

GUIDELINE ON PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors hereby establishes the following guideline for receiving public comments at Board meetings.

Agenda for Public Comments

The agenda of every regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors shall contain an item providing for receipt of comments by the general public on matters relevant to METRO's services, programs, projects and activities. The Chairman of the Board may, however, place an item on the agenda for receipt of public comments for any Board meeting. The Board shall hear speakers in the order prescribed by the Chairman, with consideration for public officials being heard before other speakers.

Requests for Appearance

A person wishing to address the Board at a meeting of the Board shall make his request by registering his name, address, telephone number and the subject of his proposed remarks with the Assistant Secretary to the Board, at 713-739-4834, or her designated representative at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Such requests may be made in person, in writing or by telephone.

Speakers are expected to conduct themselves responsibly during Board meetings and when addressing the Board. Foul language and the wearing of hats are prohibited.

Subject Matter of Comments

The subject matter of a speaker's remarks must be relevant to METRO's services, programs, projects or activities. The Chairman may assign responsibility to review and recommend action on any issue raised by speakers to an appropriate committee of the Board.

Staff Inquiry and Communication

Prior to a Board meetings, the General Manager or his designee shall attempt to review the subjects on which members of the public wish to speak. METRO staff members shall contact each person who registers to speak and, if the public party will discuss the subject with staff, shall attempt to resolve the issues to be raised by such person at the staff level. The General Manager or his designee shall promptly undertake the necessary investigation or consultation to resolve such issues and may, if necessary to allow time for effective efforts to address such issues and with the concurrence of the prospective speaker, hold the request to address the Board in abeyance until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Staff shall endeavor to promptly resolve issues raised by prospective speakers. Discussing the matter with staff is not a prerequisite to addressing the board if the speaker does not agree to talk to staff.

Comments Which Are Out of Order

The Board may disqualify a person for a reasonable period from future appearances during the public comments section of Board meetings if that person's prior comments have been inappropriate (i.e. incoherent, abusive, irrelevant, etc.). Further, the Chairman may, on his own motion or on the motion of any board member, rule any public speaker out of order if his comments are inappropriate or unreasonably repetitious of previous comments by other speakers.

Time Limits for Presentations

Speakers shall be afforded up to three minutes for their presentations. In instances where a number of speakers wish to address the same subject, the Chairman may specify in advance of the meeting a total time limit for presentations relating to the subject. The total time for speaker presentations relating to a subject shall not exceed thirty minutes. If those persons wishing to address the board on a subject cannot agree on the allocation of time among themselves, the Chairman shall allocate the time among the speakers, giving due consideration to the different positions or viewpoints to be presented.

Consecutive Appearances

For his first appearance before the Board, a Speaker will be afforded up to three (3) minutes for his presentation. If the same speaker wishes to address the Board again at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting, on the same or similar topic, he will be afforded up to two (2) minutes for his presentation. If the same speaker wishes to address the Board for a third consecutive time, on the same or similar topic, he will be permitted only one (1) minute for his presentation. The cycle will begin again after the Speaker has refrained from any previous appearances before the Board for the preceding two (2) months period.

Speakers with three (3) minutes of allocated time will speak first, followed by the speakers with two (2) minutes of allocated time. Speakers with the minimum one (1) minute of allocated time will speak last.

Audio-Visual Presentations

Speakers who wish to distribute written statements or other materials to the Board members may do so by delivering eleven (11) copies to an Assistant Secretary. Speakers desiring audio-visual equipment must request such equipment at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Such equipment will be furnished only if available and only if its use will not be unduly disruptive of the Board's proceedings.

Board Comments and Questions

Out of respect for the time constraints and schedules of other speakers, questions by Board members to speakers or comments on speaker presentations shall be reserved until all speakers have concluded their remarks.