Since Governor Greg Abbott’s suspension of certain open meetings provisions in March of 2020, Groundwater Management Areas (GMAs) have had the option to hold remote meetings by video or telephone conference call as an alternative to in-person meetings. The ability to utilize remote meetings has been particularly important in that it allowed GMAs to continue the time-sensitive task of setting desired future conditions for the current 5-year planning cycle.

EVERY GMA stated it may use remote meetings if the option was offered, and most said they would use them occasionally or frequently.

100% of GMAs reported either increased or consistent levels of public participation compared to in-person meetings.

59 Remote meetings held

Positive aspects identified:

- Improved public participation and accessibility
- Time and cost savings
- Easier to schedule
- More consultants were able to participate
- Easily able to record for later viewing

None of the survey respondents reported a negative perspective on remote meetings.

When asked to identify any negative aspects of remote meetings, GMA coordinators reported occasional technical difficulties and a lack of informal interaction.

Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts sent a survey to all GMA Coordinators in April 2021 and received information from 14 respondents. The information presented here summarizes the results of the survey and answers were not independently verified.