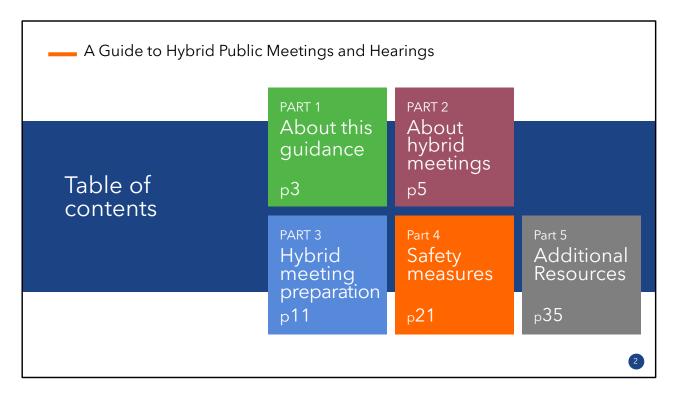


# A GUIDE TO HYBRID PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

- This guide was prepared by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Office of Policy Planning.
- The Office of Policy Planning provides technical assistance on how to conduct public meetings using virtual and hybrid meeting formats.
- Please contact the FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM) concerning hearings for Project Development and Environment (PD&E) projects. Contact: <u>jason.watts@dot.state.fl.us</u>.



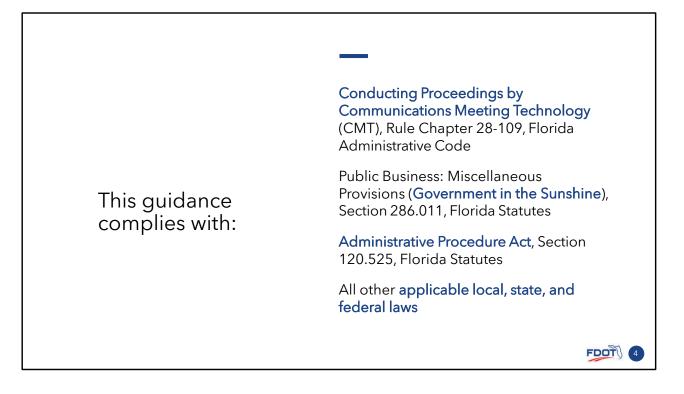
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About this guidance page 3
- About hybrid meetings page 5
- Hybrid meeting preparation page 11
- Safety measures page 21
- Additional resources page 35



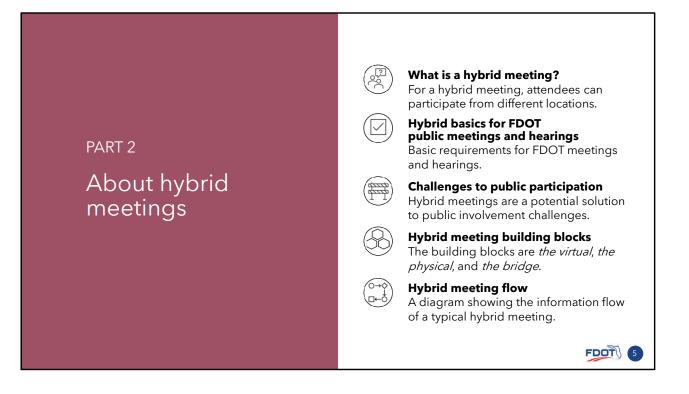
# FDOT HYBRID PUBLIC MEETING GUIDANCE

- The FDOT Public Engagement Hybrid Meeting Guidance provides techniques for holding public meetings and hearings.
- Public meetings and hearings will employ a hybrid meeting format that combines face-to-face and virtual meeting components.
- The guidance is mindful of the need to provide a variety of methods for the public to receive information and provide input on plans and projects, while meeting public health guidelines and protecting vulnerable populations and civil liberties.
- The goal is to increase engagement opportunities, convenience, and access for the public while allowing flexibility in developing meeting plans.



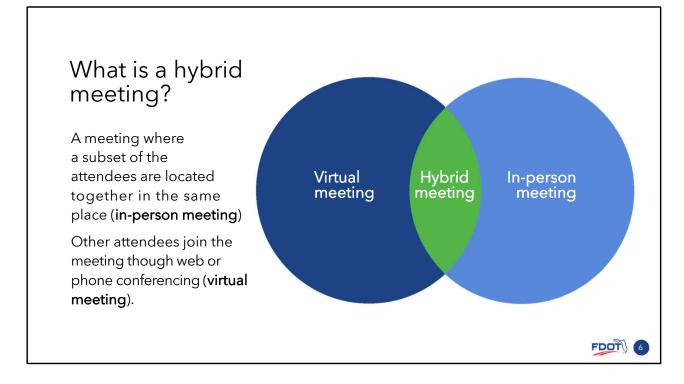
#### THIS GUIDANCE COMPLIES WITH...

