



Memorandum

TO: SMART CITIES AND SERVICE
IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

FROM: Rob Lloyd

**SUBJECT: DIGITAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
STATUS REPORT**

DATE: November 19, 2021

Approved

Date 11/22/2021

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on digital public participation, including the City's use of streaming services to support public engagement, agenda management and access, and meeting management tools.

OUTCOME

The Committee will be aware of and provide feedback on the status of digital public participation, including the City's use of streaming services to support public engagement, agenda management and access, and meeting management tools.

BACKGROUND

Public meeting agenda development and publication, meeting management, and broadcasting meetings via the internet and cable television are core local government functions that support presenting staff work for action by Mayor and City Council. This includes important aspects of community participation in City Council deliberations and decision-making that affect the San Jose community.

The City Clerk and City Manager's Office jointly manage agenda development for City of San José public meetings. Across City Council, Council Committees, and over thirty active Boards, Committees, and Commissions, 20-50 City employees participate in planning, publishing, running, and completing records for about 40 meetings per month.

The CivicCenter Television team of one employee specifically manages the broadcast of public meetings to the City's cable television channel and internet, live-streaming over 235 public meetings in 2020-2021. The City is currently using solutions provided by Granicus, Inc., to deliver almost all of these functions. Examples of these solutions can be found at:

- MediaManager: https://sanjose.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=51
- Legistar: <https://sanjose.legistar.com>
- Boards and Commissions: <https://sanjose.granicus.com/boards/w/2f8403d8c84ae3fe>
- eComment: <https://sanjose.granicusideas.com/meetings>

In addition to Granicus products, the City Clerk utilizes VoteLynx, for in-meeting vote management, and CivicCenter Television uses video encoding hardware to live stream meetings to the City's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/cityofsanjosecalifornia. The audio-visual and voting system are maintained by the Public Works—Facilities division, including equipment and software.

Since 2005, following a competitive procurement, the City has maintained an agreement with Granicus for agenda and meeting management tools in addition to web-streaming of sessions and hosting recorded videos for public access. Council has subsequently approved 4 amendments to the agreement to add features to improve meeting management and broadcasting including: legislative process automation, a public body management software module, mobile agenda viewing, and a public agenda comment tool. On June 8, 2021, the agreement was amended to allow extensions through to August 8, 2025. Upon extension of the agreement, City staff were directed by the Mayor and City Council to report back to Smart Cities and Service Improvements Committee with analysis of the following¹:

- (1) Solicit from the Mayor's Office, Council Offices, and other relevant stakeholders' requests for service improvements related to the streaming and agenda management tools currently provided by Granicus, Inc.
- (2) Assess, in particular, the value of the streaming services provided by Granicus, Inc. in light of the tools available via Zoom, YouTube and other potential service providers.
- (3) Provide an update including but not limited to requested service improvements, the assessment of streaming services, and staff's recommended approach to improving these services through future requests for proposal and/or amendments to existing contracts.

With lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, City Council expressed a clear desire to ensure public meeting technology solutions are in place that support hybrid meetings—both in-person and videoconference attendance among the public, staff and Councilmembers—for City Council, Council Committee, commission, and board meetings moving forward.

¹ June 8, 2021, City Council Meeting, Amendment to the Agreement with Granicus, Inc. for Web-streaming Software and Hosting Services— <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4964339&GUID=F2C43328-BE6F-42B9-9474-FA3B667F224C&Options=&Search=>

Stakeholders Input for Service Improvements

The Mayor and City Council, City Clerk, and City Manager—Agenda Services team identified the following features for improved agenda and meeting management:

- More intuitive software to ease and minimize training of new staff;
- Mobile application that effectively synchs across tablet and phone devices with high stability;
- Easy to use for average person;
- Ability for staff to easily create and make edits of agenda templates;
- Convenient way to manage markups of agendas and to add notes with many contributors;
- Ability to automatically post agenda to Brown Act site without delay or lag;
- Central location and visibility of all agendas;
- Ability to include e-comments for the public—when receiving a large amount of e-comments, show in what is visible to those running the meeting and the public;
- Options to send notifications to people enrolling to receive updates immediately, daily, and weekly; and
- Options for viewing agenda documents in a new browser tabs in current/supported browsers (e.g., Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari) rather than as direct downloads that users can miss.

The training curve of the software used is especially important, as many staff play a role in agenda development and meeting management. Software that provides an intuitive and effective workflow system, templates, and easy adoption allows departments and Council Appointee offices to effectively run meetings that engage the audience.

