

## **June 10, 2025 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board**

**Topics covered included:** City of Seattle's Digital Accessibility Work in response to the 2024 Department of Justice rule on accessible web sites, content, and applications by April of 2026

**This meeting was held:** June 10, 2025; 6:00-7:15 p.m., via Webex and in City Hall Room 370

### **Attending:**

**Board Members:** Phillip Meng, Isabel Rodriguez, DeiMarlon Scisney, Omari Stringer

**Public:** Dorene Cornwell, Sanchit Gera, Robert Kruse, Tom Van Buren, Sean McLellan, Lauren Jensen, Nancy S., Rahim Malik

**Staff:** Tara Zaremba, Kim Dowden, Michal Perlstein, Vinh Tang, Cass Magnuski

### **17 In Attendance**

**Phillip Meng:** Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the June meeting of Seattle's Community Technology Advisory Board. It's great to see everyone, especially given that it is super nice and sunny outside. Thanks for spending time with us here. I will go in alphabetical order for introductions.

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

**Phillip Meng:** Can I now get a motion to approve the minutes for the May 13, 2025 CTAB meeting?

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** I move to approve.

**Phillip Meng:** Do I have a second from a board member?

**Omari Stringer:** Second.

**Phillip Meng:** All in favor? Any abstentions? Great. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda for this meeting?

**Isabel Rodriguez:** Motion to approve.

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks, Isabel. Do I have a second?

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** Second.

**Phillip Meng:** Thank you both. All in favor? Great. That's everyone. Motion passes. Let's get started. Today we are learning more about the City of Seattle's Digital Accessibility work. As I understand it, this is in response to a DOJ rule that was introduced during the Biden administration on accessibility in web content. So, we have Kim Dowden and Michal Perlstein is also a presenter. Kim, do you want to give it a moment for her to rejoin?

## **CITY OF SEATTLE DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY WORK IN RESPONSE TO THE 2024 DOJ RULE ON ACCESSIBLE WEB SITES, CONTENT, AND APPLICATIONS BY APRIL OF 2026**

**Kim Dowden:** She is mainly here to support me at the questions, but I can certainly move forward without her. I think she's having technical difficulties.

**Phillip Meng:** I see that Michal Perlstein has joined. Are you okay to start? The floor is yours.

**Kim Dowden:** Thank you all. I'm happy to be here. I am an IT project manager with the City. I'm in the IT Department, and have been here for nine years working on various technology initiatives and projects, one of which was the (unintelligible) clinic, which was pretty interesting. But today we are here to talk about digital accessibility. So, let's jump in.

Just to start off, the citywide digital accessibility and compliance project, also known as WCAG. We like our acronyms. We like to track progress to ensure that our web site, applications, and content are accessible and comply with federal regulations for digital accessibility. I will provide a little background, and then get into more details of the project.

Digital Accessibility, although this formal project started this year, is not new. I want to start with a little bit of context and background. The web content accessibility guidelines, also known as WCAG is a standard by the World Wide Web Consortium, and the City has adopted 2.1 Level AA as different levels of these guidelines, and the City has adopted compliance on Level AA, and that has been in place for several years that is documented in our digital policy. Also, the City has made a lot of effort over the last several years to educate our staff on equity and legal issues, but also the importance of digital accessibility. They have a formal ADA program that is run by our finance

and (unintelligible) services department. Our digital engagement team, which Michal Perlstein is part of, and she is a manager of that group; and also our legal staff have done several presentations about resources. And one of the examples of that is that there is a day for accessibility, Global Accessibility Awareness Day, and it happens every year. And we have been doing events for those days over the last four years. Again, I just want to reiterate that the focus on this area in the City isn't new, but there are some new aspects of it that we will talk a little bit about. Another piece is that the digital engagement team has developed a digital style guide, and this is a resource for not only City staff, but also external consultants, anyone that is doing business with the City and providing applications available to the public, as well. This is not news. It has been in place for several years and it really helps us to design accessible and includes web experience. So, what is new, starting as of last year, in April of last year, the Department of Justice updated the regulations under the title (unintelligible). What the ruling really did for us is that States are now required to comply with that same level of guidelines that we already have in the City that we are following, 2.1 AA. So, it's now a standard for all State and local governments. Also new this year was an executive order that Mayor Harrell issued in February, and this was a response to that ruling and also holistically support and commit to making the information (unintelligible). That's a little bit of background and a few new things. Any questions? There will also be questions at the end. This may be new and I am happy to entertain those at the end, too.

**From chat:** Omari Stringer 6/10/2025 6:21 PM • Once the project is completed, will responsibility for compliance remain with the departments or will it be monitored by the Workgroup?

**From chat:** Perlstein, Michal 6/10/2025 6:23 PM • It will remain in departments, which is technically the policies that have been place but not necessarily followed. The workgroup will be for information sharing and support across departments.