- Conducting Proceedings by Communications Meeting Technology (CMT), Rule Chapter 28-109, Florida Administrative Code;
- Public Business: Miscellaneous Provisions (Government in the Sunshine), Section 286.011, Florida Statutes;
- Administrative Procedure Act, Section 120.525, Florida Statutes; and
- All other applicable local, state, and federal laws.



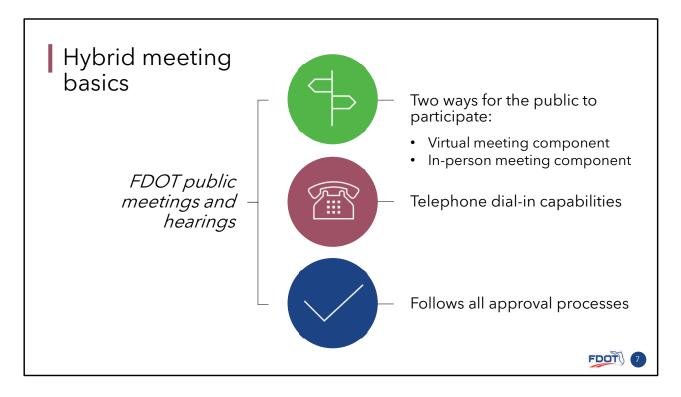
# ABOUT HYBRID PUBLIC MEETINGS

The listed topics are discussed in this section.



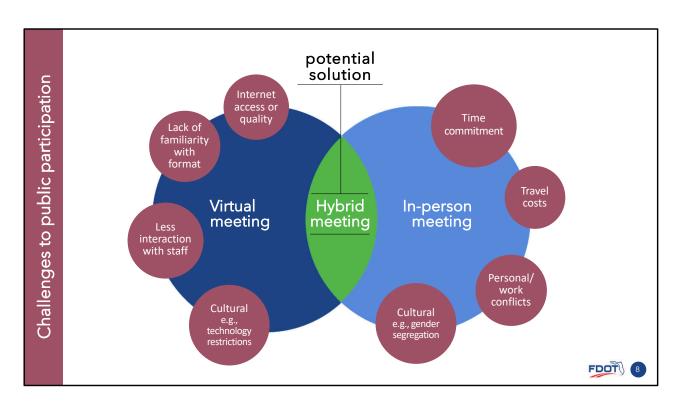
# WHAT IS A HYBRID MEETING?

- A hybrid meeting refers to the physical location of the participants.
- In a hybrid meeting, a subset of the people attending the meeting is located together in the same place.
- This is the in-person meeting component of a hybrid meeting.
- Other attendees join the meeting by web conference or phone conference.
- This is the virtual meeting component of a hybrid meeting.



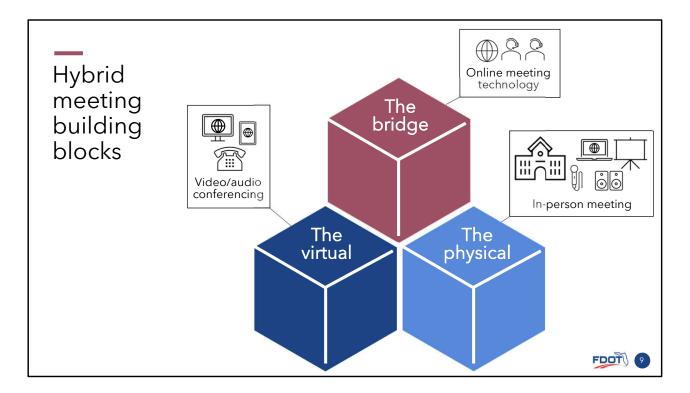
# HYBRID BASICS FOR FDOT PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

- FDOT hybrid public meetings and hearings accommodate public participation in both virtual and in-person settings.
- The virtual meeting component must have telephone dial-in capabilities to more fully accommodate individual preferences and/or needs.
- At this time, GoToWebinar and GoToMeeting can be used for the virtual meeting component.
- Additional platforms are being studied and may be added in the future.
- Hybrid meetings and hearings must follow all Department approval processes.



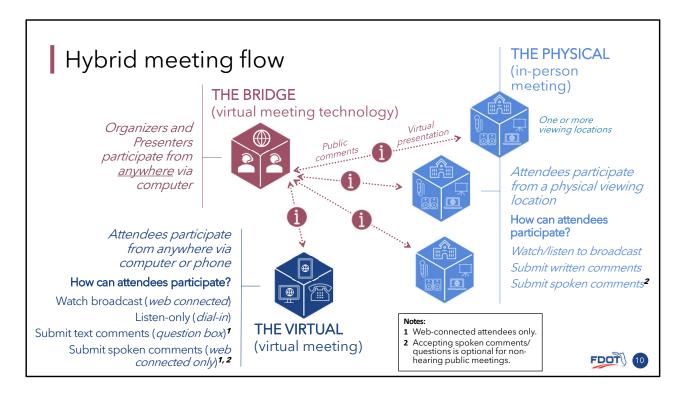
# CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hybrid public meetings can help overcome some common challenges that negatively affect public meeting attendance.