Value of Streaming Services—Broadcasting and Hosting

To assess value and compare current streaming services in light of the tools available via Zoom, YouTube, and other potential service providers, it is important to clarify what software components are used in broadcasting and access to videos of past meetings.

- Granicus is an enterprise provider of software and hardware solutions for government and one of the largest companies in this software segment. Granicus provides an end-to-end streaming video solution from event scheduling, encoding hardware and software, video hosting and management, custom video player page, streaming video chaptering (agenda linking), and hosting page links to documents such as agenda, memorandums, and presentations.
- Zoom is a video conferencing software and service provider that permits physically separated individuals to talk to each other in real time using high-fidelity audio and video over the internet. Zoom has the capability to stream directly to YouTube and Facebook, along with a growing number of language support and closed-captioning accessibility features.
- YouTube is a free video sharing and social media website that allows individuals and organizations to share live-streamed or on-demand videos with tools that manage streaming event scheduling and hosting.

City staff's analysis of other service providers does not include Zoom and YouTube, as they are not equivalent services. Rather, Zoom and YouTube remain essential components of the City's overall integrated public meeting technology, adding levels of engagement and accessibility for the public audience.

Within the topic of streaming and service providers, it is important to note that a cornerstone of transparency and public participation is the service that CivicCenter Television provides. CivicCenter TV, San José's government access channel, generates the broadcast that our streaming solutions webcast. State regulations (2006 AB 2987 DIVCA) impose a fee, 1% of revenue, on video service providers such as Comcast and AT&T, which is earmarked to support capital and maintenance of PEG (Public, Educational and Government) cable access broadcast facilities. CivicCenter Television's operational costs are funded from Public Works Facilities and capital and maintenance expenses come from Government Access Capital Fund. City staff will continue to operate and integrate this public resource with streaming solutions.

ANALYSIS

Based on action by the Mayor and City Council at its June 8, 2021, meeting, City staff solicited feedback on functionality and assessed the value of components of related to public meetings that include web-streaming and video hosting for access. A project team consisting of the City Clerk's Office, Public Works Department, City Manager's Office of Communications and Agenda Services group, and Information Technology Department assembled, setting a project charter for overall public meeting technologies and needs. The project performed the following work:

- (1) Conducted a needs assessment with input from the Mayor's Office, Council Offices, key City staff, and organizations representing the public, in order to gather a robust set of requirements across agenda management, meeting management, and broadcasting from all relevant stakeholders in public meeting technologies;
- (2) Identified which needs identified in the assessment requirements versus desirable, including reviewing the City's existing solution for potential coverage of those requirements;
- (3) Released a Request for Information (RFI), with to assess the current state of the marketplace and its likely ability to meet the requirements; and
- (4) Assembled a recommendation for the Smart Cities and Service Improvements Committee on requirements, options, and direction.

It is important to note the complex mix of stakeholders, hardware, software, services, and accessibility requirements that support running public meetings and open those meetings for active participation by a diverse audience. Elements include agenda development, converting the

agenda into a meeting flow with tools that support display of content, and then holding and recording votes. Simultaneously, staff must broadcast speakers and materials, show contextual information about speakers and the place in the meeting, and provide language and accessibility options for audiences. These services and tools must be built to work in facilities with well-designed attendance areas, security, lighting, sound, and video to host the meeting with high production value. Tools must be configured to broadcast the event to the cable head-end for broadcasting on the City's cable channel and internet streaming services with strong fidelity and nominal delay.

Once designed and implemented, different staffs support agenda management, meeting management, broadcasting, and facilities use. If any elements in the chain fail on a meeting date, participants experience and notice the problems, public access laws may be unfulfilled, a City business may be left undone. For these reasons, the City has strong interest in solutions that are highly integrated and for which the vendor will commit to strong service levels

City staff's analyses build around this complex set of solutions and stakeholders. The project team also focused on both the City's public meeting needs as well as the ability for all members of the public to participate in meetings as an equity requirement. Staff is clear that a well-designed hybrid meetings solution allows San José's Access and Functional Needs (AFN) community to more easily attend and participate in meetings that shape their lives. This includes supporting residents who cannot afford transportation to City Hall, parents who cannot easily find childcare or eldercare, and residents who have health or anxiety needs that virtual attendance resolves. Technologies also provide access to those with language needs, including interpreter access versus simple direct translation.

