



Voting Accessibility Committee (VAAC) Meeting Minutes

May 28, 2021 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Recording available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHWmEgF_eR0

Meeting Attendance:

John Arntz, Director, Department of Elections
Deborah Kaplan, Mayor's Office on Disability
Alyssa Prohaska, Dominion Voting Systems
Travis Kester, Dominion Voting Systems
Andy Pastalaniec, Department of Elections
Clint Wolfrom, Department of Elections
Eve Peña, Department of Elections
Jonathan Aaberg, Department of Elections
Leo Samuelson, Department of Elections
Mayank Patel, Department of Elections
Nataliya Kuzina, Department of Elections
Tiff Lee, Department of Elections
Winter Patterson, Department of Elections
Ellen (last name not displayed in meeting)
Elizabeth Ann Dunlap
Fiona Hinze, Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC)
Francis Lau, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Fred Nisen, Disability Rights California
Jay Roevers
Linda French, League of Women Voters San Francisco
Marti Goddard, SFPL Access Services
Thomas Novogradac
Victoria Post

Meeting Minutes

A. Welcome

B. Review of recommendations VAAC provided to Dominion Voting Systems

1. Dominion Voting Systems representatives reviewed actions taken in relation to VAAC's recommendations for improvements to accessible voting equipment.

a) Independent Activation of voting session and independent tabulation

This feature will require hardware and software changes, so it may take some time to completely implement. However, this remains a priority item and the team will share more when there is new information.

b) Synthesized Voice Enhancements and Better Speech Output (complete)

Enhancements have been made to the voice features and audio.

c) Greater Options for Zoom Features and Text Customization

This feature is undergoing additional evaluation and could be implemented on the software side, but nothing new to report as of this meeting.

d) Ballot Marking Device (BMD) Tilt

Currently evaluating alternatives to make this process easier for everyone, but the tilt is designed this way on purpose so the machine doesn't fall over or adjust while-in use. Evaluation ongoing.

e) One Contest Per Screen (complete)

This feature has been implemented; the default mode is one contest per screen.

f) ATI Color/Shape Description Mentioned for Every Contest (partial)

There have been some improvements to make this navigation easier and more intuitive when compared to previous builds, but additional enhancements are still undergoing further evaluation.

g) Change the Audio Wording Flow for RCV Contests

Additional information will need to be provided to DVS to assess solutions.

h) Lowering the On-Screen Touch Pad

This is a high priority item and is currently in evaluation. Subject matter experts have confirmed that this feature could be relatively easy to implement, but no official timeline ready to share.

i) Reduce On-Screen Glare

More information will need to be provided, but environmental factors may be changed to lower glare on screen (such as moving the BMD to face away from natural or synthetic light).

j) Add Ability to Dim the Screen Without Poll Worker Assistance

DVS requesting additional information and suggestions from the VAAC on how this should be implemented. More information needed.

k) Add Option to Have All Contests on One Screen

This feature is currently being evaluated as an additional option for an accessible voting session.

l) Add Option of Physical Keyboard for Write-In Input

This feature would require semi-significant hardware changes and as such, this is likely only an option with new hardware considerations. Currently in evaluation, but this is a lower-priority due to the nature of the feature request.

2. Dominion representatives provided an overview of improvements to accessible equipment. Also, Dominion highlighted improvements to occur in the next versions of the voting equipment.

a) Privacy Screen - Independent Activation

Voters activating the privacy Screen without assistance – Upon initiation of an accessible session, the first screen is the language selection, the second screen is the accessible device selection screen. The voter will then be presented with instructions for using their selected device. Once the voter has listened to the instructions (or skipped past) they can choose to vote with or without the privacy screen activated.

b) ATI Navigation Improvements

Several changes were made to improve the voting experience when voting using the ATI.