# HYBRID MEETING BUILDING BLOCKS

- A hybrid meeting typically consists of three basic building blocks: the virtual, the physical, and the bridge.
- The virtual building block is the video and audio system (e.g., computer with microphone and speaker) that meeting attendees use to connect to the meeting.
- The physical building block is the in-person meeting venue.
- The bridge building block is the technology that brings the virtual and physical meeting components together.



# HYBRID MEETING FLOW

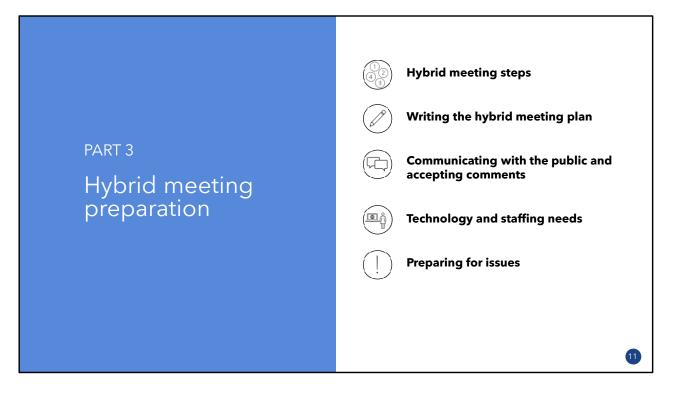
- The figure depicts the flow of a hybrid meeting.
- The virtual presentation is simulcast via the bridge (virtual meeting technology) to meeting attendees participating virtually and from one or more physical locations.
- Keep in mind that dial-in attendees to the virtual meeting will only be able to listen to the presentation so take care to describe or spell-out important information shown in the presentation.

# Comment opportunities for virtual attendees during the meeting:

- Virtual attendees can submit comments and questions during the meeting by typing text in the question box on the virtual meeting platform or, if unmuted by the meeting organizer, by speaking their comments or questions into their computer microphone.
- Attendees that dial in to the meeting on a telephone line will not be able to submit comments using the virtual meeting comment features.
- A telephone hot line could be open during the meeting for dial-in attendees to state their comments/questions to meeting staff.

# Comment opportunities for in-person attendees during the meeting:

• In-person attendees can submit written comments and questions via comment card or, if offered, speak their comments and questions into a microphone provided in the meeting room.



# HYBRID MEETING PREPARATION

The listed topics are discussed in this section.



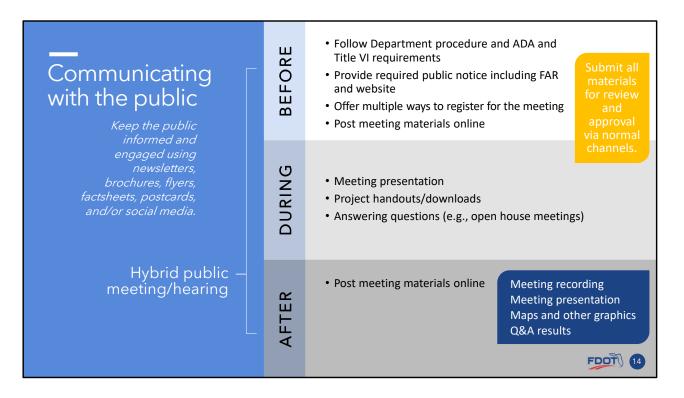
# **HYBRID MEETING STEPS**

The process for planning, organizing, executing, and completing a hybrid meeting involve these basic steps.

	Elements to consider:
Writing the hybrid	<ol> <li>Event type (e.g., Kickoff Meeting, Public Information Meeting, Public Hearing)</li> </ol>
meeting plan	2. Project number
	<ol> <li>Project description, history, demographics, previous public involvement</li> </ol>
	4. Event date and time
	5. Location
	6. Meeting/hearing format
	7. Projected in-person audience
	8. Meeting technology/registration process
	9. Venue room capacity and layout
	10. Safety measures
	11. Notifications
』 「 こ 「 こ 「 」 、 「 」	12. Survey/feedback
	13. Materials
I X U P	14. Staffing
	15. Project contact

# WRITING THE MEETING PLAN

- Include this information in your hybrid meeting plan.
- All materials must be reviewed and approved through normal channels.
- Keep in mind that public hearings have additional requirements.



# COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

- To facilitate an inclusive process, maintain contact with the public when the project is active.
- Provide project updates using newsletters, brochures, flyers, factsheets, postcards, and/or social media, which can be distributed by mail and electronically.
- Include required non-discrimination language on all communications and work with the Communications Office for traditional media and social media communications.

