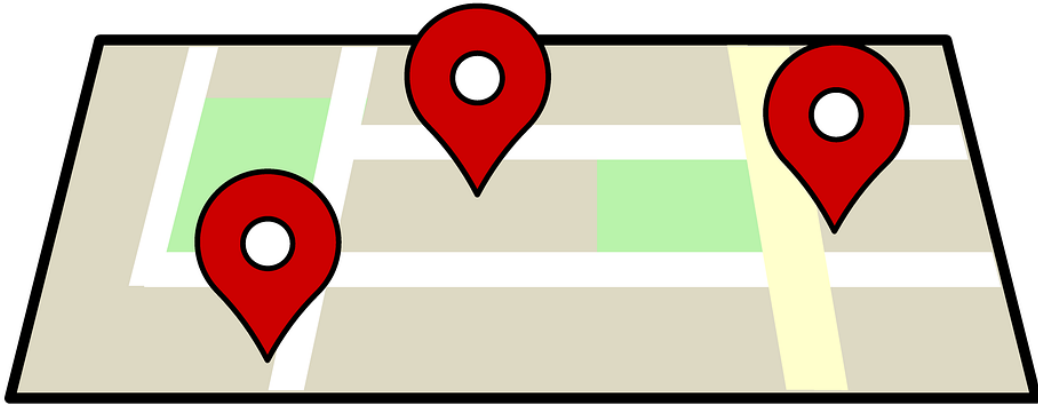


1. Identify Local Attendees



- Work with local partners and use multiple methods to ask how people want to attend (in-person or virtually) ~ +6 weeks ahead
- Identify from attendees what accommodations are needed for effective planning
 - In-person – PPE, translations, etc
 - Virtual – interpretations, CART

