**Key Considerations for Public Meetings/Hearings**

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Consider the following questions before holding a public meeting/hearing:

 ***Why*** are we holding a public meeting/hearing? What is the current phase of the project? What project information needs to be shared with the public? What information does the project/project staff need to obtain from the audience?

 ***Who*** needs to attend?

* Who will be directly affected, indirectly affected by the project?
* Who can affect the project?
* Who has the legal or political ability to affect the project?
* Who wants to be involved?
* Who needs to be involved and is typically underrepresented?
* Who will be upset if they are not included?

 ***Where*** should a public meeting/hearing take place? Day of week, time of day, window of dates based on NCDOT staff, Federal Highway Administration engineer for federal projects and local official calendar.

 ***Will*** a LOIM be needed? It is important to note that this meeting is not typically advertised.

 ***Where*** should the public meeting/hearing be held? Prospective facilities include community centers, churches, temples, schools in the project area that have sufficient parking and meeting space for meeting materials, the project team, and expected crowd, and is ADA-compliant.

 ***Which*** meeting format or combination of formats suit the meeting purpose? Drop-in session, charrette/workshop, station concept, repeating presentations, virtual meeting, or facilitated meeting and small group meeting (e.g., alternative language meeting).

* ***How*** is the public meeting/hearing publicized? Public meetings must be advertised a minimum of **14** days prior to the meeting date using email, social media, radio, postcard/newsletter delivery to home/business address, and newspaper notices.

**Public Hearings**

* Notice for public hearings must be posted **30** days in advance of the hearing, this includes:
	+ Newspaper advertisements
	+ Postcards/newsletters in the mail
	+ NCDOT public meetings website
	+ Project website
* Notice of public hearings posted **5** working days in advance:
	+ Drive Time Radio advertising
	+ Social Media

**Public Meetings**

* Notice of public meetings whether Virtual or In-Person must be posted **14** days in advance of the meeting, this includes:
	+ Newspaper advertisements
	+ Postcards/newsletters in the mail
	+ NCDOT Public Meetings website
	+ Project website
* Notice of public meetings posted **5** working days in advance:
	+ Drive Time Radio advertising
	+ Social Media

 ***How*** do we submit a public meeting/hearing request via Environmental Tracking and Coordination System (ETRACS) to inform and involve the right NCDOT staff?

• You must have a North Carolina Identity Service (NCID) account to access ETRACS. There is no fee for an NCID account. Initiate an ETRACS entry for the project 6 to 8 weeks prior to a public meeting, to the PICSViz Group Leader.

• Once the ETRACS request has been received and assigned to a PICSViz Staff, an email notification will be sent back via ETRACS. If this is not received within one week, call the PICSViz Group Leader.

• The PICSViz Staff assigned to the public meeting will work collaboratively until the date of the public meeting.

 ***What*** happens after the public meeting/hearing?

• The PM or consultant should prepare a meeting/hearing summary. Summary should include the number and nature of the participants, comments submitted along with responses, and number and general nature of comments received. review comments submitted and prepare responses to comments and questions received using the [*Standard Responses to General Public Comments*](https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/PIDocuments/NCDOT%20Standard%20Responses%20to%20General%20Public%20Comments%209-21-21.pdf)document.

* Coordination with the **Subject Matter Experts** is recommended for review of responses, especially when a specialized response is needed.
* Draft comment responses should be sent to project team at least 1 week (minimum) prior to the post meeting.

• All comments and responses should be included in environmental review documentation.