# *Before the public meeting:*

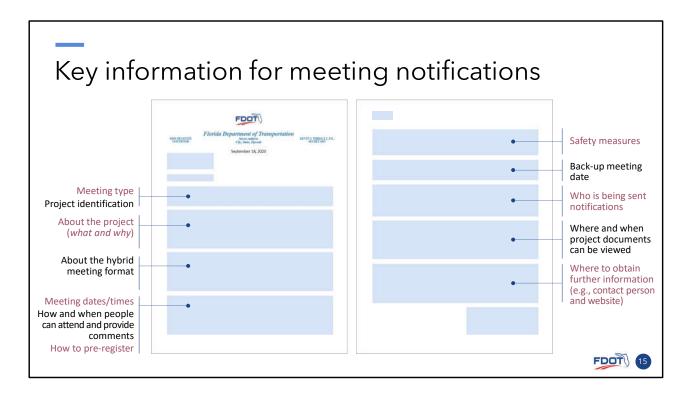
- Follow Department procedure and ADA and Title VI requirements.
- Provide required public notice including FAR and website.
- Offer multiple ways to register for the meeting
- Post meeting materials online concurrent with distribution of the meeting notification, if feasible.

# During the public meeting:

- Present information about the project and ways for the public to submit comments and questions.
- Offer key information in handouts for in-person attendees and downloads on the virtual meeting platform for virtual attendees.
- Provide question and answer opportunities in the virtual and in-person settings, as appropriate.

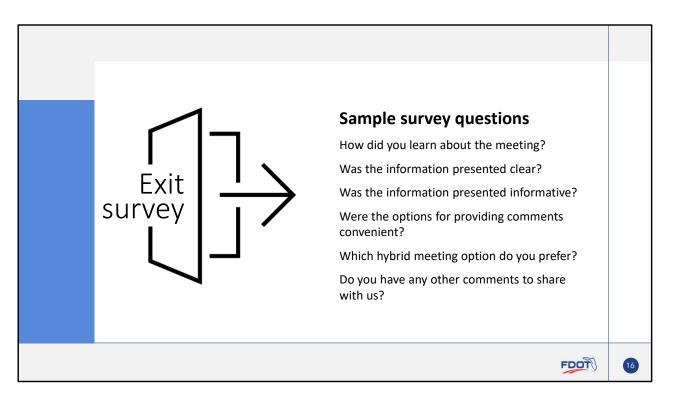
# After the public meeting

• Post the meeting materials online for on-demand viewing.



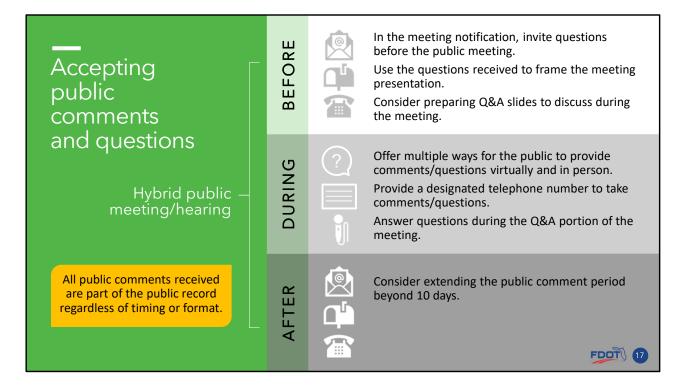
# **KEY INFORMATION FOR MEETING NOTIFICATIONS**

- The hybrid format may be unfamiliar to some people so be sure to clearly describe the array of options for public participation.
- Offer a back-up meeting date should the meeting not be able to take place or be completed.



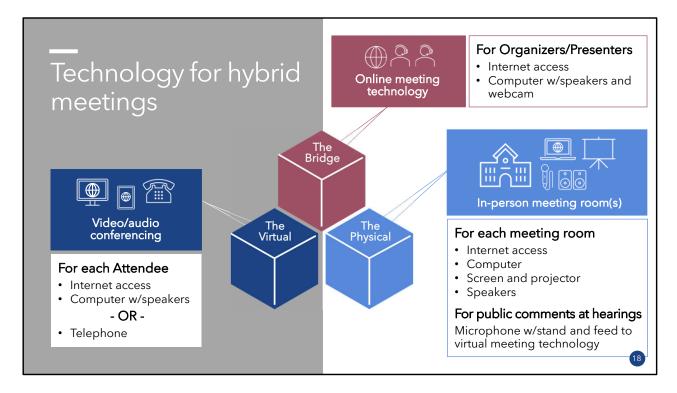
# SAMPLE EXIT SURVEY QUESTIONS

- An exit survey can provide valuable information about community preferences.
- Here are some questions you could ask in an exit survey to help you assess performance.
- An exit survey can be generated and distributed through the GoToWebinar meeting platform.
- Virtual meeting registrants will receive the survey automatically on their computer screen upon signing out of the meeting or in a scheduled follow-up email.
- A postcard or letter can be mailed or emailed to other meeting attendees who registered in advance or signed in at the physical meeting location.



