



Member Motion

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM6.15	ACTION			Ward: All
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City Hall Hansard: Transcribing City Council Discussions for greater Accessibility and Transparency - by Councillor Brad Bradford, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Special Committee on Governance. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Brad Bradford, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Clerk to report to the Special Committee on Governance, for consideration as part of the Committee's work plan, on the feasibility of implementing accurate time effective transcription of meetings of City Council and the various committees, boards, agencies and special committees and such report to include:

- a. a review of the transcription services used in other jurisdictions, including the Provincial and Federal Governments;
- b. the cost of implementing such transcription services;
- c. a scan of technologies that could perform accurate time effective transcription services;
and
- d. an analysis of the equity impact of transcription services.

Summary

Toronto ranks among the most open and accessible City governments in the world. While the Provincial and Federal Government have provided a proven, effective and accessible way to engage the public, Toronto continues to rely on a limited range of services such as our YouTube channel.

This Motion asks City staff to report on the feasibility of transcribing City Council and committee meetings. Offering this service would remove one more barrier to residents understanding Council decision-making, provide context on historical decisions and programs, and go further in demonstrating Council's commitment to transparent, accessible government.

The City's YouTube channel launched in 2014 and has had only 65,000 views. Many advocates as well as citizens rely on this service to follow meetings. Video records are a valuable resource for anyone interested in the work happening here at City Hall but from a user standpoint, transcription opens up a world of additional access opportunities. Transcripts are easily searchable, could be more easily translated in the many languages spoken by Torontonians, and integrate with a range of modern assistive technologies for our residents using accessibility tools.

In a recent conversation, someone shared a valuable perspective: "we cannot make the public trust City Council but we can take every step to ensure our actions inspire trust". This Motion takes an important step toward inspiring greater trust from the public. As we have in so many aspects of City-building – we have an opportunity to be a global leader on transparent and accessible government.

With new technologies available to us and an increasing burden on the City to make ever more complex decisions, it is critical that we give our residents every possible opportunity to follow Council decision-making, understand our processes, and hold our decisions to account.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM6.15