

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2018, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

City Hall, Room 305

Meeting Attendees:

John Arntz, Director, Department of Elections	Sascha Bittner, State Council of Developmental Disabilities
Nicole Bohn, Director, Mayor's Office on Disability	Francis Lau, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Nataliya Kuzina, Department of Elections	Hillary Brown
Kimberly Daniel, Department of Elections	Elizabeth Dunlap
Jonathan Aaberg, Department of Elections	Lulu Feliciano, SFMTA
Jill Fox, Department of Elections	George Sacco
Iva Maurin, Department of Elections	Jackson Soderquist
Andy Pastalaniec, Department of Elections	Lisa Marie Martinez, Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Aurora Livingston, Department of Elections	Lisa Starliper, CCSF Department of Emergency Management
Jeremiah Beasley, SFSU	Caitlin Morgan, Institute on Aging
Bill Hershon, Disability Rights California	
Fred Nisen, Disability Rights California	
Jane Ferguson Flout, Catholic Charities	

Meeting Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Nicole started by talking about practices that we want to follow for providing documents and communicating with each other to make sure we are accommodating different communication styles and accommodating different participant needs
 - b. Ground rules, which can always be revisited and revised, include:
 - i. Speak one at a time – don't speak over one another
 - ii. For the benefit of those who are not in the room or who are blind or low vision, introduce yourself before you speak
 - iii. If someone needs something clarified or repeated, please accommodate
 - iv. Provide documents for review in advanced and in an accessible format
 - v. Include all reference documents when sending document for review
 - vi. Repeat what is said to ensure all understand
 - vii. John added that VAAC meetings are a good opportunity for the Department to learn about accessible meeting practices, so please feel free to let us know what we can do to meet expectations
 - c. John shared that one challenge is how to best provide info to those with a sight disability so that we can gain feedback, if there are thoughts on how we can best solicit information please share
 - i. Must be able to see something 3x magnified so seeing it on screen ahead of time is the preferred practice.
2. Update from Mayor's Office on Disability

- a. Topics from MOD since the last VAAC meeting:
 - i. Update on significant transportation initiatives state and local
 - 1. The state is moving towards disabled parking placard reform and officials are aware that disability parking placard abuse is widespread
 - a. Four years ago, San Francisco put forward recommendations for efforts that might help with the reform process, such as different controls with DMV records updates and the suggestion to implement a tiered parking permit structure and structure for fees. This idea was rejected locally at the time. State is hoping that SF will engage again in support of State-proposed solutions
 - b. LA has conducted feasibility studies and the efforts to overhaul the program are regaining energy
 - i. MOD anticipates presentations at the state level about what placard reform might look like
 - c. If you are interested in this topic, please contact Nicole at MOD nicole.bohn@sfgov.org
 - 2. Local requests to communicate with the CPUC regarding the accessibility of transportation network companies or TNC's (Lyft, Uber, etc.), which are currently regulated by CPUC and require recommendations to be vetted by CPUC, are anticipated to be placed on the agenda soon
 - a. Over the past several years, SFMTA has weighed in on the accessibility of transportation network companies hoping to find viable access solutions. TNC's have raised concerns about whether or not they function as a transportation service or if they are strictly an app, for accessibility oversight purposes. From the disability community and SFMTA perspective, TNC's provide direct transportation services and should be accessible, or provide an accessible equivalent
 - b. Issues pertaining to disability access are on the upcoming CPUC agenda and will be open for comment
 - i. MOD is seeking folks who want to engage and comment on this topic, specifically regarding the accessibility of vehicles and of the apps themselves
 - c. SFMTA wants to ask the CPUC to allow SF City and County to place a surcharge on TNC rides that are not accessible and the charge would go towards improving accessibility of taxi and other accessible transportation programs, a model that has had success in other major cities
 - d. SFMTA has been unsuccessful in getting the CPUC to respond to past requests. However, the disability access being on an upcoming CPUC agenda will allow for new opportunities to solicit response from the CPUC, as well as feedback from the public
 - i. If you are interested in being a participant in the CPUC comment period please contact Nicole
 - ii. The issue of service animals being accepted by these companies was also raised, and while MTA is especially concerned about wheelchair

access, it is also appropriate to raise concerns about service animal issue, or any disability access issue related to TNC's

iii. There was a question as to who will run the program associated with the oversight of the surcharge, if approved

1. SFMTA would oversee the funds, as SFMTA currently oversees all aspects of transportation, so the money would go toward augmenting the program and giving incentives to those who provide accessible taxi services

3. The Age and Disability Friendly Task Force has concluded efforts to look at different recommendations across eight domains and are now working on implementing recommendations across the domains. Specific to the community engagement domain:

a. Recommendations pertained to getting folks with disabilities and seniors more engaged and represented on committees and in general, getting people with disabilities out to vote were discussed

