

Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee – July 31, 2018

In Attendance

Name	Organization
John Arntz	Department of Elections
Nataliya Kuzina	Department of Elections
Mayank Patel	Department of Elections
Andy Pastalaniec	Department of Elections
Jonathan Aaberg	Department of Elections
Eric Anderson	Department of Elections
Nicole Bohn	Mayor's Office on Disability
Fred Nisen	Disability Rights California
Bill Hershon	Disability Rights California
Fiona Hinze	Independent Living Resource Center
Lisa Maria Martinez	Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Elizabeth Ann Dunlap	Poll Worker Representative
Hillary Brown	Poll Worker Representative
Alice Chiu	Senior & Disability Action
Lulu Feliciano	SFMTA-Municipal Transportation Agency
Jane Glasby	SFPL-Library for the Blind and Print Disabled
Jeremiah Beasley	SFSU Disability Programs and Resource Center

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting began with a presentation from Nicole Bohn of the Mayor's Office on Disability updating the group on local and statewide measures of interest. Information on the Mayor's Office on Disability including upcoming events and resources for citizens with disabilities can be found [on the MOD webpage](#).
 - a. The Office of the City Administrator is beginning the discussion on emerging technology and meetings for feedback have begun. The next meeting for the group will be on Friday August 17, 2018 from 2pm-4pm in the 2nd Floor Auditorium at 1 South Van Ness, San Francisco 94102.
 - i. Discussions are focusing around what emerging technology means and how the city can best adapt to it. Specifically, how can the city be proactive instead of reactive? Members of the community are encouraged to attend the public meetings.
 1. Information regarding the emerging tech effort and the schedule of past and upcoming meetings can be found at [Emerging Technology Open Working Group website](#) and any questions or concerns can be emailed to emerging.tech@sfgov.org.
 - b. Parking Placard reform has been placed on pause until the next session which will open in January 2019.
 - c. Supervisor Ronen has passed a renewal of registration for affordable housing which goes through an accessibility review by the city. This is a part of the focus on continuing to prioritize affordable and accessible housing projects.
 - i. [The Accessible Building Entrance Ordinance \(No. 51-16\)](#) requires that public buildings have their primary entrances be accessible for people with

- disabilities. More information can be found at [SF Dept. of Building Inspection web page on the Accessible Business Entrance Program](#)
- d. The new Single-Use Foodware Plastics, Toxics and Litter Reduction ordinance, coequally known as the “Plastic Straw Ban” contains a provision for exemptions for people who have disabilities or medial conditions which would require some kind of plastic utensil. The exact language for the exemptions has not yet been added but is expected to be included during the amendment phase which will happen in September.
 - i. The new ordinance will take effect on July 1, 2019 and requires that straws, stirrers, toothpicks, beverage plugs, and cocktail sticks must be plastic free. [More information on the provisions of the Single –Use Foodware Plastics, Toxics, and Litter Reduction Ordinance can be found on the SF Dept. of the Environment web page.](#)
 - ii. [Additional information regarding the new waste reduction ordinance and the exemption for people with disabilities can be found on the MOD website.](#)
 - e. The group was also updated on the status of [SB-1376, also known as the “Accessibility for All” act](#), which would require Transportation Network Companies (TNC), such as Lyft and Uber, to provide accessible services for people with disabilities.
 - i. The bill will be in committee during the week of August 6-10. There is concern over the final language of the bill. It is uncertain as of now if the bill may be made available for public comment.
2. The Department of Elections gave a presentation with the highlights of implementation of the new Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail System (RAVBM) which was first introduced during the June 5th Consolidated Statewide Primary Election.
 - a. The RAVBM system was made possible due to recent changes to state election law that expanded the definition of such a system to apply to voters with disabilities, in addition to military and overseas voters. [Elec. Code §303.3](#)
 - i. Under California law, only voters with disabilities and voters in the military or living overseas are eligible to use this system. An eligible voter must be registered as a Vote-by-Mail voter to access the system.
 - ii. Voters have until October 30, 2018 to register to become a Vote-by-Mail Voter for the November 6th election.
 1. Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) ballots can be accessed beginning 29 days before and including Election Day and like all VBM ballots, if returned by mail, the envelopes must be **postmarked by Election Day** and be in the possession of the Department of Elections **no later than** Friday November 9, 2018.
 - a. Ballots that are returned in person must be received by the Department **no later than** 8 p.m. on Election Day.
 2. [Voters interested in registering to vote-by-mail are encouraged to visit https://sfelections.sfgov.org/vote-mail](#) and use the Department’s Vote-by-Mail application tool. A print version of the application is also available for download on the website which can be returned either by mail or in person to the Department of

Elections Room 48, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall.
Voters can also contact the Department of Elections and apply to become at Vote-by-Mail voter at (415) 554-4375 or TTY: (415) 554-4386