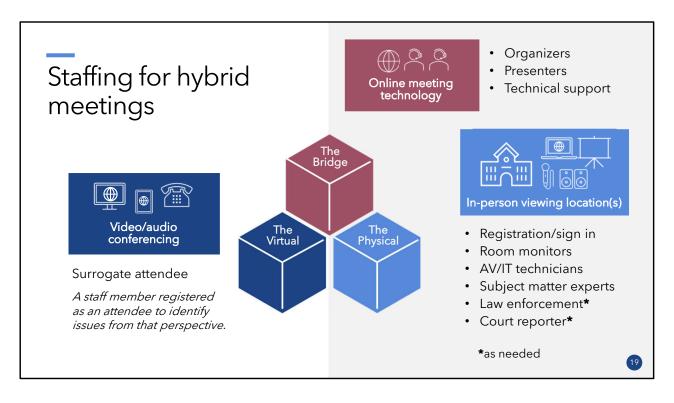
# ACCEPTING PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Public comments and questions can be invited before, during, and after the meeting.



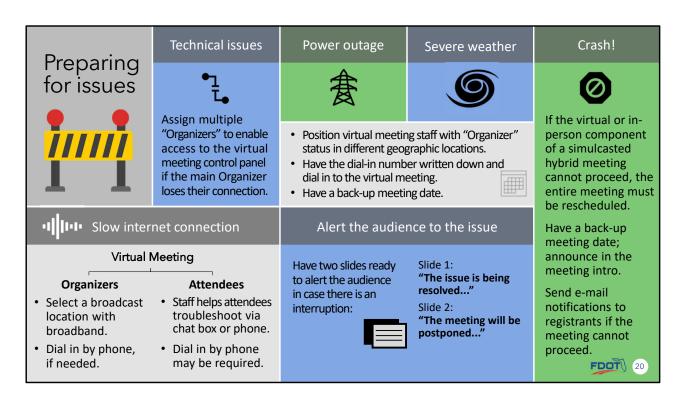
# **TECHNOLOGY FOR HYBRID MEETINGS**

Conducting and participating in a hybrid meeting has specific technology needs.



# STAFFING FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

Hybrid meetings will include staff for the Bridge and the virtual and physical components.



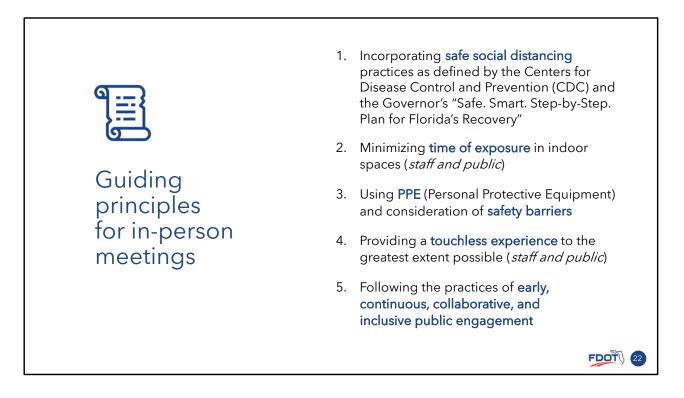
#### **PREPARING FOR ISSUES**

Have a backup plan to prepare for a variety of issues that may occur.



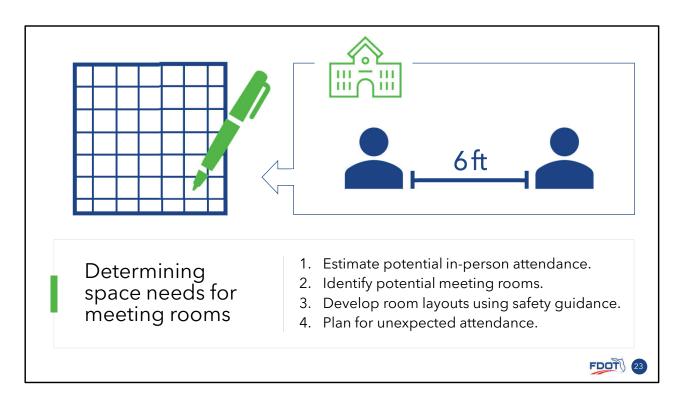
# PART 4 SAFETY MEASURES FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Have a backup plan to prepare for a variety of issues that may occur.



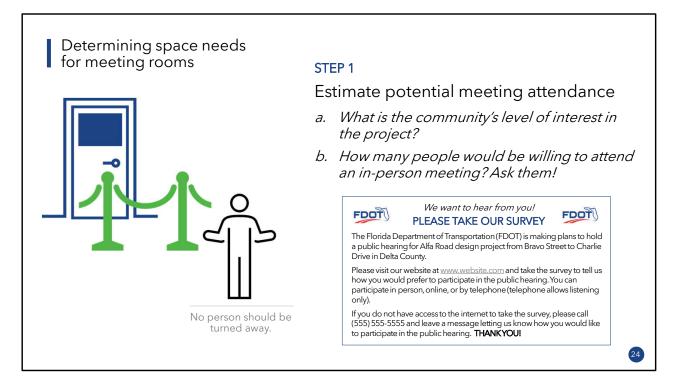
# **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

Consider these guiding principles for when planning, organizing, and executing a safe, in-person meeting.