**Kim Dowden:** Here are a few things, different highlights of the WCAG criteria and the ruling. It's all policy saying (unintelligible) applications, web applications, web sites, mobile applications and all of the content within those (unintelligible) images, audio, video, documents, all of those things. Some of the principles in the SCAG is referred to as POUR. There are four principles of these guidelines. Just to give you a little bit of what these are, one, information should really be perceivable, and what we mean by that is that it should be presented in a way that people can recognize. The second one, operable: People should be able to find what they're looking for and easily navigate on a site, within a space, or through an application. Three, understandable. Writing in plain language, utilizing consistent design; making it easy for anyone to understand the contents, and also provide prompts to help avoid mistakes. Think about filling in a form.

If something is not correct, giving a prompt when that may not be correct information. And then finally, robust. This means that the information should be interpreted by current and future technologies. So, for example, screen readers, assistive technology devices. The contents should be able to be interpreted by those, too.

Why does it matter? Well, it's the right thing to do, of course. but this an actual statement by Mayor Harrell on why this is really important for the City. I won't ready it, but it is a great statement. Ultimately, it comes down to it is our duty as public servants, and it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that services and information accessible and (unintelligible).

Now, I will dive a little but into just the project information. This project is being managed by Seattle IT. Seattle IT is not doing all of the work. We are managing the project. Rob Lloyd is our CTO, and he is the executive sponsor of the project. A key part of governance is a steering committee, so we have a steering committee established that has representatives from IT, the City Attorney's Office, the Mayor's Office, staff from the current ADA program, and also the City Budget Office. In addition to the steering committee, there is an inter-departmental team, and that team includes representatives from all City departments, and there are 46 of them. So, departments are working together, and each department is really responsible for meeting and monitoring their compliance. As I mentioned, the ruling came out last year in 2024, but the compliance deadline is April 24, of next year. So, we have just under a year to comply. Fairly quick timeline. And then, the estimated project end date is June of next year. Just to clarify, that does not mean that the work is going to end. It is just that specific projects have specific timelines. And at that point, it will transition into operational work.

Now I will go into what the objectives are. There are two main objectives. One, we comply with federal law by next year; and then we also want to establish an accountability structure so that there in ongoing compliance and accessibility is really built into standard work at the City. We have identified a few target outcomes. One, as I mentioned, the applications and content complies with (unintelligible). We want to establish business practices to ensure that the applications and content are accessible, and then that digital accessibility inter-departmental teams transition to a long-term digital accessibility work group, and at the end of the project, it continues on.

Again, if you have questions, feel free to raise your hand. I am happy to answer those. Let's talk a little bit about project scope and I did mention them already, but I'd like to reiterate it, because it's very important. It's a lot. All public-facing web applications and apps, content, documents, images, video, and audio, all need to be accessible. It also covers third-party content that is created by a consultant or a vendor on the City's behalf -- this could be applications like vendor platforms and staff applications that we use are still covered by this. Those also need to be accessible. Another piece of it are

documents that are created by contractors, so for example, if a vendor is creating a report or a document for the City that is available to the public on our web site, or a blog, or something like that, that also needs to be accessible. So, as far as some of the activities and deliverables of this project, one I mentioned is the creation of the digital accessibility inter-departmental team. Second, is to create an asset inventory. That means creating a comprehensive list of what are all of the assets that the City has that are public-facing, so that we know what to drop. Then, supporting and monitoring and reporting our progress toward compliance. Again, this project is an organized effort to support the departments, support this effort, and then report out on how we are doing towards compliance. Then, as I mentioned before, also establish best practices and operational procedures, and then an accountability structure. We have to make sure that not only are there business practices but there are practices and people enrolled that will hold staff, and vendors and contractors accountable.

**Phillip Meng:** Kim, I saw a hand from Omari Stringer earlier, and also conversation in chat. Omari, does that answer your question? Please feel free to ask.

**Omari Stringer:** No, it does. Thanks.

**Kim Dowden:** The departments will have representation in the work groups. It is a One Seattle approach. Everyone is doing this work together.

**Phillip Meng:** Quick question on the first bullet point of duties/deliverables. How big is this digital accessibility inter-departmental team, and what departments? Does this include all City departments or focus on a few?

**Kim Dowden:** No, it is all departments. There are 46 currently that are represented in the inter-departmental team. I think every department has some content that is out there facing the public. Even if it is a minimal amount, we want to make sure that there are business practices and oversight within those departments. Some have more than others, and IT is a little bit unique in that we have content out there on our web site, but we also manage a lot of applications. Most of the applications that are public-facing are supported by the IT department.