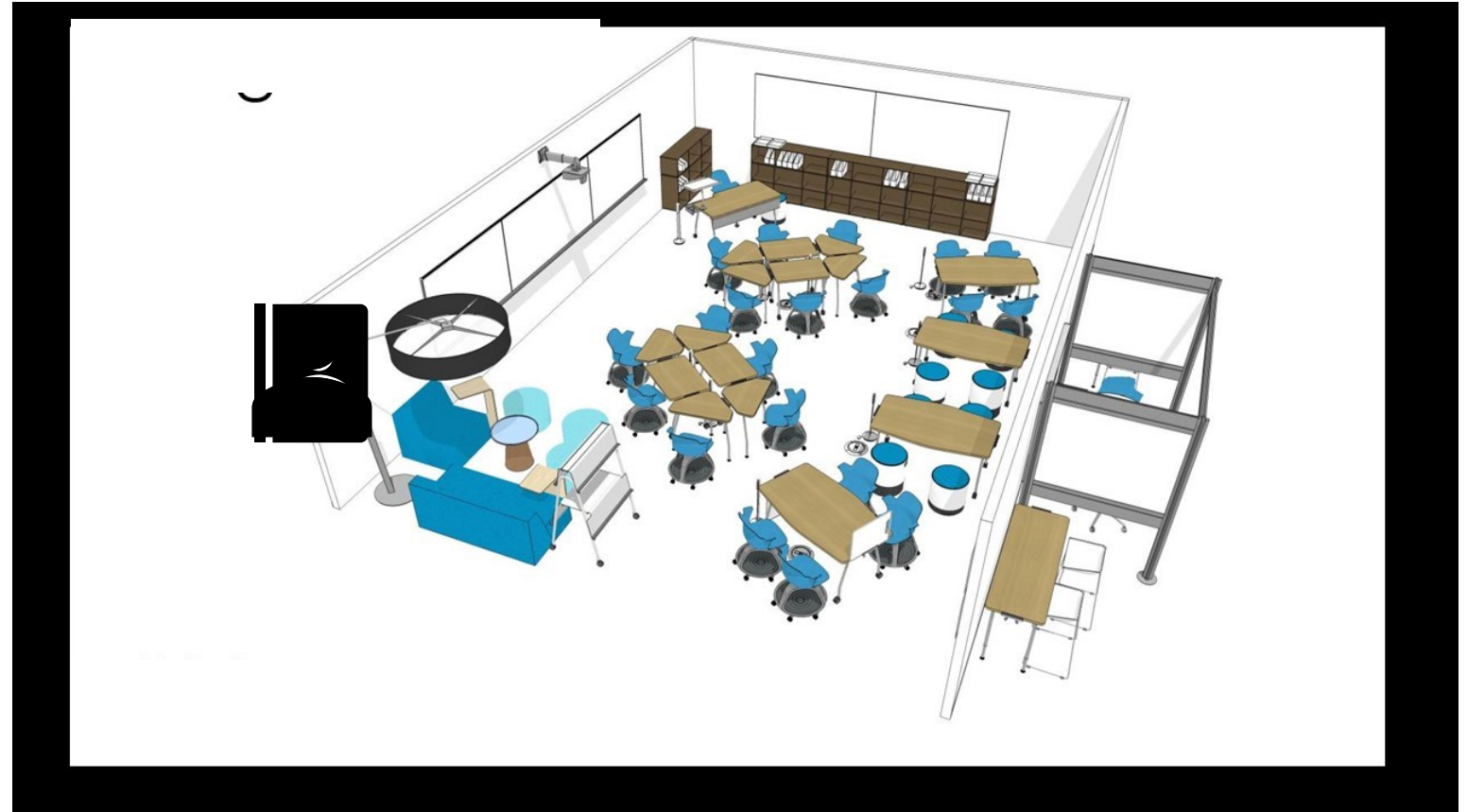
2. Determine Locational Meeting Venues



- Use Engage Tool and consult with the VPI Team to identify list of accessible locations that can support technology.
- Work with local partners to confirm optimal location for expected in-person attendees
- Work with local staff to confirm technological capabilities of space (will vary between a combined and separate hybrid meetings).

3. Determining Meeting Space Needs

- Estimate potential in-person attendance
- Identify potential meeting rooms
- Develop room layouts using safety guidance
- Plan for Unexpected attendance



6 ft Rule Applies

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4. Meeting Notice minimum of 6 weeks to plan



**MEETING
NOTICE!**

- + • In order to properly plan and engage the public, *hybrid meetings require more advance planning for issuing a notice.*
- • It is imperative to work with local partners to assess the number of in-person attendees and find a location that can accommodate more than anticipated attendees
- It is also important to make sure you have enough time to secure interpreters and CART for meetings (in-person and virtual)



Draft Hybrid Template

- Under internal review
- Will be posted on the Learning Hub
- Need to post both virtual and in-person times the same notice and fliers
- Templates on Learning Hub

Placeholder for Event Title

What is happening?

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How will this affect you?

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When

[MONTH, DAY, TIME]

Where

[FACILITY, ROOM]
[ADDRESS 1]
[MUNICIPALITY, MA, ZIP]

Attend virtually

[WEB LINK & PHONE NUMBER]



Please note this meeting will be recorded. Information will be available on the website starting on [DATE]. Visit [PROJECT WEBSITE] for more information.



This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request, as appropriate. To request accommodation or language assistance, please contact [MEETING ORGANIZER'S NAME] by phone [PHONE NUMBER], fax [FAX NUMBER], relay 7-1-1, or by email [EMAIL ADDRESS]. Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the meeting.

Project inquiries may also be emailed to [PROJECT EMAIL ADDRESS]

Please submit any written statements regarding the proposed undertaking to: **Carrie A. Lavallee, P.E., Acting Chief Engineer,** MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza North, MA 02216, Attention: [PROJECT DEPARTMENT], PROJECT FILE NO. [FILE NO.]

Checklist for In- Person Meetings - Space

Public Meeting Engagement			
In-Person Checklist - Physical Space			
No	X	Item	Notes
1		PPE for staff and attendees (masks, gloves)	Staff have gloves, masks
2		Hand sanitizer placed throughout for staff and attendees	# of bottles
3		Touchless areas - sign in stations - info tables	
4		Disinfectant for Microphones, Podium, and Frequently Touched Objects/Surfaces	Disinfect Mics and Podium between each speaker
5		Signs with Rules - reflect current State and CDC guidance	Mask requirement, social distancing, etiquette, etc.
6		6' Rule for seating	
7		Consider room flow - enter and exit signs, wayfinding through displays, access to seating, etc.	There may be separate rooms (displays, meeting space, overflow, etc.)
8		Establish seating area for CART and ASL providers	Maintain an unobstructed view
9		Provide multiple accessible seating locations	Avoid limiting accessible seating options to only one location and integrate.
10		Maintain unobstructed paths of travel	Eliminate hazards where possible or mark them clearly.
11		Identify the accessible entrance	Especially if main entrance isn't the accessible entrance.
12		Inform attendees of availability of alternate format/multilingual materials	This may be in response to requests and/or proactive.
13		Understand emergency procedures for specific location and inform attendees as meeting starts	Identify a location where attendees should gather if they require assistance during an emergency.
14		Where feasible, confirm that meeting location is within 1/4 mile of public transportation	Confirm that the path of travel from public transit stop to meeting location is accessible.
15		If parking is available for attendees, ensure accessible parking spaces are designated	Refer to the regulatory requirements.
16		If restrooms are available for attendees, ensure accessible restroom is available.	Refer to the regulatory requirements.
17		Ensure that the location for presenters is accessible.	This includes access to any stage/platform being used as well as a low table next to any podium in use.

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Checklist for Virtual Meetings - Technology

Public Meeting Engagement			
In-Person Checklist - Technology			
No	X	Item	Notes
1		Internet connection in meeting room (Y/N)	
2		# of outlets and extension cords available	
3		Bandwidth of 1.0 Mbps/600kbps (up/down) (Y/N)	
4		Equipment to broadcast to Zoom (TBD)	
5		Projector and screen	
6		Connection to local cable station for broadcast	

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Forthcoming / Next Steps

- Continue to identify suitable sites for hybrid
- Test and approve technology for hybrid meetings
- Continue to train Project Managers
- SOP for meetings and hybrid meetings
- Develop an internal Facilitator Program to support PMs and Consultants