# DETERMINING SPACE NEEDS FOR MEETING ROOMS

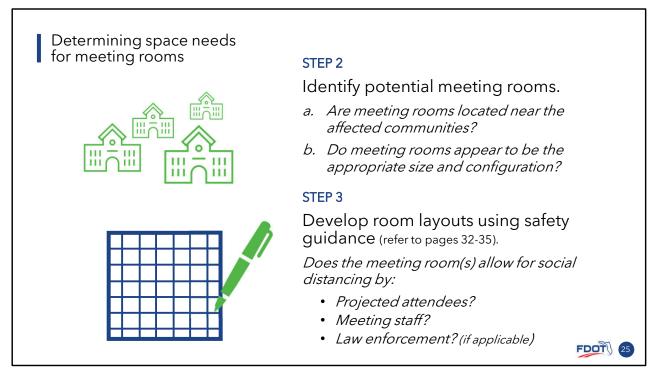
- The physical venue for hybrid meetings must be of adequate size to maintain social distancing.
- The meeting room (or rooms) should be large enough to accommodate the expected number of attendees, staff, and law enforcement and their ability to socially distance as people interact with the meeting materials and each other.
- To determine the space needs for meeting rooms:
  - 1. Estimate potential in-person attendance.
  - 2. Identify potential meeting rooms.
  - 3. Develop room layouts using safety guidance.
  - 4. Plan for unexpected attendance.



#### DETERMINING SPACE NEEDS FOR MEETING ROOMS (continued)

# Step 1: Estimate potential meeting attendance.

- To estimate how many people might attend a hybrid public meeting, particularly the in-person component requiring a physical room, first consider the level of interest in the plan or project.
- If there have been previous interactions (e.g., meetings) on the plan or project, then consider how many people showed interest to develop an estimate.
- If the level of interest in the plan or project is unknown, then consider distributing a short survey to poll the affected community about their attendance preference.
- The poll question could be "Please tell us how you would prefer to participate in the project meeting by selecting one of the following options." A full range of options could be in-person, online, by telephone (noting that this is listen-only mode), will not participate, and undecided.
- An online survey app such as Survey Monkey is a quick and easy way to create a poll question and an online link.
- Plan on distributing the poll question about 90 days before the meeting to enough time to choose the right facility.
- More time may be needed when less is known about community opinions about the plan or project.
- Ways to distribute the poll link include 1) targeted posts on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor); 2) in a newsletter, letter, and/or postcard to property owners and tenants; 3) email to people on the contacts list, 4) on project/partner websites, and 5) in a press release. Be sure to coordinate the Communications Office for media distribution.
- Keep in mind that some people do not have online access. A dedicated telephone line where people can leave a message about their attendance preference is one way to address this issue.
- Along with the poll question, identify the plan or project, contact person, and any other questions you would like to ask the community.



# DETERMINING SPACE NEEDS FOR MEETING ROOMS (continued)

# Step 2: Identify potential meeting rooms.

- Once you have an idea of how much interest there is in the project, you can start exploring possible locations for your meeting.
- Venues should be located as close as possible to the location
- In addition to the facility, consider parking, entry ways, availability of restrooms, and be ADA-compliant.
- Does the room appear adequate in size to accommodate all participants with social distancing in mind?

# Step 3: Develop room layouts using safety guidance (refer to pages 32-35)

• For each venue under consideration, develop a room layout plan to confirm which facility will work best.

Determining space needs for meeting rooms Remember... Have a backup plan. Be flexible. Be ready to adapt.

# STEP 4

Plan for unexpected attendance.

# Consider:

- a. Encourage participation in the virtual meeting
- b. Have overflow space(s)
- c. Provide multiple meeting times/dates

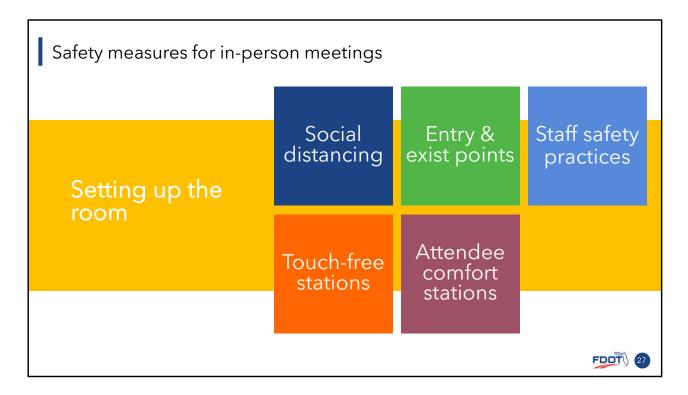
FDOT 20

d. Monitor occupancy and admissions

DETERMINING SPACE NEEDS FOR MEETING ROOMS (continued)

# Step 4: Plan for unexpected attendance.

- Planning is necessary to ensure that no person is turned away.
- While the virtual meeting option could reduce in-person meeting attendance, access to technology varies by community which could mean higher in-person attendance.
- Plan for more people than you expect.
- Overflow space could be in additional meeting rooms, lobby areas, and breezeways, including everything to create the full meeting experience.
- Also consider conducting the meeting multiple times and inviting people to pre-register for a certain time slot.