4. Next Mayors Disability Council meeting Friday 1/19 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in City Hall and on SFGTV

a. Topics include Recreation and Park, Healthy Saturday and Sunday park closures and accessibility concerns

b. Support at Home program, which provides financial incentives to people with disabilities who are not eligible for State IHSS services. The program is now looking for folks 18-55

c. Part of the meeting will be a tribute to Mayor Ed Lee, opening the floor for gratitude and experiences related to Mayor Ed Lee and disability access

3. VAAC Involvement in Implementation of the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail System

a. During the last meeting we had a presentation on the ballot format for military and overseas voters and voters with disabilities to access the ballot and the agenda for this meeting included a link to access a test ballot for review

i. In order to incorporate VAAC feedback acquired by testing the San Mateo County ballot into San Francisco's instructions and processes, we need feedback by January 30 at the latest

b. Dominion voting system testing was conducted and Fred was able to participate and share feedback, as well as frame steps to take if you are interested in future testing opportunities

i. The best way to join up is to send an email to the volingsystems.ca@sos.gov to say you want to be part of the mailing list to receive future testing of voting system equipment opportunities; they will email you asking if you want to participate for each testing opportunity

1. When it comes time to test a new system or software, you will receive a link to test

a. If you are interested in testing polling place equipment, the invitation process is the same, however in order to test equipment you will need to visit Sacramento

ii. Fred's feedback on the Dominion system:

1. The actual ballot itself is easy to go through if you use the tab through function and it was easy to make selections

2. Printing it was easy

3. Only problem was that Fred felt getting to the ballot was way too complicated, since you had to put the voter ID, name, and then they email you with a link where you have to set a password and username then they send you another link to log in
4. Must be mailed back and Fred does not think it will be easy in real life because the vote by mail envelope can be printed out so you have to assemble it – it was like a label
 - a. Nicole added that some of the previous concerns were related to not having a printer or how to figure out the envelope or mailing it back in and asked if there were any updates for addressing these concerns
5. The envelope has holes on the signature line so people can feel where to sign the envelope
6. If you have an envelope from the county it might be more clear than printing it out
7. John shared that he spoke with the vendor regarding what they do with the feedback they get from users and they indicated that if the feedback fits within the scope of the original application they will make changes to the application and work it into what they are proposing
 - a. If the feedback is beyond the scope of the original application, the changes would happen in the next build; it's an ongoing process
- iii. John also added that Fred is part of the State VAAC and asked VAAC participants to share feedback so Fred can speak about San Francisco's experience testing the RAV
 1. Fred also provided a PowerPoint regarding the RAV and how it came to be, which the Department will share in follow-up correspondence
 2. Nicole suggested that the Department check in with the library to see what services they can offer to assist us with RAV implementation for voters who do not have Internet access at home
4. Business Case: City Possibly Developing Open Source Voting System
 - a. Friday we are expected to get a draft and January 26 is the deadline for the contractor to submit the business case to the city. For VAAC purposes, focus on the usability of the system
 - b. Based on the findings the City will determine whether to pursue the open source topic
 - i. VAAC should review the report once it is available
5. Implementation Timelines
 - a. See appendix A of the January 9 agenda for timelines associated with the Departments work on RAV, the leasing of a new voting system, and the possible business case for open source
 - b. The timeline gives the VAAC a general sense of when the Department needs to make decisions about a variety of things so consult this list and make feedback known in time for the Department to implement feedback
 - i. A pilot program allowing for public testing will be a requirement in the RFP for vendors to set up any new systems
 1. Feedback will be included in the scoring of the system and will help determine who will be the winner of the bid
 2. Think about testing, the approach to testing, and this group can help guide who will be deciding the winning bid based on the outcome of the pilot program
 - c. With all that is happening between now and the next meeting, folks will need to engage via email and in smaller groups

- i. Communication via email, over the phone, or in smaller meetings in John's office are all acceptable ways to get feedback to the Department
 - 1. Start with the San Mateo ballot so we can start developing our own demo ballot for RAV in SF county
- 6. Poll Worker script regarding equipment that offers accessible voting options at the polling places
 - a. Fred commended the Department for being so willing to step up efforts to inform more people about accessible voting options at the polls
 - b. John, Yelena, Bill, and Fred have been working on updated language might look like
 - i. "You will get a paper ballot unless you want to use the Edge ballot with accessible features."
 - 1. It can be hard because not all poll workers use the scripts and it will be important to remind poll workers to always offer
 - ii. We want feedback on training and materials
 - 1. Sascha will write up her statement about her experience at the Voting Center during the June 2016 election when she asked to use the accessible machine and staff offered instead to complete the ballot for her. She knew her rights and demanded use of a accessible ballots
- 7. Takeaways from the meeting
 - a. Please access San Mateo ballot and provide feedback
 - b. We will be communicating via email before next meeting
 - i. Provide the survey
 - ii. Specific to subtopics, if there is a particular group that resonates, please let us know so we can organize around that
 - c. Create an email message that these groups can push out to their users to provide a lot of feedback and ask "what is the best way to reach you?" and provide the date deadline – please send it back to Elections