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"Lowe, Janice" <janice.love@vancouver.ca>
"Hagiwara, Rosemary" <rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca>
"City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL" <CMCG@vancouver.ca>
Date: 2/20/2018 2:45:29 PM
Subject: Response to Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee on Making Voting Accessible in 2018
Attachments: 2018 Election - Responses to Persons With Disability Advisory Committee.pdf

Dear members of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee,

Please see the attached memo from Rosemary Hagiwara, Chief Election Officer in response to the recommendations put forward at the meeting on February 1, 2018. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rosemary at 604.873.7177 or Rosemary.Hagiwara@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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MEMORANDUM

February 19, 2018

TO: Persons With Disability Advisory Committee

CC: Mayor and Council
Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk
Janice Lowe, Deputy Chief Election Officer

FROM: Rosemary Hagiwara
Chief Election Officer

SUBJECT: Making Voting Accessible in 2018

I would like to thank the Committee members for welcoming the Election Office staff to their meetings in the past months to gather input from the Committee. The input received has helped shape the election planning in 2017 for the 2018 municipal election. Feedback from committee members has been helpful in identifying ways to increase the accessibility of the election for persons with disabilities, including transportation, access to voting locations and how information is communicated.

We are committed to making voting accessible and easy in the 2018 municipal election. In the coming weeks, staff will be seeking Council's approval on a by-law amendment to expand the special voting opportunity program to include more types of facilities. Staff will be seeking assistance from the Committee members in mobilizing the updated special voting opportunities program.

As the recently appointed Chief Election Officer, I look forward to introducing myself to the members at the next Committee's meeting and working together in the coming months. Attached is the motion approved by the Committee on February 1, 2018 and my update to those recommendations.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Rosemary Hagiwara
Chief Election Officer
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Appendix A

<p align="center">PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 1, 2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	<p align="center">STAFF RESPONSE</p>
<p>1. Outreach</p>	
<p>a. Provide telephone voting which was successfully trialed by Elections BC in May 2017.</p> <p>i. Telephone voting will increase accessibility for people who are blind/visually impaired, homebound, and people who cannot mark the ballot themselves; and</p> <p>ii. Telephone voting is financially accessible for persons with disabilities who can incur high costs getting to and from voting stations.</p>	<p>Staff have initiated discussions with Elections BC to learn more about their telephone voting implementation. The Election by-law currently does not permit telephone voting therefore a by-law amendment would be required.</p> <p>In addition, further research would be required to learn from other municipalities who have successfully implemented telephone voting. In absence of telephone voting for the 2018 election, the Election Office will provide other options to assist the community faced with accessibility issues.</p>
<p>b. Hire people in marginalized communities, including persons with disabilities; as having diverse staff will increase accessibility and help break down barriers to voting.</p>	<p>Recommendation is in the election plan. Staff will notify organizations that work with persons with disabilities when recruitment begins -for election workers to help promote the job opportunities to their clients.</p>
<p>c. Ensure polling stations are available at residential care facilities, rehabilitation centres, hospitals, and shelters.</p>	<p>A by-law amendment to provide a more comprehensive special voting opportunities will be brought forward to Council in the spring.</p>
<p>d. Ensure adequate notice is given to deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents that accommodations have been included for this election.</p> <p>i. It would also make a big impact if an ASL interpreter, as well as captions, were included in the official announcement (televised or online video.)</p>	<p>Recommendation is in the election plan and staff will be communicating plans to the Committee.</p>
<p>e. Work with Elections BC to ensure voters are aware of transportation resources on voting days (e.g. TransLink and Vancouver Taxi Association).</p>	<p>Recommendation is in the election plan.</p>
<p>f. Use community champions to speak with groups in the DTES about making voting locations safe and approachable spaces.</p>	<p>The Election Outreach team is working with partners in the DTES community.</p>

g. Publicize the solemn declaration of identity process to people in marginalized communities - many of whom have disabilities - to clear concerns about ID requirements, as many may not have a fixed address.	Similar to previous elections, the identification requirements are published in advertisement. This year, staff will include the identification requirements in our outreach efforts in addition to emphasis on our website and social media.
h. Recommend that all-candidates meetings be accessible to people with mobility devices, blind and visually impaired people, deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people, people who have communications disabilities and all service dog users. It is also recommended that the organizers book ASL interpreters for all meetings.	The City will assist in all-candidates meeting announcements through the City's website and will provide the Committee's recommendations to meeting organizers.
2. Communications	
a. Ensure that the Elections pages on the website are fully accessible to everyone with disabilities. All communications should be in plain language and describe the voting process in easily understood steps. All videos should include interpreters and be captioned for deaf and hard of hearing people.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will be communicating with the Committee in the coming months.
b. Involve PDAC, SAC, and other relevant Civic Advisory Committees early on to provide input on communication materials (e.g. posters, voters' guides, etc.) with special consideration given to language, colours and contrast and print size.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will be communicating with the Committees in the coming months.
c. Provide voting and candidate information materials in large print and Braille upon request.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will be communicating with the Committees in the coming months.
d. Provide ASL interpretation at designated polling stations, and ensure that their availability is widely communicated to the deaf and hard of hearing community.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will engage with the Committee for further input.
e. Clearly communicate the features of the Image Cast Evolution Assistive Device and provide online video demonstrations (including ASL interpretation and captions) of how each accessibility function operates, as well on the election website so people can research how to use them in advance.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will be communicating with the Committee in the coming months.
f. Emphasize that citizens can still vote even if they have not registered in advance, and offer clear guidelines on what the process is to register at a voting location.	The outreach program will be expanded for 2018. Registration will be the focus in the months leading up to the election. Guidelines will be emphasized on the City's website and social media.

3. Polling Station Staff		
a.	Hire persons with disabilities to train election staff on how to use the accessible voting machine and demonstrate how long the process takes.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan and will seek further input from the Committee.
b.	Provide anti-oppression training for election staff, especially for people who will be working in areas with marginalized communities like the DTES.	This recommendation is in the election plan and staff will be working with DTES community members.
4. Accessible Polling Stations		
a.	Ensure that numerous voting stations are accessible to those with the full range of physical mobility challenges and have adequate accessible parking, drop-off areas, and washrooms.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan. The 2018 election website will include accessibility information for each polling station based on accessibility surveys conducted by staff.
b.	Establish curb-side voting at all polling locations.	Curb-side voting is offered at every election. Staff will strengthen the communication for this option.
c.	Set up a priority-line for persons with disabilities to mitigate long lines being a barrier for people who find it difficult to stand for long periods of time.	As part of 2018 improvements, priority lines will be setup at all voting locations on advance and general voting days.
d.	Ensure adequate seating is available so people are not forced to stand while waiting to vote.	Staff has this recommendation in the election plan.