# **ROOM LAYOUT CONSIDERATIONS**

When developing a layout plan for the meeting room, there are several safety measures to take into consideration.

#### Social distancing Traffic flow Protective shields Presentation seating Use signs and floor markings at • Place seating 6 feet apart in all Protective shields are useful in areas entry points and throughout the where social distancing may be directions. meeting room to help attendees difficult to maintain, such as · Use directional signage and floor social distance, especially where registration and display stations. markings to guide attendees as lines could form. they take their seat. • Designate space for wheelchair FDOT 28 users.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING

*Traffic flow – Meeting attendees should flow in one direction to better maintain social distancing.* 

- Use signs and floor markings at entry points and throughout the meeting room to assist attendees in maintaining social distancing, especially in areas where lines may form.
- Use tape on the floor and/or rope lines to demarcate the required six-foot separation between people.

# Presentation seating

- Place all seats six feet apart in all directions.
- Provide directional signage and floor markings to assist attendees in maintaining social distancing as they take their seat.
- Seating can be rearranged for family members or others wanting to sit together.
- Provide space for wheelchair users.

#### Protective shields

• Consider using protective shields (i.e., sneeze guards) in places where social distancing may be difficult to maintain (e.g., registration and display stations where people may tend to cluster).

# Entry and exit points





Provide safety information on boards/signs in conspicuous locations.



# Doors - Entry and Exit

Provide separate and clearly marked entry and exit points, if possible.

Consider assigning staff to open doors for attendees or leave doors open, if allowed.



# **Clickers & timers**

Use clickers and timers to manage the number of people in the room.

Monitor the time attendees spend at displays and the number of people waiting to enter the room.



# **ENTRY AND EXIT POINTS**

# Safety information (boards/signs)

Provide safety information on boards and/or signs alerting attendees to social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, and other safety guidance.

# Doors/entry and exit

- If possible, provide separate and clearly marked entry and exit doors.
- Consider assigning staff for opening doors for attendees to minimize touching, or leave the doors open, if feasible.

# Timers/clicker counters

- Consider using timers and clicker counters to manage the number of people in the room and time spent at each station.
- Determine the amount of time people can spend at the displays by factoring the: 1) type of display, 2) number of directly affected people, and 3) overall number of people waiting to enter the room.
- Remind attendees of the availability of display materials online or in a handout provided at the meeting.

# Staff safety practices



# Masks/face coverings

- Meeting staff are required to wear a mask.
- Provide masks for attendees who may want them (if feasible).
- Find out if any local safety directives are in effect.



# Disinfecting

- Bring disinfectant for regular for cleaning of high touch areas.
- Use chairs made of materials that can be sprayed and wiped down (e.g., plastic or metal).

# Microphones

#### Options:

- Use multiple microphones sanitized between each use.
- Replace disposable microphone covers after each use.
- Place the microphone at a safe distance from users.

# **STAFF SAFETY PRACTICES**

#### Masks/face Coverings

- All in-person meeting staff are required to wear a mask.
- Provide face coverings for those who may want them, if feasible.
- Check local directives regarding masks.

# Disinfectant

- Bring disinfectant spray and/or wipes for regular for cleaning of high touch areas.
- If possible, use seating made of plastic or metal that can be sprayed and wiped down.

#### Microphones

- Consider the following methods to reduce the potential for virus spread from public comments at a microphone:
  - Have multiple microphones available and sanitize after each use.
  - Use disposable microphone covers replaced after each use.
  - Place the microphone stand at a safe distance from users (may require a more sensitive microphone).

# Touch-free stations



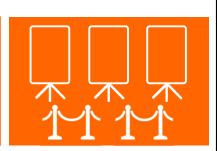


Consider methods for touchless sign-in, for example:

- Pre-registration (online/phone)
- QR code check-in
- Sign-in using a texting app
- Sign-in cards with give-away pens

Provide hand sanitation stations at entry, exit, and intermediate points in the meeting place.

Use automated dispensers if available.



# Information stations

Discourage crowding at stations by providing two or more sets of displays.

Use boards that are large enough for people to read at a social distance from staff.