**Phillip Meng:** Thank you.

**Kim Dowden:** Any other questions? Here are a few things that we have completed and some other things that are in progress. So, if we mention the executive order, that was something that was really needed to support this effort, and that was done in February. We established a project governance structure. We have a steering committee; we have project management, project leadership, and then we have the inter-departmental piece. That was created early in the year with all departments, and

we established monthly meetings for that group. We also implemented a project Sharepoint site. This is an internal site that is available as a resource for those that are participating in the project. So, resources, documentation, that kind of thing. It is also a place for some collaboration. And then, we also developed a data model for our digital asset inventory. So, again, as I mentioned, a big piece of this project is to develop a large inventory when it lists all of the assets. So, take some time to be thinking about what information do we need about all of these assets, how we prioritize them, and schedule them out. That was completed. And then, a few things that we have in progress. the departments are establishing department work groups. I did want to make clear that even though each department has one representative on the inter-departmental team, that one person is not expected to do all of the work. We wanted to make sure that they have the support needed that is expected from each department. (unintelligible) the assets and information that they have that may look different. Some have a lot; some have less, so it is up to the department to coordinate. They are doing that, organizing their department work. Departments are identifying their assets and making an initial (unintelligible) thing. Also raising awareness and educating the staff. A lot of it is not new but might be reeducating and reemphasizing the right things to do, but now we have a deadline of next year. The steering committee is really working to provide some prioritization criteria to help departments -- things like how critical is the information; how critical are the services that are provided, how many people ask the system for information, so we could take a stab at focusing on those with the highest impact first (unintelligible). It's a lot of work (unintelligible). Another thing we are working on is developing an inventory reporting tool. As you can imagine, its a lot of information, so it is not something that we can just manage on spreadsheets, we need a tool to help us manage processes and develop that. And then, just defining our process and milestones. There has been a lot of discovery on getting up to speed, really understanding the scope of this and how we are going to approach it. So, when the next step outlines some milestones, focus and being able to identify those spaces is what we are working on.

Next steps: We are going to document all of the additional aspects, leaning in to find out what they have, and pulling all of that together. As I mentioned, we will have prioritization criteria and we'll begin, once we have all of the aspects identified, apply that prioritization to break things up and improve, that will identify what will happen first, then developing that tool that I mentioned, and then (unintelligible) reporting (unintelligible), defining that criteria and some progress indicators to report out regularly. And then, once we have that tool and the criteria, then we will begin reporting out. And then, begin development of our procedures. We have already done some of this work, but we really want to be perfect on the inventory, but also to recognize the pieces that are important that we don't want to keep creating in

accessible (unintelligible), and really start integrating that. And again, a lot of that has happened. (unintelligible)

That is my last slide. I can take questions.

**Phillip Meng:** All right, I am opening the floor.

**From chat:** DeiMarlon "D" Scisney - CTAB 6/10/2025 6:37 PM • Can you speak to the KPIs and reporting framework being developed, will the compliance progress be made publicly available?

What does success look like for this project beyond meeting the DOJ deadline? How is user experience being measured?

How will departments be held accountable if they miss any compliance milestones? Are there formal training programs or certifications being implemented for city staff?

**Dorene Cornwell:** I think this is a real exciting presentation. Last year, a year ago, I got to be part of the Global Accessibility Awareness Day presentations, and it was very fun to hear that the Department of Neighborhoods want to make sure that everything that faces the public is accessible. We didn't know very much about it, so they talked about their partnership with Seattle IT. I want to emphasize the importance building accessible criteria in when you purchase apps, because using Webex as a platform for CTAB is an example of that. Because at some point, news came out that said CTAB was going to be using Webex for conferences. And I immediately wrote to David Keyes, being mildly grumpy. Word on the blind street is that Webex is on the more horrible end of accessibility in terms of video platforms that people are expected to use in their workplace. I actually know somebody who is an consultant. He must have been working in the background, because by the time it was acquired, accessibility is much better. The other point of that is that there are a lot of things that are built into apps, and an average user might not even know about until somebody else uses them. As I listened to the whole day's presentations, it was interesting. There were a couple of points where, the screen reader is telling you something going on in the PowerPoint and I think that's probably because of something to do with Sharepoint, but since I am not a regular user of Sharepoint, I said, oh, this is cool. And then, there are just little tricks people have to know to make things work, so you can never have enough users of existing technology in your picture, because it creates possibilities across organizations to share information and tips. There is a lot more to say. This isn't really a question, but this is more a comment. The only question is is there a business presentation over the CTAB links? I keep forgetting to ask. To see a PowerPoint separately, outside of meetings? Is this presentation going to be available for people at this meeting?

**Vinh Tang:** Yes, Dorene, the PowerPoint will be uploaded.

**Dorene Cornwell:** Thank you. I want to hear questions from other people.

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**From chat:** Zaremba, Tara 6/10/2025 6:39 PM • Cass, he didn't get to introduce himself - that is the new City of Seattle CISO, Assistant CTO and Director of Security & Infrastructure. His name is Jake Hammock and will join a later CTAB meeting. We would love to hear (in this chat or send me an email [tara.zaremba@seattle.gov](mailto:tara.zaremba@seattle.gov)) what information you would like to hear from Jake

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:39 PM • Reports from any department should be covered by accessibility guidelines. But things like charts and highly graphical data are definitely industrywide always development questions.

