



vote!

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Joe McDermott  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember McDermott:

I am transmitting for your consideration the attached Motion which would revise the policy direction for Accessible Voting Centers (AVCs).

Currently, our Accessible Voting Center (AVC) requirements come from a 2008 Motion that also approved a plan for ballot drop box locations. That drop box plan was never implemented and the council subsequently approved, and my department implemented, a different plan this past year.

Per Motion 12820, we are required to open three specific AVC locations for every election, regardless of their proximity to participating jurisdictions. As a result, our Accessible Voting Centers have extremely low turnout - so low that, in some elections, it's costing us more than one thousand dollars-per-voter. For example, the city of Maple Valley and Shoreline School District were the only jurisdictions that participated in this past February Special Election yet we opened AVCs in Bellevue and downtown Seattle. They were utilized by a single voter over the course of the four days that they were open.

What's more, we have many more options available to us to provide accessible voting. In some cases, a permanent location open for the entire election makes sense; in other cases it's more effective to visit a particular community group for the afternoon or even visit the home of a specific voter. In any case, I believe we can do a much better job in meeting our voters' needs, especially those with disabilities.

I am very proud of the work we are doing together to improve voter access and believe that this new policy takes another step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration. If you should have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Julie Wise  
Elections Director

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers  
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff  
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council  
Ellen Hansen, Chair, Citizen Elections Oversight Committee