



## **Guidelines governing public comments at meetings of the Board of Trustees**

The Open Meetings Act of the State of Texas requires the VIA Board of Trustees to allow members of the public to attend meetings where permitted.

The VIA Board of Trustees does allow members of the public to speak in a “Citizens to be Heard” segment of the regular meetings. Because time is limited, citizens are encouraged to keep comments clear and concise. In order to set reasonable guidelines that will allow citizens time to address the board without significantly hindering the progress of the meeting, the following rules apply to all people who wish to speak:

- Citizens should register their name, address, telephone number, and the subject of their remarks prior to the start of the meeting.
- Topics of comments should be relevant to VIA’s services, programs, projects, or activities. Personal attacks and comments not relevant to VIA services, programs, projects or activities will not be allowed. Irrelevant topics will not receive a formal written response from VIA.
- Abusive, irrelevant, or personal attacks that directly address people by name are considered inappropriate and will not be addressed or receive a formal written response from VIA.
- Citizens will be allowed three minutes to speak on a topic. If the same topic is addressed by the same citizen at the next meeting, the topic will only be formally responded to the first time it is addressed before the VIA Board of Trustees.
- Hard copy handouts to the board will be allowed. Citizens are asked to provide 11 copies of their handouts, ready to distribute, to the board assistant at the time of the meeting.
- Whether speaking on an agenda item or at the “Citizens to be Heard” portion of the meeting, citizens shall be called upon in the order that they have registered.
- Disturbances – Citizens attending the meeting shall not delay, interrupt or disrupt the proceedings or refuse to obey the orders of the Chair. Persons in attendance are encouraged to remain seated except the person at the floor microphone with permission of the Chair.
- At the discretion of the VIA Board Chair, the total time for all citizens to be heard may, at times, not exceed one (1) hour.
- Because items presented during “Citizens to be Heard” are not agenda items, the VIA Board cannot respond to citizens.
- An organization shall have a total of nine (9) minutes to address the VIA Board of Trustees. A recognized organization shall be represented by three (3) individuals in order to be allotted the nine (9) minutes to speak.
- A citizen may yield his/her time of three (3) minutes to another speaker. However, the total time a speaker can address the VIA Board of Trustees with time yielded shall not exceed nine (9) minutes.