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**From chat:** Perlstein, Michal 6/10/2025 6:39 PM • Accessibility requirements for internal staff and vendors in our design system: <https://app.uxpin.com/design-system/3f410cc070aa87dbff70/accessibility>



**From chat:** Van Buren, Tom 6/10/2025 6:45 PM • How might One Seattle Data Strategy help this project? <https://www.seattle.gov/mayor/one-seattle-initiatives/one-seattle-data-strategy>

**From chat:** Perlstein, Michal 6/10/2025 6:46 PM • We do align and cross-promote in our communications, and one of the digital accessibility project steering committee members is involved in that project as well.

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:45 PM •

My outline from my presentation last year with links to individual topics Adventures of RantWoman: GAADoutline

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**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:47 PM • The outline actually does not perfectly follow all accessibility standard\

**From chat:** Zaremba, Tara 6/10/2025 6:50 PM • I am still interested in hearing of any topics the group would like to hear from our CISO

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:51 PM • I personally think the standards are critical regardless of what the federal government does

**Kim Dowden:** Thanks, Dorene. That's really good to hear. I appreciate the support. And bringing up the vendors, we have a meeting where we're going to have one of our senior procurement managers highlight that. It's everybody's responsibilities when you purchase something.

**Michal Perlstein:** I just wanted to add that I don't remember if this was in those five, Kim, but in about June of last year, the City Attorney's Office and the financial administrative services and IT, the senior vendor manager had all worked on language, and I came in to help define the language. Officially, it is in all software contracts for the City and includes accessibility. But not just that it has to be accessible, it says when you submit documentation proving that it is accessible, you submit a (unintelligible) and we will review that (unintelligible), and determine if it is acceptable in order to sign the contract. Or if it is a custom application, you make it accessible as you build it, and again, we will review that. We can't say it is perfect, because none of us can be perfect in what we are creating, so you know there is going to be something in there about 'we just made this mistake, and here is how we fixed it, and now we think it is wholly acceptable.' That is in there, and through the inter-departmental team, a great group of

people that really engage, they came up with another idea. They said, well not just software contracts, what about when we book with a PR firm to create an annual report, some kind of brochure? That falls through the cracks. So, they want to work on language so even with a small consultation contract or just for communications and marketing, those will include things that say, 'any deliverables at all have to be fully acceptable. And by the way, the official legal language also says that IT is not responsible for testing to validate that. You're responsible for handing it to us (unintelligible), then we shouldn't be spending any more money. Wholly, we are moving in the right direction, so I wanted you to know what has happened since we talked last year.

**Dorene Cornwell:** I think it was May of last year when I did a presentation, but it is actually really important that the marketing materials be accessible because it is really important to be looking at that piece of it.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** I have a few questions, and I typed them out, as well, so we can just take them one at a time. The first one is can you speak to the KPIs and reporting framework being developed, will the compliance progress be made publicly available?

**Kim Dowden:** That is part of determining at what level should we be reporting out, because again, we have a lot of documentation out there. So, yes, a framework is being developed. Will it be made publicly available? We can't really consider that before we have information out on it, but that is something we can consider, if that is something that would be important.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** Awesome. And then, what does success look like beyond meeting the DOJ deadline? How is user experience being measured?

**Kim Dowden:** Right. So, yes, it's a great point that we don't want to be just checking boxes that say, yes, we've been complying. We've checked off criteria and it is accessible. So, we think that is something that we do want to include. We want to get feedback from our public in an attempt to make it genuinely accessible. So, not just a check in a box, but it's actually usable by people. We don't have a framework yet, but for that piece of it, we want to make sure that we are not just checking a box, but that we are in full compliance and we also have services that are genuinely useful.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** Okay, so it sounds like things that are working progress rightly. We would love to keep in touch and hear back on updates around this. And my last question is how will departments be held accountable if they miss any compliance milestone. And then, just in regard to the individuals, themselves, -- I do a lot of work with groups that focus on training and upscaling. So, is there any formal training or programs and certifications being offered by the City?

**Kim Dowden:** Another great question! Yes, the scope of the project is to identify those business practices and an accountability structure. Great example. It should be part of required training. I think the things that will come out of this work is what is the required training, what do job descriptions look like, is this included in job descriptions. And then, as far as accountability, it really should be up to management, leadership, to again hold staff accountable as part of their job. Those are all things that have been discussed and contemplated, and really the execution will be to have those in place in policy and in the structure. As far as the one challenge is that we don't have a dedicated budget for this, so departments are really using their resources, as in Seattle IT, the resources that we have, the staff that we have. It's just a challenge, and it's just reality. So, we're doing what we can with what we have, and definitely training is something that we have identified. We already have a training platform that has accessibility content available. So, again, I think it is identifying (unintelligible) and should be the standard and required, using what we have and leveraging.