Needs Assessment and Ratings

Staff created a ranking instrument for stakeholders to rate agenda management, meeting management, and broadcasting/hosting needs selected by key staff on a 1-10 scale where 10 is the highest priority, as well as to provide additional service to be considered. The instrument asked stakeholders to rate 28 features in total – 11 agenda management features, seven (7) meeting management features, and 10 broadcasting/hosting features.

In total, City staff received 18 responses. Eight (8) out of 10 councilmembers' offices provided responses, as well as the Mayor's office. Seven (7) key City staff responded – the City Clerk, a Deputy City Manager, two from the City Manager's Office of Communications, two from Public Works, and one from Information Technology. For equity, the City requested and received responses from representatives of two organizations serving members of the Access and Functional Needs (AFN) community: San Jose Peace and Justice Center and the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. The San Jose Peace and Justice Center seeks to empower members of community left behind due to racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination, as well as those left behind economically. Silicon Valley Independent Living Center is a non-profit, non-residential organization that provides support tools and resources to allow people with disabilities to live independently in Santa Clara County. Four (4) respondents provided additional service requests to the 28 features rated, including both public organization representatives.

The ratings were then aggregated and averaged across each of the three components, in addition to the scores for the service requests. Reviewing the score distribution, staff set any score above an eight (8) be viewed as a critical priority (minimum requirement), while any score below be considered desirable. These distinctions are applicable to a potential procurement evaluation. The ratings are provided in the following tables. ***Please note that highlighted features are those the City currently does not have. Bolded items are suggested additions staff determined are feasible.***

Agenda Management Features (11)

Need	Score	Priority
Automatically post agendas to a publicly accessible website (for compliance with Brown Act)	9.44	Critical
Easily find agenda items and related materials	9.28	Critical
Sync updates across devices (e.g., iPads)	9.06	Critical
Easily access agenda from a search engine (e.g., Google, Bing)	8.28	Critical
Draft, route, review and approve agenda prior to posting	8.12	Critical
View agenda documents in a new browser tab (current/supported browsers i.e., Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari) rather than as direct downloads to more easily share	8.00	Critical
View agenda translated to other languages from English	7.69	Desirable
Facilitate markup of agendas and adding notes	7.41	Desirable
View agenda within 5 minutes of publishing on public site	7.41	Desirable
Comment on the agenda electronically prior to the meeting	7.28	Desirable
Generate copies of agendas and make notes on top of them	7.11	Desirable

Additional Service Requests

- Larger print for agenda items: 10
- Agendas available in both Braille and sound file: 10
- See both staff notes and original memo in split-screen: 7
- **Real-time notification of agenda item updates: 10**
- Collaborative editing system for notes: No Rating
- Open more than one document at a time on iPad: No Rating

Meeting Management Features (7)

Need	Score	Priority
Provide information to Zoom viewer(s) who may require access and functional needs support during meeting	8.78	Critical
Queue and time speakers whether in-person or online	8.56	Critical
Have live-vote recording and display results	8.39	Critical
Notify public speakers on place in line for public comment (who is on deck and next few in line)	7.44	Desirable
Set and monitor time for certain agenda items	7.28	Desirable
Create instant meeting recaps	6.67	Desirable
Pause the video recording while the meeting recesses	6.22	Desirable

Additional Service Requests

- See screen showing number of raised hands: No Rating
- Meter showing individual sound volumes: No Rating

Broadcasting/Hosting Software Features (10)

Need	Score	Priority
See closed captions text	9.12	Critical
See agenda item number during broadcast	9	Critical
Have a high-quality viewing experience using smartphones, tablets, and computers	8.59	Critical
View broadcast closed captions (not Zoom) in non-English languages	8.47	Critical
When watching a recorded video, click an agenda item and play video for that item	8.39	Critical
View broadcast transcripts (not Zoom) in non-English languages	8.06	Critical
View video in full high definition so that when making video full screen on a device, the presentations and images have the highest clarity possible	7.59	Desirable
Download meeting agendas, minutes, and transcripts from a documents tab next to each meeting video in a video library webpage (searchable archive of agreed number of years)	7.33	Desirable

Search for words spoken at meetings on video library webpage and receive search results with each video and specific moment(s) where word was spoken	6.71	Desirable
Download audio and video podcast files from a link within the player	5.76	Desirable

Additional Service Requests

- Archive of video beyond 10 years: No Rating

All 28 features plus the one (1) additional agenda management service request determined feasible by City staff (real-time notification of agenda item updates) were included in an RFI released to the market in September. In addition, 11 features (including the additional agenda management service request) were determined to be enhancements not currently included in the City's existing platform and contract.

