

TITLE
Telephonic Participation in Agency Meetings Policy

ORG. AGENCY
 Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency

APPROVED

105.1 STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the intent of the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (hereinafter the “Agency”) to establish a clear and consistent process for the authorization of the Agency Board of Directors to participate telephonically in Agency meetings where extraordinary circumstances prevent the Director from physically being present at the meeting.

105.2 AUTHORITY

The Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors adopted this policy on February 16, 2004.

105.3 OBJECTIVE

The goal of the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency is for the Directors of the Board to participate in all Agency meetings and that each Director exercise his/her vote on matters presented to the Board for decision. During the course of events one or more Directors may not be able to physically attend a meeting. The purpose of this policy is to prescribe procedures that will allow Directors to participate in meetings telephonically. It is not the intent of this policy to allow Directors to participate telephonically for convenience only but to acknowledge that extraordinary circumstances may exist from time to time that preclude a Director from being able to physically attend an Agency meeting.

It is the intent of this policy to require Board approval for a Director to participate telephonically in Agency meetings and to establish procedures for telephonic participation to be adopted by the Agency.

105.4 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

The policy outlined herein shall apply to the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors.

105.5 DEFINITIONS

Agency Meeting: Any scheduled and noticed meeting of the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors.

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Agency Board of Directors: Board of elected City and County Commissioners sitting jointly as prescribed in the Interlocal Agreement, as it may be amended from time to time.

Calling Director: Any Member of the Board of Directors for the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency who requests to participate telephonically in an Agency meeting without being physically present at the meeting.

Telephonic Participation: Participation in an Agency meeting via high quality telephone with speaker or video teleconferencing.

Chairperson: Duly elected member of the Board of Directors charged with the conduct of all Meetings of the Agency Board of Directors.

Vice Chairperson: Duly elected Member of the Board of Directors who acts as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

Director of PLACE: The individual responsible for managing and directing the Tallahassee – Leon County Planning Department, the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency and the Office of Economic Vitality, reporting directly to the Intergovernmental Management Committee or their Designees.

Blueprint Director: The individual responsible for carrying out the implementation of the Blueprint 2000 projects and the Blueprint 2020 Infrastructure projects, reporting directly to the Director of PLACE.

105.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Director of PLACE or his/her Designee is responsible for:

1. Acting as the point of coordination for all Board of Directors to initiate a request for Telephonic Participation.
2. Coordinating the logistical support for Telephonic Participation as required.

B. Calling Director is responsible for:

1. Initiating requests to the Board of Directors, through the Blueprint Director, to participate in an Agency meeting telephonically.
2. Notifying the Director of PLACE of the desire to participate telephonically in sufficient time allow the Director of PLACE to coordinate the needed logistical support.
3. Prior to the Agency Meeting initiate the phone connection.
4. Maintain/reestablish the phone connection as required.
5. Ensure that communications to the meeting are high quality so not to disrupt the normal conduct of the Agency Meeting.

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- C. Agency Board of Directors is responsible for:
1. Authorizing a Director(s) to participate via telephone with a standard of:
 - a) Extraordinary circumstances.
 - b) Based on good judgment of the Board of Directors.
 - c) On a case-by-case basis.
 2. Authorize the disconnection of a Calling Director if the connection becomes degraded to the point that it impairs the conduct of the Agency Meeting.

D. Vice Chairperson: Act as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

- E. Chairperson of the Board of Directors is responsible for:
1. Presenting to the Board as the initial item of business any late request for telephonic participation from a Director(s).
 2. During voting ask the Calling Director for their vote separate from those Directors present.
 3. Request from the Board authorization to disconnect a Calling Director if the connection becomes degraded to the point that it impairs the conduct of the Agency Meeting.

105.7 ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS, PROCEDURES AND EXCEPTIONS

- A. Pursuant to the Legal Opinion of the Agency's Attorney, the following are specified: A Calling Director who requests and is approved for participating telephonically in an Agency meeting will **not** count in the determination of a quorum.
1. A Director who has been duly approved for telephonic participation by the majority of the Board shall vote as required and in accordance with the bylaws.
 2. On a case-by-case basis, the majority of the Directors shall determine in their good judgment if a physically absent Director may participate telephonically due to extraordinary circumstances.
- B. Implementing Instructions:
1. Any Director desiring to participate telephonically due to extraordinary circumstances will make such request to the Board of Directors at the Agency Board Meeting prior to the meeting for which the absence is requested. Requests from Calling Directors shall be considered during the "Items from Members of the Board" portion of the agenda and will be recorded in the minutes. Approval of a request shall be by majority vote in accordance with Agency bylaws. In the event that the telephonic participation is a last minute requirement the Board shall consider and vote on the request as the initial item of business of the meeting. *It is recommended that only one Director be authorized to participate via telephone at each meeting for logistical reasons.*

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NO.

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2. In situations where advance approval is not possible the Calling Director shall advise the Director of PLACE of the intent to participate telephonically. The Director of PLACE shall coordinate with the City or County staff for the logistical support and will advise the Chairperson of the pending request.
 3. The Director of PLACE working with the Calling Director or designee will ensure that on the day of the Agency Meeting that communications are established and maintained during the Agency meeting.
 4. Clear communications are mandatory for telephonic participation and degraded communications that disrupt the conduct of the Agency Meeting shall be terminated as directed by the majority of the Board. *The use of cellular phones for this purpose is strongly discouraged.* Lost communications are the responsibility of the Calling Director to reestablish. If communications are lost or distorted to the point that the Calling Director cannot hear or be heard the Agency Meeting shall continue without regard to the communications disruptions. Votes taken and material discussed during a period of lost or degraded communications shall not be reheard or be subject to revote for the sole reason of lost or degraded communications with a Calling Director.
 5. To preclude confusion in voting the Chairman shall ask the Calling Director for his/her vote independently of the Directors present.
- C. Any items not specifically addressed in this policy will be presented to the Director of PLACE, and the Agency Attorney for resolution.

105.08 EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy will become effective on February 16, 2004. Revisions to this policy will become effective immediately upon approval of the Agency Board.

Revised: February 21, 2017
January 30, 2020