



# MEMO

**To:** Accessibility Advisory Committee

**From:** Deputy Clerk & Accessibility Coordinator

**Date:** January 15, 2025

**Subject:** Update on Public Participation through Electronic Platforms in AAC

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Staff have been collaborating closely with Clerks on Call consultants on the procedural by-law review. A draft is expected to be presented to the Procedural By-Law Review Committee in the near future. One key issue raised during this process is enabling public attendance at advisory committee meetings virtually. To accommodate this, updates to the procedural by-law will be required, along with enhancements to our existing virtual meeting software.

In light of this change, staff are suggesting transitioning the Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings to virtual meetings as the primary format, with in-person meetings scheduled only when necessary. This change would provide numerous benefits to both the committee and the public.

Some of the reasons for the proposed change are:

- Improved accessibility and inclusivity- Virtual meetings reduce physical barriers for committee members and attendees with mobility challenges, ensuring broader participation and fostering inclusivity.
- Enhanced safety during winter months- Traveling during the winter months can be hazardous due to icy roads, snowstorms, and limited daylight. Virtual meetings eliminates these risks and ensure the safety of all participants.
- Greater convenience and attendance- By allowing members and the public to participate from their homes or workplaces, we can improve attendance and reduce scheduling conflicts.
- Enhanced transparency and record-keeping- Virtual platforms allow for easy recording of meetings, ensuring accurate documentation and enabling the public to review proceedings if they are unable to attend in real time.
- Adaptability to unforeseen events- Virtual meetings are less likely to be disrupted by emergencies such as severe weather or sudden personal circumstances, ensuring continuity of the committee's work.
- Public participation- To maintain transparency and community engagement, virtual meetings will allow for public attendance and be recorded for future reference. Holding virtual meetings will allow the host (recording secretary) to easily monitor the virtual meeting, record minutes, and present reports from one computer rather than multiple.

If approved through the procedural bylaw review process, the committee can pilot virtual meetings for the next quarter, assess their effectiveness, and make adjustments as needed. We can also explore technical solutions to ensure accessibility for all participants, such as closed captioning or transcription services.

I welcome any feedback on this proposal and would be happy to assist with the transition process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AL' in a cursive style.

Amanda Laurence