

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee (COBAAC) Committee Charter

Committee Purpose

The City of Bend is committed to being an accessible and welcoming community. First established in 2010, the City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee (“COBAAC”) is intended to help achieve this purpose. COBAAC is also intended help the City ensure that the voices of people experiencing disabilities are represented in local government.

Finally, the committee will assist and advise the City on the most appropriate means by which to make its programs, services, activities, and facilities accessible to all Bend community members.

To accomplish this purpose, the committee’s primary roles are to:

- Identify and elevate accessibility issues to be addressed by City staff. The committee may bring forward issues affecting people who experience disabilities and may work with City staff to find solutions in those cases where the City has jurisdiction and responsibility, particularly related to City Council goals.
- Act as an advisory body to City staff and the City Manager, as well as the City Council when requested, related to City initiatives and projects that impact accessibility and community members experiencing disabilities. The City will endeavor to actively seek feedback from COBAAC members that align with member expertise, lived experiences, and time availability.
- Advise the Accessibility and Equity Manager on meeting accessibility and inclusion goals, help prioritize committee projects, and prepare letters of support, among other activities. To support this role, the Accessibility and Equity Manager and other City staff are committed to bringing well-timed and relevant issues to COBAAC to most effectively use their expertise and lived experience.
- Meet the Bend 2030 Vision action item to establish a City Accessibility Advisory Committee to assist the City with accessibility determinations and to review Department of Justice requirements, City compliance, City infrastructure, downtown accessibility, downtown parking accessibility, new development accessibility, and Access Challenge Resolution.
- Help meet the City of Bend’s obligations as a Title II public entity under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended. Title II protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in the services, programs, or activities of all State and local governments.

The work of the COBAAC does not replace other City of Bend outreach or public involvement efforts. City staff will include the committee’s input in its decision making process. Final decisions will reside with City staff, the City Manager, and City Council.

Language

Language used to describe marginalized groups is dynamic and changes over time. To reflect the changing narrative around the disability experience and recognize that disability is frequently the result of an inaccessible environment rather than a medical condition, this charter uses the term “people experiencing disabilities” based on feedback from COBAAC members. It is important to recognize, however, that each person is empowered to identify their own experiences using terminology that is comfortable for them. For example, members of the Deaf community generally prefer to identify as Deaf people and people with Autism often prefer to be referred to simply as autistic. Use of the term “people experiencing disabilities” in this charter or any other City of Bend document is intended to capture the preferences of a majority of the Bend disability community but should not be interpreted as the preference of each individual. The City will continue to update this charter as needed to ensure the language used is inclusive and up-to-date.

Committee Composition

The membership will consist of 11 voting members. The committee will maintain a goal of having at least 51 percent of members be people experiencing disabilities. The committee will also seek to maintain representation of the following general backgrounds:

- disability advocates,
- professional members from the building, engineering, design, transportation, planning, and architectural industry, and
- one member at large from the community.

Committee Membership

Committee members are appointed by the City Manager.

Length of Appointments

Members are initially appointed to a three-year term and may be reappointed to a second three-year term, to a maximum of six continuous years. Terms expire after a members last full COBAAC meeting following a full three years of service.

Committee Member Openings

If the number of voting committee members falls below nine (9), the committee will advertise openings for new volunteer members. The opening shall be advertised to promote broad response and interest in the position. Prospective members must apply and may be asked to participate in an interview.

Committee Member Qualifications

Voting COBAAC members should have a demonstrated interest, experience, and commitment to issues pertaining to accessibility for people experiencing disabilities. Bend residents are preferred for COBAAC membership but full-time employees of an entity doing business within the City will also be considered. Current City employees may not serve as members.

Committee Member Responsibilities

Voting COBAAC members are responsible for attending meetings and review materials as needed to learn about accessibility needs and projects. Members are expected to ask questions, respect differing views, and work together to provide guidance and recommendations.

Meeting Schedule

The committee will generally hold meetings once a month. At the Chair's discretion and in consultation with the Accessibility and Equity Manager, monthly meetings may be canceled for lack of agenda topics.

Time Involved

The time commitment for committee participation will vary but generally will not exceed an average of four hours per month to include a meeting and follow-up time to research issues.

Absences

If a committee member is absent for three consecutive meetings without notice or justifiable reason, their membership will be reviewed.

Working Groups

The committee may establish working groups as required to research specific issues and make recommendations to the committee. Working groups may draw upon members from the committee and may include outside resources as necessary.

Committee Structure and Operation

Structure

COBAAC consists of 11 voting members, the City's Accessibility and Equity Manager, and City support staff. The following specific roles are defined:

- **Accessibility and Equity Manager:** Acts as the City Manager's representative; brings issues on which the City is seeking input to COBAAC; takes committee recommendations to appropriate City staff; oversees the City's accessibility efforts across departments.
- **City Support Staff:** Assists Accessibility and Equity Manager with taking minutes; distributes meeting agenda, meeting minutes, and other pertinent meeting materials prior to the monthly meeting; provides answers to historical and operational questions; provides other clerical support.
- **Chair:** Facilitates COBAAC meetings, including working with the Accessibility and Equity Manager to draft meeting agendas, request City department representation at meetings, and mediate discussions; represents COBAAC at City Council meetings and other events at which COBAAC representation would be beneficial; and represents COBAAC in written form as needed (e.g., letters of support).
- **Vice-chair:** Support the Chair and fulfills the duties of the Chair when the Chair is either unavailable or conflicted from participation.

Quorum

The committee will operate under a consensus-building model. When the voting members of the committee are not able to agree on a specific recommendation, the recommendation of a majority of the voting members will be the primary recommendation, and minority opinions may be included. Committee guidance and recommendations will be provided to City staff and City Council for their consideration during final decision making.

Voting

At the Chair's discretion, a vote may be called. In the event of a vote, a quorum shall be required and will consist of a majority of the voting members present at the meeting. When necessary, a simple majority vote of the quorum can make a recommendation or decision. City staff cannot participate in votes or be counted towards the quorum.

Election of Committee Leadership

From the voting membership, a Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the committee's voting members. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall serve one-year terms. Following the expiration of the Chair's term, the Vice-Chair shall automatically be nominated for the Chair position. Additional nominations for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions may be received from the committee membership. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair positions shall occur as needed. The method for voting shall follow the voting requirements outlined in the previous section.

Revision History

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
5/31/2022	Updated charter approved by City Manager
5/24/2022	Voting COBAAC members voted to approved updated charter an elevate to City Manager
1/24/2022	Temporary Modifications (indicated using Track Changes) made to Committee Composition, Committee Member Openings, Decision Making – Quorum and Voting, and Election of Committee Leadership sections.
10/23/2016	Charter Updated