Instructions – Instructions for skipping the ATI instructions have been added to the audio playback. The beginning of the dialogue will play ATI Instructions. To skip the instructions and continue to the ballot, press the red x button at any time

Left and right arrows – The left and right arrows can now be used within a voting session to navigate to the previous and/or next contest on the ballot. Navigation between contests can be initiated using the arrows regardless of the focus on the screen. When the voter selects the left or right button, they will be prompted to confirm (with a dialogue message and audio prompt) that they are about to navigate to the next or previous contest

Contest Navigation: Fast Mode – Voters can choose to navigate between contests without the prompt. This can be accomplished by activating a “fast mode”.

Options Menu – To enter the Options Menu, the voter must press the “Up” button on the ATI

c) Terminology Improvement

Options Menu – The “Cancel Activation” menu item from the options menu has been renamed to “Quit Voting” to better indicate the action that will be completed upon selection of this item.

Text Size – The labels for the options to change the text size have been renamed to “Small” and “Large”

d) Contest Page Improvements

Focus and Context – When navigating to a contest, the focus will automatically direct to the contest description/title. Once navigated to the contest’s description, the audio will inform the voter about the total number of contests, as well as their relative position within the ballot (e.g., Contest 2 of 5)

e) Choice Navigation Improvements

Choice List Size – Once the voter listens to the contest description the audio will inform the voter of how many choices are available. For example: There are 6 choices in this contest.

Choice Selection Context – When selecting a choice in a multi-vote contest (e.g., Vote for more than one choice) the audio will provide contextual information to the voter about how many remaining choices they may select. For example: You have selected John Doe. You have 3 remaining choices left in this contest

f) Write-In Improvements

Space Reflected in Playback – The space between words will be read when the write-in playback plays the name of the entered write-in candidate. For example, the text here would be played back: J-O-H-N-space-S-M-I-T-H

Write-In Indexing in Multi-Vote Contests – When a contest has multiple “vote for” options (E.g., Vote for two). The relative positioning of the voter’s write-in selection will be played in the audio feedback to the voter, for example: Write-in choice #1 and Write-in choice #2

g) General Navigation Improvements

Review Button – The review button has been renamed to “Skip to Review” (to inform the voter that pressing this button will skip them directly to the Ballot Review Screen). On the final contest of the ballot, the “Skip to Review” button will no longer be present, and the “Next” button will change to “Review”. Pressing this button will direct the voter to the ballot review screen.

3. Questions and Answers

a) Question regarding availability of an accessibility compliance report

There is a compliance report filed with the CA Secretary of State (SOS).

Answer – Dominion has provided the following two reports which are attached to the email enclosing these minutes:

“SD_ICE_UsabilityReport_5.10_CA”, and

“SD_ICX_UsabilityTestReport_5.10_CA”

In addition, Dominion has provided the following link **to the report**

provided to the SOS “[Dominion Democracy Suite 5.10 Accessibility, Usability, and Privacy Test Report](https://votingsystems.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vendors/dominion/dvs510aup-report.pdf)”:

(<https://votingsystems.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vendors/dominion/dvs510aup-report.pdf>)

b) Question on accessibility device set-up

(SFDOE) Have any improvements been made to the setup, either size, height, or layout?

Answer – The department uses accessible compliant tables and layouts; additional changes may be able to be made on the software side (such as a lower screen) – but there is no timeline on implementation

c) Question on the dates of new feature implementation (CA 5.15)

(DVS) When can the new build with accompanying features be expected?

Answer – Timeline is unclear, but it will likely not be available until 2022 at the earliest.

d) Question on the amount of polling sites for accessible in-person voting

(SFDOE) – How many polling places are there in San Francisco?

Answer – the amount is unchanged, 588 polling spaces per election.

e) Question on if the next iteration of changes has been submitted for review.

(DVS) – Have the changes been submitted for state review?

Answer - they have not been submitted yet, tentative timeline for SOS review is sometime in 2022

C. Next VAAC meeting

1. Likely to be held in late July or early August, likely a Zoom meeting
2. Some possible agenda items were discussed including: emergency voting, curbside voting, review of informational materials provided by the Department.
3. Other topics raised by participants included: digital signature, paperless options, recall election date, and changes to election process in wake of COVID pandemic.