

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Workshop Notes

Discussion & Recommendations to Inform Accessible Voting Methods

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Agenda

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Collaborative principles
- Opening activity to connect us to our purpose
- Context-setting presentation and discussion
- Voting methods discussion
- Closing activity and remarks

Collaborative Principles

- Everyone has important contributions to make
- No one knows everything, but together we know a lot
- Be curious
- You don't have to be articulate all the time
- Move up, move up

Opening Activity

Submit your response via Google Form called [Opening Activity \(1 of 4\)](#), or share your thoughts out loud in the meeting. The facilitator will read written responses aloud.

In 1-2 sentences, describe an experience with voting you're aware of and why accessible voting methods matter to you.

Points of Discussion

Please refer to the recording for verbatim responses.

- Accessibility needs to be a priority and it hasn't been in the past
- No option for some people to vote independently. It's frustrating we are still having this conversation after 10 years
- Degradation of autonomy when you have to ask someone else to mark your vote
- Physically difficult i.e. distance from parking lot
- Personal stress of the experience and it's not efficient and it perpetuates stigma
- I have limited mobility and last municipal election I had a hard time walking from the lot in the cold to the gym and to the polling booth.
- I've had issues with voting being inaccessible because of perfumes worn by participants and facilitators.

- I have only once or twice been able to vote completely independently and that was online. Every other method has had issues that have caused me to compromise my independence.
- Stripping individuals of their human rights
- Loss of dignity
- Our words, thoughts and opinions are so important. These notes can't be the only information to inform the staff of the next steps. Please use the recording verbatim.

Context-Setting Presentation Discussion

Submit your response via Google Form called [Presentation Discussion \(2 of 4\)](#), or share your thoughts out loud in the meeting. The facilitator will read written responses aloud.

Points of Discussion

Please refer to the recording for verbatim responses

What did you hear?

- Staff talking about staff experience
- Staff timelines explained
- Providing context to why we are discussing voting methods

How do you feel about what you heard?

- Invalidated. Staff driven, one sided, so far seems city staff focused, we need AAC voices to be central, have felt betrayed by the process last year
- Comments like "we didn't have sufficient time" are not accurate
- Staff drafting a motion for us doesn't mean that we have to accept that motion. I want to make sure that our voices are centered
- There are barriers inherent in the system and process
- This isn't only a nice to do, it is a human right requirement of government to allow for citizens to vote
- Enhancements is a good term, but doesn't capture the gravity of the situation. Liability should be a factor
- Solution can't be staff driven, staff will facilitate us and move the process forward, but must be driven by this group and others like this group
- Some have met with Human Right Commission and were told there is a case
- 2014 had options that we haven't had since, it's been more than 10 years since this conversation started—I don't see good faith discussion being able to be continued forever
- Council has to understand what's happening, not sure they do understand, staff are part of the problem and council is part of the problem
- Not sure yet that our voices will produce any significant changes

What questions do you have about what you heard?

- No questions added in this discussion

Voting Methods Discussion

Share your thoughts out loud in the meeting.

The force field analysis structure for this conversation was not agreed upon. Some AAC member comments responded to the following chart. Most AAC member comments sit outside the chart as recommendations to be applied to the whole.

Points of Discussion

Please refer to the recording for verbatim responses

Internet Voting - Forces that Attract (Meets the goal of accessibility)

- Reaches a wide group
- Most positive response from voters
- Most widely accessible
- Allow tools and hardware people are already using
- Quick and easy - make things better for able bodied people as well
- "Computers can be hacked" is often brought up, but shouldn't let fear of this preventing so many people
- More universal

Internet Voting - Forces that Repel (Challenges the goal of accessibility)

- Not everyone has resources (internet connection)

Vote from Home - Forces that Attract (Meets the goal of accessibility)

- Great for environmental sensitivities and mental health concerns

Vote from Home - Forces that Repel (Challenges the goal of accessibility)

- Not all would want people to show up at their door

Vote by Mail - Forces that Attract (Meets the goal of accessibility)

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Vote by Mail - Forces that Repel (Challenges the goal of accessibility)

- Difficult to get to a mailbox
- Can be lost

Vote by Phone - Forces that Attract (Meets the goal of accessibility)

- Feedback processes for those who can't access other methods

Vote by Phone - Forces that Repel (Challenges the goal of accessibility)

- Can be confusing

Remote Accessible Vote by Mail - Forces that Attract (Meets the goal of accessibility)