**Michal Perlstein:** I just want to follow up and answer one of your questions. As Kim said, there is no citywide digital accessibility specialist, very unfortunately. We are all pitching in and have other jobs with our many hats, and so we have been trying to hold people accountable, and I have put some links in the chat. Really, this is where we are going to need that support. The Mayor has an executive order, and we have an executive sponsor from IT. What does that look like? On Friday, I found an inaccessible application that was (unintelligible). I didn't test it, I just looked at it. So, we see something, we tell people about it, but what really happens? Or when it comes to things like the web site or something where my team actually owns it, we can go in and look at it. We know exactly what tools are there. We know exactly what training we can give people, so it's not a question of other constraints, and we do our best to report on those things. And sometimes, it kind of hits the wall at a certain point. We really are trying to build those bridges and develop relationships with the people on the ground. And that's where those inter-departmental team members are really helpful. So, the people who do the work every day might not be executives, but how can we get them to empathize with people with disabilities. That's why we had Dorene Cornwell last year, to share her experience, and other people share their experiences to try to really get to thinking. So, we are trying to tackle this from both ends. How can we train people and get them on board and help them feel supported, as well, in trying to get this in compliance. So, they're not just going to get in trouble because one person project manages for their department (unintelligible).they get supported from the top. It is kind of complicated. It's a big change, this management issue, and we were thinking that that would start later. And people started thinking about evaluation and mediation. We said this should start now. This is really a big deal. We need to start changing behavior, shifting mind sets. And that's what we were talking about a few weeks ago, the whole operational accountability structure. One thing I wanted to mention, that Kim did say that I think was

really great, is the agenda for the IDT meeting. We brought in a lot of great speakers and agendas (unintelligible).

**From chat;** Perlstein, Michal 6/10/2025 6:38 PM • Public information about the City's requirements for web accessibility: <https://seattle.gov/web-accessibility>

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**Kim Dowden:** Sure. There are many things that we've talked about in the IDT that we have to remember off the top of my head, but one, we had the department chair's experiences with various vendors. So, those departments that do have some money to actually hire some help, they shared their experiences with various vendors and heard about their experiences so other departments could consider that. We have also brought in our legal advisors, so we have one of our lawyers sit on our steering committee, and she shared information about the history of ADA regulation. Where it has been; where we're at now; what it means for the department. That was really helpful. We also have had a representative from our ADA program. We have a full ADA program that's really focused more on the (unintelligible) environment and not on the digital accessibility. That program has been in place for quite some time. And they have their own group, so we share that information. We want to connect these two groups because they have different focuses, but it's all really supporting the same effort and outcomes. We are going to have a great session with our vendor manager. I wasn't sure what Don's title is, but Don is great. He has been with the City for a long time. He is really familiar with and passionate about this work. He is going to share about the importance, as we talked about, and it really starts at the beginning where we are confabbing with vendors and that everyone really has a part in that. Is there anything I've missed?

**Michal Perlstein:** I don't think so. I think that was a great highlight. I think it's a good thing for people to hear, that we've brought in experts to pick their brains. I know what questions people have, and so we can go back and answer them.

**Kim Dowden:** And that's a big part of this, too. We really want to build a community, and a group of people at the City who will start spreading this information. And we will work together. It's been really great. We have monthly meetings, and people bring up ideas, and say, 'I worked on this thing and it worked really well.' Or, I found this forum that has a good workshop in it. I think the thing that has been a really great experience because everyone is very passionate. I don't think there is a single issue there. Everyone wants to do this work. It's just a matter of us all coming together to get it done.

**Phillip Meng:** I want to take a moment to thank you, Cass Magnuski and Tara Zaremba, for calling it out. There's a person in the room who hasn't had a chance to introduce himself. Jake, would you like to give a quick intro? Is Jake on the call?

**Vinh Tang:** I don't believe he is on the call anymore.

**Phillip Meng:** I might be wrong. I read Tara Zaremba's comment that he might be on the call. If he is not on the call anymore, though, I just want to call out that you can use Tara Zaremba's email if you have any questions or information that you would like to hear from Jake at a future meeting. And on that note, please let me know if I have missed anyone else. Back to our discussion here. I saw a question from Tom Van Buren. Any other comment here on how the One Seattle data strategy helps this project?

**Tara Zaremba:** I put it in the chat, but it is aligned, how the City's digital experience have included for a long time accessibility. We are just thrilled that the Department of Justice has this rolling, because now it forces us to really comply and get more attention to the City's One Seattle data strategy. Actually, Ben (unintelligible) of the Mayor's Office is on the steering committee for this project. I know that he is heavily involved in this. There is also another member of innovational performance. He is also involved in that project. He is a member of the inter-departmental team. So, there are definitely people on the ground having every day conversations and are there to think about things, but in general, we do (unintelligible), like when my team has information, we will provide information about forums and surveys, and getting into doing data. It's an internet site, but go over here because you can find out more about what you should collect and how you should do it. We are aligned but it doesn't quite overlap, but if you see places where we are not (unintelligible).

