HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

In March 2020, to help control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the City of Wheat Ridge began conducting virtual meetings for City Council, Planning Commission and other boards. Virtual meetings encourage public participation as usual while also keeping the community, elected officials, staff and residents safe while continuing to conduct important City business.

Starting in June 2021, the City returned to in-person public meetings and also retained the option for virtual public participation. The City will continue using this hybrid meeting format for the City Council and Planning Commission; this means that public meetings will continue to be virtually accessible and will also be held in-person if allowed by public health guidelines on the respective meeting date. This guide describes the various ways in which the public may participate in public meetings.

1. TO COMMENT IN ADVANCE
- Click this link: www.wheatridgespeaks.org
- Use Wheat Ridge Speaks to review agendas and staff reports and to submit written comment.
- For City Council meetings on Wheat Ridge Speaks:
    - You may submit comments at any time until noon on the day of the meeting.
    - For public hearings related to development or zoning, content will be posted about 10 days in advance.
    - For all other agenda items, content will be posted about 4 days in advance.
- For Planning Commission meetings on Wheat Ridge Speaks:
    - You may submit comments until noon the day before the meeting.
    - Content will be posted about 10 days in advance.

2. TO COMMENT VIRTUALLY DURING THE LIVE MEETING (by web or phone)
Join the live meeting through the web link or phone number (with access code) provided on the calendar on the City's website and provided on the top of all meeting agendas. Find the calendar at www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/calendar
- You will be joined into the meeting and automatically muted.
- When public comment is invited, all participants will be unmuted and called upon by last name. (For example, the Mayor or meeting Chair may say: "Now is the time for public comment. All members of the public will be unmuted. Please mute yourself or keep background noise to a minimum. If your last name begins with A through F, you may now speak.")
- Please only join via the Zoom web or phone meeting if you intend to participate. If you wish to simply view the meeting, see option 4 below.

3. TO COMMENT IN PERSON
- Confirm that local health guidelines allow the meeting to be held in-person. The meeting format will be described on the City's calendar at www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/calendar
- When you arrive, sign up on the roster to speak on a specific agenda item.
- Review these tips for commenting during a public meeting or hearing: https://bit.ly/WRPublicHearings

4. TO VIEW THE MEETING LIVE OR LATER
The meeting will be live streamed and archived for viewing at:
- www.wheatridgespeaks.org (watch here to follow along with the agenda packet)
- Channel 8 on your Comcast feed
- YouTube Live www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/view

HELPFUL TIPS FOR A GOOD VIRTUAL MEETING EXPERIENCE

- If joining through the web, log on 5 minutes before the start of the meeting, since some online products require downloads and installation.
- State your name when you speak.
- Turn off nearby cell phones, if you are using a computer to connect.
- Please use a headset or earbuds.
- **<u>Only</u>** have the virtual meeting application open on your computer. If you are running other programs like email or have additional websites open in your browser, it will interfere with your ability to hear or see the information. Close all other applications and windows when participating.
- Please limit distractions when possible. Be aware of background noise.
- Video streaming is a relatively new technology. Some things to be mindful of when connecting with your computer/tablet or smart phone.
  - If your computer/tablet or smart phone is older than 2015 it is recommended that you use a landline/standard telephone to dial into the virtual meeting number to ensure that you can hear the meeting clearly.
  - Internet service minimum needs to be 40-50 Mbps for best results with a virtual meeting.
  - Depending on the Internet speed and service in your neighborhood, the most reliable way to participate in the meeting is to call the phone number provided, rather than joining the meeting though the web link.