- Access online, can use assistive technology
- Real paper ballot that can be recounted

Remote Accessible Vote by Mail - Forces that Repel (Challenges the goal of accessibility)

- Not everyone has access to a printer

Points of Discussion

Please refer to the recording for verbatim responses

- No one option will work for everyone, we'll need multiple options
- Don't like the idea of naming reasons people wouldn't want this option—everyone needs something different and this is unfair to ask
- None on their own will be enough
- Internet voting or vote accessible by mail will be required for me to vote independently
- Encourage all accessible formats to be used and available to everyone
- My concern is that the council will use their understanding of accessibility, which may not capture the whole picture. It can't just be a literal interpretation (consider what are their barriers to understanding and how can we overcome these). We need more listening on all sides.
- Built environment can be a barrier in itself
- People's needs are not just one avenue
- Accessibility is for everyone
- Mobile kiosk, voting machines all over would be one solution
- No two people have the same needs, so we will all have different opinions
- Don't want to pick and choose, let's continue to add to the list of options
- Urge the city not to have us decide which is most important, all options without taking away options (feels like some disabilities win and some lose)
- We don't have to care about the City's budget, we have to provide our recommendation
- Computer access must be included
- We can't predict who will use what option. All three options (internet voting, vote from home, vote by mail) should be provided, plus many other accommodations
- Inclusion of all methods lowers liability
- Worried about being pigeon holed into picking one - relates to human rights
- Consider how to communicate options, who people can connect with
- Offer as many as possible is important, consider how this will be connected to the community conversation
- Literal logistics will be important in implementation—do people understand how it works, each step in the process for each method, and what their options are
- Factor of non-disclosure should be baked into the voting system (no verification of identity)
- All barriers can exist and all of these option could help to remove barriers
- Strongly disagree that the first three (internet voting, vote from home and vote by mail) were more talked about in this discussion than the last two (vote by phone, remote accessible vote by mail)
- Would welcome another conversation with staff that is not facilitated—we need a dedicated and direct conversation of us speaking our minds and feedback

- I would urge staff not to craft a motion that recommends or guides by prioritizing a few methods—the option to “fill in the blanks” is not sufficient
- “Nothing about us without us” further consultation is extremely key

Summary of Themes

The following provides an overview of the key themes and concerns expressed during the feedback session, but should not be relied on solely. Please refer to the recording for verbatim discussion with the AAC.

Multiple and Diverse Accessibility Options:

- “No one option will work for everyone, we’ll need multiple options.
- None on its own will be enough.
- Accessibility leads to better outcomes for everyone.
- No two people have the same needs, so we will all have different opinions.
- Offer as many as possible is important, consider how this will be connected to the community conversation.

Concerns about Bias and Fairness:

- Don’t like the idea of naming reasons people wouldn’t want this option.
- My concern is that the council will use their understanding of accessibility, which may not capture the whole picture.
- Don’t want to pick and choose, let’s continue to add to the list of options.
- Urge the city not to have us decide which is most important, all options are needed without taking away options.

AAC Voices Must Be Central:

- Nothing about us without us—further consultation is extremely key.
- Worried about being pigeonholed into picking one, instead of being fully heard. This is a question of human rights.
- AAC doesn’t have to care about the City’s budget, we have to provide our recommendation.
- We need AAC voices to be central.

Technical and Procedural Considerations:

- Internet voting or vote accessible by mail will be required for me to vote independently.
- Computer access must be included.
- Literal logistics will be important in implementation—do people understand how it works, each step in the process for each method, and what their options are.
- Factor of non-disclosure should be baked into the voting system (no verification of identity).
- Enhancements is a good term, but doesn’t capture the gravity of the situation. Liability should be a factor.
- Consider how to communicate options, who people can connect with.

Lack of Trust and Past Issues:

- 2014 had options that we haven't had since, it's been more than 10 years since this conversation started. I don't see good faith discussion being able to be continued forever.
- Feeling invalidated by the context-setting pieces shared—the message is staff driven, one-sided, so far seems city staff focused.
- Not sure yet that our voices will produce any significant changes.

Council and Staff Challenges:

- Council has to understand what's happening, not sure they do understand, staff are part of the problem and council is part of the problem.
- Solution can't be staff driven, staff will facilitate us and move the process forward, but must be driven by this group and others like this group.
- AAC would welcome another conversation directly with staff that is not facilitated.