**Tom Van Buren:** Yes, thank you very much. I'm thinking especially about accountability, and how we do make decisions, and how those decisions are evidence-based, and how those decisions are shared with the public. The One Seattle data strategy at [seattle.gov](http://seattle.gov), the trend here is to be open and transparent. I was looking at the (unintelligible), I'm turning a lens on SPU, and looking at how do the government employees create a government record, for example. Is it classified? How is it preserved? How is it shared with the public? How do we safeguard the digital assets in the City. And most importantly, how can the public access that information? I think there's a lot to tap into. I think we can share roles and responsibilities? For example, the business owners citywide. They are responsible for decisions made about data technology processes, etc. So, there is a lot there that we can tap into at the City. So, thank you again for inviting me. This has just been fantastic.

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks, Tom. I see that Dorene Cornwell added questions to the chat. I'm wondering some of the same things.

**Michal Perlstein:** People ask when they have witnessed (unintelligible). I just ask, does it matter? ...know that this was the right thing to do (unintelligible) don't choose our customers and we have to help everyone. And now that you know this, are you okay with that? It's a conversation that kind of stops, and the good thing is the Mayor's all for it. We have executive support, so we have all of the right people of Seattle, from all the different areas who think that this is the right thing to do and we want to support the effort towards this. We are trying to put effort towards this, so I think that's the important part. We don't need the ruling, although I personally was thrilled that the ruling gave us a lot more cover and a sense of urgency. Now that everyone knows we have a tiered deadline, they kind of freak out. But I've been here for eight years and saw not much headway. Or the people who care aren't the people who can actually track change throughout the departments. I don't know if the (unintelligible), but I'm hoping that it doesn't matter.

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks, Michal. One question from my end. How is the inter-departmental group or Seattle IT planning to collect user feedback and get a sense of how users are perceiving these accessibility changes?

**Michal Perlstein:** The way my team works is we do is we se personas, and we have research, and we do usability testing. I can't say that everyone does things that way. Right now, to be honest, one should not vote for people, you should vote with them. You should include people with disabilities when you're building the products. Right now, I feel like we're cleaning up a mess, where we know that things are inaccessible and we have to remediate them, so we have to get to a baseline, I would say. We have to get to fixing all of the things. And then, the accountability structure, how do we start from this day forward? How do we engage members of the public, and how do we get feedback from them? I think we have two parallel paths. One is let's hurry up and try to get to baseline, based on WCAG standard, the international standard. We don't need to test with actual people to know it's wrong. We can confirm that, but we can keep moving forward and know we need to fix it without them.

**Kim Dowden:** I just want to add that a part of that is sitting in the structure and operational structure, and maybe there is a new group created. We have been doing some research and we can't monitor what other agencies are doing. And I know that's something that I think in Colorado, they actually have something, they have a whole, very organized program, and they have an empathy lab that really helps to provide feedback. so, again, limited time and resources. I think there are opportunities there for the future.

**Michal Perlstein:** I want to add in case anyone here in unaware, you have to take key people (unintelligible). So, it sounds simple, but it's not just out of the goodness of their hearts. People should give us feedback and fill out surveys, or (unintelligible), or

anything like that. So, the other thing is we don't have any budget. We've never had budget for that. Because we have budget for software, we are using a platform that tests software. Or there are groups that sometimes can -- a project may have some funding where they can buy gift cards, and so that's where we don't pay people directly, but that's another thing we have to think about ongoing, whether models can actually start providing compensation for people, not just for accessibility, for all kinds of user feedback to support this. It's not very special to acknowledge that. (unintelligible)

**Kim Dowden:** I have heard this in many conversations. I don't know (unintelligible), but I do know that it has been a big (unintelligible) of coordination, communication with the vendor and the vendor-owned app is by Motorola, and there is definitely focus on that. So, I empathize with your experience and know that there are folks at the City who are really trying to fix this. As a follow-up to that, I think that is another reason that really shows that we need to be purchasing applications that are (unintelligible) from the get-go. It is much harder to remediate them, fix them, after we purchase them, especially if it is one that we don't have control over. We have very little control over what we can do with that application.

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks. Any further questions? If not, I want to end with a classic CTAB question, which is are there any ways that we can be helpful? Input that you are seeking from the community, or input that you are seeking from the board.

**Kim Dowden:** Well, that is a great question and quite honestly, I didn't know existed before this. So, I am happy to hear that you are here. I don't, off the bat, have any asks, but if there are things that we could use some feedback on, definitely we will reach out.