- iii. For the November 6, 2018 election, the RAVBM system will be available starting October 9th or 29 days before Election Day.
- b. In the lead up to the June 5th Primary Election, the Department of Elections had a proactive outreach program for developing awareness of RAVBM system. Specifically, the Department:
 - i. Contacted 70 organizations which primarily serve voters who might benefit from knowing about the system
 - 1. This includes conducting informational presentations at Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center and San Francisco In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority.
 - ii. Held 50 community outreach events including partnering with the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, and Lighthouse for the Blind to provide information via email, in braille, and large print to their clients.
 - iii. Distributed 100 Copies of the audio Voter Information Pamphlets directly to voters or provided to organizations who assist visually or print impaired residents
 - iv. Included information about RAVBM system in approximately 300,000 Vote-by-Mail ballot packets, as well as 500,000 Voter Information Pamphlets; both VBM packets and VIPS were sent out approximately one month before the election.
 - 1. A section on the RAVBM system was also included on the website explaining the system and answering questions that voters might have. [The site dedicated to the RAVBM system can be found at https://sfelections.sfgov.org/remote-accessible-vote-mail-system](https://sfelections.sfgov.org/remote-accessible-vote-mail-system).
 - v. Featured instructions on how to use the RAVBM system in the Voter Information Pamphlet available in MP3 audio format on the Department of Election’s website.
 - 1. The Voter Information Pamphlet and RAVBM instructions were also available in cassette, CD, and flash drive formats in the public library.
- c. For the June 5, 2018 Election, the Department saw 145 people who accessed the system and 31 people who downloaded the ballot through RAVBM portal
 - i. Fred Nisen, Disability Rights California, made a comment that only about 100 people used the system statewide.
 - 1. Some suggestions for increasing RAVBM usage included dropping “Remote” from the instructions and referring to the system as “Accessible Vote-By-Mail Ballot System”, and making it very explicit in the instructions that the ballot must be printed and mailed or dropped off at the Department of Elections. RAVBM ballots cannot be submitted electronically
 - 2. If a printer is not available at the moment when a voter has completed the ballot, one of the options is to save the ballot as a

- PDF file on a flash drive until a printer can be accessed. For security purposes, voters are advised not email the ballot to themselves.
- a. Printers are available at the Department of Elections in Room 48 of City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, at the San Francisco Public Library, community rooms and other public facilities. .
 - d. If anyone has any questions about the RAVBM System or accessing, marking, or returning their ballot, they may contact the Department by calling (415) 554-4375; (866) 325-9163 toll free; by emailing sfvote@sfgov.org; or by visiting City Hall, Room 48: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
 - e. Looking ahead towards the November 2018 election, the Department of Elections is planning on using the same outreach methods plus additional methods to increase knowledge about the system in the community.
 - i. Proactive outreach will start earlier in the election cycle. Specifically, the Department plans to:
 1. Form new partnerships with San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services, Institute on Aging, and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers in San Francisco
 2. Research additional outreach opportunities with established contacts.
 - a. To get involved with the Department’s outreach efforts, or for more information, contact us using our [contact form](#), or call us at (415) 554-4375.
 - ii. Simplifying the RAVBM portal instructions, and discussing where people can access a printer if one is not immediately available
 - f. [Highlights about the RAVBM from the June 5, 2018 Election can be found on the sfelections.org website here.](#)
 3. The Department provided an update and explanation of efforts to provide ballots to voters who are unable to appear at a polling location in person due to being homebound, in a hospital, residential care facility, or otherwise physically unable to come to the polls.
 - a. Starting 29 days before Election Day, the Department of Elections facilitates a ballot delivery and pick up program. A voter may authorize a person to pick up and return a ballot on their behalf.
 - i. [Authorization form can be found and printed at https://sfelections.sfgov.org/accessible-voting-and-services](#) under the *Additional Accessible Voting Options and Services* tab.
 - ii. Voters may also submit their own written authorization. The written authorization must be signed under penalty of perjury and include the voter’s name, date of birth, residential address, and the name of the person authorized to pick up the ballot.
 - b. The Department also facilitates a program for voters in residential care facilities, hospital, or inmates who are eligible to vote. This program includes all aspects of the voting process including registration, filling out the vote-by-mail application, ballot pickup or delivery, and assistance marking the ballot.

- i. The information is available on the Departments of Elections website and the Department is already in contact with appropriate facilities to increase awareness among voters who might benefit from the service.
 - c. In order to improve knowledge of these programs within the communities, it was suggested that the Department partner with the Long Term Care Coordinator Council, and the Department of Public Health. It was also suggested that the Department contact the Department of Emergency Management and get on the agenda for the Access and Flexible Needs Working Group to share information.
4. The group broke for an interactive presentation and demonstration on the new voting system from Dominion Voting. Feedback was provided directly to the Department of Elections and to the Mayor's Office on Disability.