Feasibility of Meeting Needs via Products Currently Contracted through Granicus

Based on the analysis conducted in the needs assessment, staff first engaged its vendor to determine the feasibility and cost of providing the 11 features as service improvements to the City's existing platform and agreement, 6 of which were rated as critical. Based on City-vendor discussions, the 11 features were broken into three categories: 1) can be added at no cost; 2) can be added with additional cost; or, 3) not available and not planned.

Can be Added at No Cost: Four (4) Features

- View agenda documents in a new browser tab (current/supported browsers i.e., Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari) rather than as direct downloads to share more easily
- Facilitate markup of agenda and adding notes
- Create instant meeting recaps
- Have a high-quality viewing experience using smartphones, tablets, and computers

Can be Added with Additional Cost: Two (2) Features

- Have live-vote recording and display results
- View video in full high definition so that when making video full screen on a device, the presentations and images have the highest clarity possible

Not Available and Not Planned: Five (5) Features

- Sync updates across devices (e.g., iPads)
- View agenda within 5 minutes of publishing on public site
- Real-time notification of agenda item updates
- Provide information to Zoom viewer(s) who may require access and functional needs support during meeting
- Notify public speakers on place in line for public comment (who is on deck and next few in line)

RFI Release and Responses

City Staff released an RFI on September 8, 2021, and allowed potential vendors in the marketplace to submit responses within two (2) weeks, officially closing on September 23, 2021. The goals and rules of the RFI were to:

- Assist the City with conducting an analysis of what capabilities, features, and functions are currently available in the marketplace for public meeting agenda development and publishing software, meeting management, and live and hosted internet streaming.
- Provide the City with additional information regarding required budget, specifications, and requirements that will be used for a future solicitation.
- The City may also request, at its sole discretion, interviews and/or trials to obtain additional information or to determine viability.

In addition to asking service providers about their ability to provide the 29 features gathered from the needs assessment, the RFI included 12 technical requirements for input. In total, four (4) service providers responded to the City's RFI. Three (3) service providers stated the ability to meet the vast majority of the 41 requirements (29 feature needs plus the 12 technical requirements). However, no potential vendor stated the ability to meet all requirements. The estimated software costs of implementing the City's required and desired features range from about \$70,000 to \$100,000 in annual costs, as well as about \$20,000 to \$70,000 in one-time implementation costs. Estimated implementation timelines ranged from two to six months. The City pays about \$74,000 per year for its current platform.

CONCLUSION

Research and analyses identified important features required to achieve the City's aspirations of accessible and well-run hybrid public meetings, with many lessons from 2020-2021 pandemic experiences. Based on the age of the current contract for the City's agenda, meetings, and broadcast solution, combined with new industry options, staff recommends exploring leveraging an available and equivalent agency's procurement vehicle, or releasing a new Request for Proposal (RFP) by March 2022. To be successful, the procurement must include software that addresses the required and desired features, integration with hardware and systems in City facilities, project approach and timeline for implementation, and support services and costs.

Additionally, staff should move forward to implement all four features that the City's current platform vendor can provide at no cost, as well as seek to negotiate the two available at-cost features at advantageous pricing. These actions would provide time for a procurement, while improving the experience of public meeting participants.

City staff has completed the first two action items in the June 8, 2021, memorandum approved by City Council regarding stakeholder input on service improvements and the value of streaming service improvements. Pending input from the Committee, the City Clerk's Office, City Manager's Office, Public Works Department, and Information Technology Department will work together to proceed with procurement options, available service improvements, and a potential project.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The City Clerk's Office, City Manager's Office, Public Works Department, and Information Technology Department will proceed with procurement options and service improvements through March 2022. The City Clerk's Office and City Manager's Office will coordinate funding with the City Budget Office through the annual City Budget Process, if required. Staff can return to the Committee after June 2022 for a status report if desired.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy or water goals, but does impact mobility goals. Allowing the public to participate in public meetings without having to use transportation positively impacts mobility use and carbon emissions.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

This report was not presented at a Commission.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action. (Information Technology)

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As mentioned in the analysis section, City staff received responses to the needs assessment from representatives of two organizations serving members of the public and the Access and Functional Needs (AFN) community: The San Jose Peace and Justice Center and the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center. Their responses factored into the priority ranking of agenda management, meeting management, broadcasting, and participation needs.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Clerk's Office, the City Manager's Office, the Public Works Department, and the Information Technology Department.

/s/

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CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

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