**Michal Perlstein:** I have one thought, based on what Tom Van Buren was saying. If CTAB could help us to think through what kind of transparency the public would want. Tom mentioned doing a good job of being transparent. If you have any feedback or can gather information, even specifically right now about the digital accessibility compliance work, what would be good for us to think about providing publicly, whether it is dashboards, or what kind of information is too much. What is the summary information? What would people expect? So old people, and particularly those with disabilities. That would be helpful to know to get another perspective.

**Phillip Meng:** Okay, we will keep that in mind.

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:55 PM • How often do things like phone apps get updated. I whine regularly about #FindItFixIt and sometimes something that worked goes away and what is there instead is worse.

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 6:55 PM • How often do things like phone apps get updated. I whine regularly about #FindItFixIt and sometimes something that worked goes away and what is there instead is worse.

**From chat:** Nancy S 6/10/2025 7:01 PM •

Just want to make the point, that nothing is "accessible" if low income folks don't have affordable internet access !

I moved out of low income housing in Seattle eight years ago and went to low income housing in Renton. For years, I had to walk to the other end of the complex to use the computers and free wifi, because CenturyLink eliminated their low income price. During Covid, I "bit the bullet" and got home internet...paying \$50/mo.!

So, what is CTAB doing these days to make internet available and affordable to low income folks?

**Michal Perlstein:** (unintelligible) and we do. We were thinking about all kinds of things, even when we tell people don't have a way to gaze, it's just a giant dashboard. It gives people agency to just open a dashboard, but what if anyone using a phone (unintelligible). It's tiny. I don't want to look at a dashboard on my mobile device. But even if you have a fixed data plan. It just sums up a ton of your data plan. We're trying to think of everything, like people speaking different languages, people at different literacy levels, people with different (unintelligible). So, we're trying to think of all of these things. Right now, we're thinking about accessibility, but we are absolutely thinking about all of those things when we talk about equity and inclusion in the digital experience.

**From chat:** Dorene Cornwell 6/10/2025 7:01 PM • I have to jump off but really appreciate this conversation. and will think about what is valuable to whom.

**Phillip Meng:** Before we move on from this conversation, I want to address Nancy's point absolutely. I know that a lot of us are very focused on affordable internet access. I think it's a good segue into the next part of our board meeting, where we talk about committee work. Especially since this is a huge focus for our Digital Equity Committee, including the annual exercise of the Digital Equity Telecom Forum, where we bring in representatives from telecom companies to discuss what they are doing around affordability and low-cost internet access. If there are no other questions, thank you so much to Kim and Michal for the presentation. We look forward to following up with them. And what would be most valuable in terms of communication about this very exciting accessibility initiative. So next, I would like to turn it over to committee updates, starting with the Digital Equity Committee.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES**



## DEI COMMITTEE

**Sanchit Gera:** The main thing on our plans for the telecom forum, we had some discussion at the last meeting and got some feedback from DeiMarlon Scisney, as well. We want to hold the feedback for the next meeting when we should have the final draft.

**Phillip Meng:** Thank you, Sanchit. As always, we welcome both board and community members to opine on the draft. If you are interested, please reach out to me or to Sanchit Gera. We very much welcome folks to help recommend content. I want to give a particular shout out to this last call. Digital Equity Committee is welcoming new members. As you might know, we've had some members move on to new adventures and new places. And we would love to have more participation on the committee, especially as we think about the upcoming work plan, which includes following State legislative updates and responding to State legislative updates and other activity in Olympia and Seattle around digital equity, as well as finding our next digital equity telecom forum. Next, we have the Outreach Committee.

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** I wanted to drop this into the chat just so everybody can have context on what I'm talking about. A few weeks ago, Jon Morrison Winters put out a post just around where we are from a digital equity funding perspective. I responded underneath that, with some others, as well. But if you all don't know, the Governor vetoed the \$5 million allocated for the Digital Navigator program in 2025, and so this program had already been cut in half in prior years, from \$30 million to \$15 million. There have been multiple efforts to include ongoing funding in the biennium budget, but they have repeatedly failed. And there has been this over-reliance on yearly appropriations that is putting programs at constant risk. So, we have been looking at a more sustainable and diversified, community-anchored funding stream that we can really focus on. And being a part of Outreach, I took the initiative, and reached out to some people, Sabrina being one of them, and others on an email list and it drew some traction, based on this LinkedIn post. So, in addition to the Outreach, (unintelligible) that we have been curating to ensure that we can have people to reach out to for things like the digital equity event, etc. What does mobilizing look like? What does advocacy look like? We would really like to open that up for conversation because I know that -- I think it was three individuals from CTAB that are official board members who agreed to participate in the convening that we're having next Saturday. We're not going to be a quorum. I know that Dorene Cornwell had signed up, as well, but she is not an official CTAB board member. And there were others involved in that conversation, as well. And so, just trying to define what that advocacy arm looks like as part of Outreach, and this was kind of the major project that has fallen into our laps with the vetoing of this \$5 million. And personally, I do think that a \$5 million endowment is quite small, especially

