

Brown Act Basics



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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What is the Brown Act?

- California's open meeting law
- Requires that all “**meetings**” of a “**legislative body**” be open and accessible to all members of the public
- “Legislative Body” – Nearly all boards, committees, and councils serving a public agency
- “Meeting” – a quorum or majority of a legislative body in the same place, at the same time, to hear, discuss, or deliberate on agency business
- “Meeting” includes online spaces like emails and social media



Agendas are your roadmap

- Meetings must follow posted agenda
- Cannot discuss items at length if not noticed on the agenda
- Cannot take action on items not labeled as action items



Serial meetings are prohibited

- “Serial meeting” – series of communications used to discuss agency business among a quorum or majority of body
- “Chain” meetings – game of telephone
- “Hub and Spoke” meetings – one person at the center
- “Firework” meetings – “reply all”
- Applies to social media – can use social media to discuss and promote your work with the public, but not with other members; prohibited from commenting on or interacting with other members’ social media posts; best to “unfriend” or “unfollow”



Questions?