FDOT 31

#### **TOUCH-FREE STATIONS**

#### Registration/sign-in stations

- Consider methods for a touchless sign-in experience, for example:
  - Pre-registration online and by calling a project contact person (consider using appointment times for larger audiences)
  - QR code check-in at meeting for pre-registrants
  - Text option to sign-in at the meeting
  - A socially distanced staff member can check in pre-registrants and record the sign-in information for others
  - Sign-in cards with give-away pens

# Sanitation stations

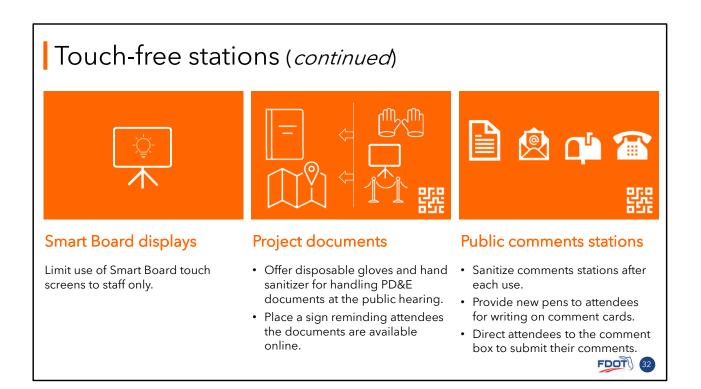
- Provide sanitation stations with hand sanitizer at all entry, exit, and intermediate points in the meeting place.
- If available, provide automated dispensers for a touch-free experience.

#### Information stations

- Provide two or more sets of displays and stations to allow for social distancing.
- Boards should be large enough so that social distancing can be maintained at each display and between displays.
- Consider placing tables in front of displays to establish a safe physical distance between staff and

10/6/2020

attendees.



# **TOUCH-FREE STATIONS** (continued)

# Smartboard displays

Smart Boards displays should be managed by staff only.

# Display of project documents (PD&E public hearing)

- For PD&E documents on display at the public hearing, place a box of disposable gloves and/or hand sanitizer on the table for those wishing to review the documents.
- Place a sign reminding attendees that the documents are available online and accessible from their smart phone by using the QR code displayed (if used).

# Comments stations

- Sanitize comments stations after each use.
- Provide a new pen to each attendees who wishes to fill out a comment card; pens should not be not reused.
- Direct attendees to the comment box where they can submit their comments.

# <image><section-header><complex-block><image><image><table-row><table-container><image><table-row><table-container><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-container><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row><table-row></table-row><table-row>

# ATTENDEE COMFORT STATIONS

#### Restrooms

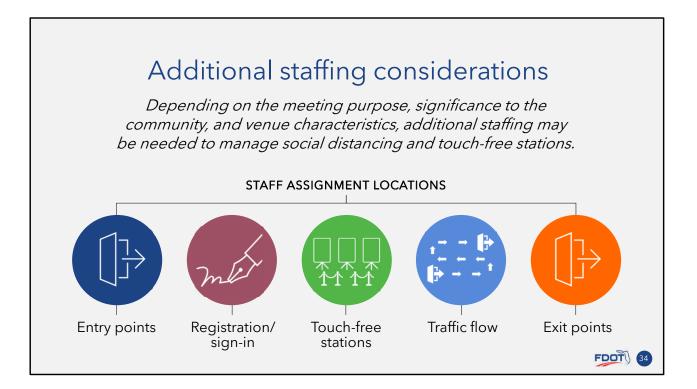
All facilities should have a fully stocked restroom.

#### Water fountains

Water fountains/hydration stations that have shared surfaces that may contribute to the spread of infection and may require additional sanitation needs.

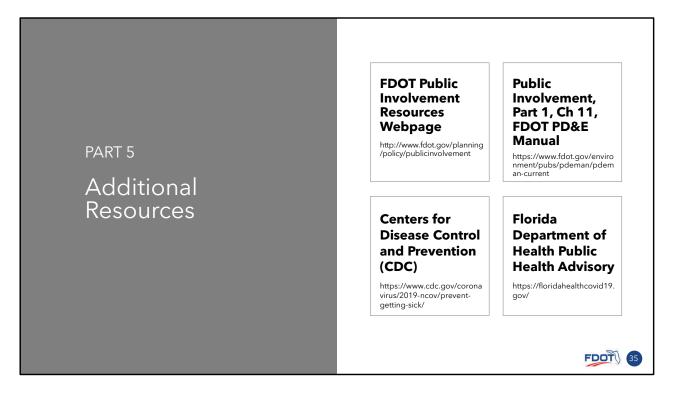
# Trash receptacles

Provide trash cans throughout the venue, including at exits for disposal of PPEs.



# ADDITIONAL STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

- Staff assignment locations for safety...
  - Entry points (counting people entering) Any law enforcement present will need to be counted toward the maximum number of attendees that can fit within the facility.
  - Sign-in/registration
  - Touch-free stations
  - Traffic flow
  - Exit points
- When developing the staffing plan, consider that some team members are vulnerable or taking care of vulnerable family members and should not be at the in-person location. Signage can be used to encourage social distancing practices rather than additional staff.



#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please visit these websites for additional information on the topics discussed in this guide.