when you look at corporate American and certain foundations . I know that Bill and Melinda Gates and others have closed their funding doors and become 'invite only' to organizations that they've given to before, but I do feel like an endowment is possible, and \$5 million is a drop in the bucket here in Seattle. So, I do want to find ways to mobilize around this and would love to open it up to the rest of the group. I know I've said a lot there, but just wanted to give context. And then, we did send out a (unintelligible) just to an individual's needing DELN, Sabrina, others, that have worked on policy in the past, as well. And that is next Saturday at 3:00 p.m. And that's everything from my end for now.

**From chat:** DeiMarlon "D" Scisney - CTAB 6/10/2025 7:06 PM •

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7331139563051974659/>

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks so much, D. Opening the floor. I just want to also add a couple of notes of context. First, this relates to the Outreach Committee with their amazing work and shift in focus towards really tracking what is happening both at the City government level and in Olympia, and responding to that. And second, a lot of the meetings that are taking place is through engagement with DELN, as well, for which CTAB is a member. But back to the floor. Any comments or questions from folks, or interest in getting involved.

**Sean McLellan:** I am interested in getting involved. With all of the money that this community has and the cutting of funding for the people who truly need it, the digital divide and internet are not a luxury. They are necessities, especially for students, and just to access your doctor to get your medical records, you have to be online. So, for them to cut that is appalling. It's disgusting. So, yes, I would love to get involved.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** I also wanted to add, and I'm going to drop this into the chat, from another organization. I don't know if you all know about WTIA, but that is the Washington Technology Industry Association and they focus on tech policy. Nick Ellingson is the director of products in a start-up. They're a WTIA, and also put out a post just talking about the zero dollars going into innovation, as well as \$500 million on computing and things like that. So, cuts are very detrimental to community. I get that. But also on the innovation side, as well. It's multi-faceted cuts that I feel need to be supplemented with new forms of endowments or looking at things like participatory budgeting and work with commerce and CRP, whatever that is, it can be replicated and put in place, because they're having historic cuts across everything, not just digital equity.

**From chat:** DeiMarlon "D" Scisney - CTAB 6/10/2025 7:06 PM •

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7331139563051974659/>

**From chat:** Phillip Meng 6/10/2025 7:14 PM • Please feel free to contact:  
[phillipmeng98101@gmail.com](mailto:phillipmeng98101@gmail.com)

**From chat:** DeiMarlon "D" Scisney - CTAB 6/10/2025 7:14 PM •  
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7333941880109322242/>

**From chat:** Sean McLellan 6/10/2025 7:14 PM • [seanmcl@cdw.com](mailto:seanmcl@cdw.com)

**From chat:** Lauren Jensen 6/10/2025 7:15 PM • This was great y'all, thanks for having me! Recently attended Bellevue's Inclusive Innovation Forum as well and it's exciting to see these conversations happening across the Greater Seattle Area. 😊

**Sean McLellan:** We don't want to lose our foothold. We will be part of the past.

**Phillip Meng:** Thanks so much, Sean. And D, if folks want to get involved, what are the links, contact information, emails? What would those be?

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** Drop your email into the chat and then I can collect those and then I'll contact everyone. But I want to be cautious in how we move with this. We just have four CTAB board members, correct?

**Vinh Tang:** Correct. That would be a quorum.

**Phillip Meng:** And D, how many -- there's you and I, do we have any other ...?

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** There were three, Sanchit Gera, yourself, myself, and Dorene Cornwell.

**Phillip Meng:** Sanchit Gera has been so wonderfully involved in the digital divide. We certainly can take on more board members of course, welcome all community members to our conversations. I will leave an email address in chat, and I'm happy to link everyone into the relevant conversations. Great. D, anything else on the Outreach side?

**DeiMarlon Scisney:** No..Just please get involved. I love that Sean McLellan has taken the initiative. So, please, anybody else who is willing to get involved, it's more than just Outreach, it's getting back to what David Keyes was doing back in the day around Outreach and advocacy.

**Sean McLellan:** You've got me fired up!

**Phillip Meng:** I'm very happy to hear that. All right. We are moving towards the end of our allotted time today. Now I want to move over to public comment. Would anyone like to share anything with the group?

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Phillip Meng:** If not, we're ending right on time at 7:15. Thanks so much again for joining this meeting. It's so great to have these conversations about accessibility. And thank you all for the very rich discussion. I want to encourage everyone to reach out to be more in committees, and to be more involved in CTAB's work. Feel free to reach out to me over email, or to any of the other folks that have shared their contact information in the chat today. Thanks, all, and we'll see you next month in July.

## **ADJOURNMENT**