

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Community Development Conference Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor City Hall  
Thursday, December 16, 2010  
2:00 P.M.

The City Accessibility Advisory Committee met at the above place and date. The meeting was called to order at 2:10 P.M. The following committee members and staff answered roll call:

Martin Wagner	Karen Pharr
Olivia Chavez	Billie Brown
Manny Razo	Mary Castillo
Mark Shoemith	William Bennett
Jim Fraser	

The following visitors were present:

Burns Taylor	Robin Roberts
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The following members and staff were not present:

Rafael Hernando	Fred Gromand
Martin Walton	Rene Pokrzywinski
Alejandro Campos	Sergio Reyes
Tony Bustillos	

AGENDA

- I. WELCOME / ROLL CALL
- II. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT  
This time is reserved for members of the public who would like to address the City Accessibility Advisory Committee on any items that are not on the City Accessibility Advisory Committee Agenda and that are within the jurisdiction of the City Accessibility Advisory Committee. No action shall be taken.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of November 18, 2010.
- IV. DISCUSSION AND ACTION
  - A. Update on Analysis of Impediments for Fair Housing.
  - B. Update on Easter Seals Project Action Accessibility Planning  
Will Sun Metro continue to be the lead agency?
  - C. Presentation on the Interactive Voice Response System
  - D. Presentation on the Google Trip Planner
  - E. Curb Ramp on Request Program
  - F. Audible Pedestrian Signal Program
  - G. Subcommittee reports for Goals and Objectives
    - Employment of People with Disabilities
    - Sensitivity Training
    - Barrier Free Construction
  - H. Formal complaints regarding ADA/Accessibility Compliance
  - I. Plan Reviews
  - J. Next Meeting Agenda, Date, and Location (1-27-2011)
- V. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- VI. ADJOURNMENT

Item 1. Welcome / Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Item 2. Call to the Public – Public Comment

Comments were made by Burns Taylor, Robin Roberts, William Bennett, Mary Castillo, Olivia Chavez, Martin Wagner, and Billie Brown.

No action was taken on this item

Item 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of November 18, 2010.

The minutes are not complete. They will be presented at the next meeting.

No action was taken on this item.

Item 4. Discussion and Action

A. Update on Analysis of Impediments for Fair Housing.

Comments were made by William Bennett.

No action was taken on this item.

B. Update on Easter Seals Project Action Accessibility Planning

Will Sun Metro continue to be the lead agency?

Comments were made by William Bennett, Robin Roberts, Burns Taylor, Olivia Chavez, and Mary Castillo.

No action was taken on this item.

C. Presentation on the Interactive Voice Response System

There is not any information on this item. Rene Pokrzywinski will make a presentation on this item when she comes.

No action was taken on this item.

D. Presentation on the Google Trip Planner

Comments were made by Robin Roberts, William Bennett, Olivia Chavez, and Mary Castillo.

No action was taken on this item.

E. Curb Ramp on Request Program

Comments were made by William Bennett, Mary Castillo, and Billie Brown.

No action was taken on this item.

F. Audible Pedestrian Signal Program

Comments were made by William Bennett, Billie Brown, Olivia Chavez, and Mary Castillo,

No action was taken on this item.

G. Subcommittee reports for Goals and Objectives

Employment of People with Disabilities

Comments were made by William Bennett, Mary Castillo, Billie Brown, Karen Pharr, Mark Shoesmith, and Martin Wagner.

No action was taken on this item.

Sensitivity Training

Comments were made by William Bennett, Mary Castillo, Martin Wagner, Billie Brown, Karen Pharr, and Olivia Chavez.

No action was taken on this item.

Barrier Free Construction

Comments were made by William Bennett, Martin Wagner, Mary Castillo, Billie Brown, Olivia Chavez, Karen Pharr, and Jim Fraser.

No action was taken on this item.

H. Formal complaints regarding ADA/Accessibility Compliance

Comments were made by William Bennett, Martin Wagner, Billie Brown, Mary Castillo, Karen Pharr, Olivia Chavez, and Jim Fraser.

No action was taken on this item.

I. Plan Reviews

Comments were made by William Bennett, Martin Wagner, Billie Brown, Olivia Chavez, Manny Razo and Jim Fraser..

No action was taken on this item.

J. Next Meeting Agenda, Date, and Location (1-27-2011)

The next meeting will be on January 27, 2010, at a location to be determined later.

Item 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements were made by William Bennett, Jim Fraser, and Martin Wagner. .

Item 6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Martin Wagner, seconded by Olivia Chavez, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

AYES: Martin Wagner, Karen Pharr, Olivia Chavez, Billie Brown, Manny Razo, Mary Castillo

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

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Item 1. Welcome / Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was confirmed.

Item 2. Call to the Public – Public Comment

Burns Taylor commented on Sun Metro's move from using buses to using taxis. It has caused a mess because it had caused him to be late to work three days in a row. He called Sun Metro and had them take him off of the taxis. One of the taxi drivers said that they had 130 calls in one day for Sun Metro. This is causing their normal city business to be practically nil. The drivers are complaining because they make less money on the Sun Metro Lift trips. They are overloaded because they do not have that many taxis. They are using Yellow where the original contract was with Sun City. There was a problem with the contract and it was switched to Yellow. Burns talked with Martin Aceves, who is now with Ready One, and he has scheduled a meeting with Rene Pokrzywinski, because there are 30 to 40 blind employees who are all getting to work late. It is because once Sun Metro calls to make an assignment, the taxis schedule however they want to. They picked up Burns 15 minutes after he was supposed to be at work with a lady on board, went by and picked up another lady, dropped both of them off and Burns got there 45 minutes late. That is when Burns called and had them cancel the use of the taxi and he also had Sun Metro call his boss and explain why he was so late. Bonnie called and explained what had happened. There are rumors that the new freedoms money is being misappropriated or miss-assigned. Rene was at the Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee two meetings ago. She has not been able to attend this meeting. She has been invited and is on the notification list along with the fixed route. The taxi issue has been looked at and the taxi companies have to provide equavilent service. If a cab is called and it will take 15 minutes to get to the persons, door there should be an accessible vehicle at the door if one is needed. The cab companies had set up contracts with LULAC and they would fill in the gaps when Sun City or Yellow Checker did not have a cab available. This is not occuring according to the reports that have been received. Another day that they showed up late, the driver was about 15 minutes past the window, and a call was made to find out how soon he would get there. The individual responded that he did not have anything on the eastside. There was not a taxi on the eastside. The appointment had been made with Sun Metro a week before. That day Burns was about 30 minutes late. The taxi issue will be put back on the agenda. There is a lot of problem with scheduling on the lift. Olivia was picked up at Boeing and then the driver picked up someone on Lee Trevino and by the time she got to her students house, she was an hour late. The family had given up on her coming. The driver had left her at the wrong house and she had to wait for someone to get her to the right location. All of this information also needs to be presented to the Sun Metro Advisory Committee also. There meeting is on the third Tuesday at 2:00 at the Sun Metro Facility at 700 San Francisco. Burns also tried the complaint system and when he had finished, they asked for his name and address. He did not leave his name for fear of retaliation. Even the drivers have faced retaliation.

No action was taken on this item.

Item 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of November 18, 2010.

The minutes are not complete. They will be presented at the next meeting.

No action was taken on this item.

Item 4. Discussion and Action

A. Update on Analysis of Impediments (AI) for Fair Housing.

There is not an update on the analysis of impediments at this time. The Southwest Fair Housing Council is working on the analysis and a report for Community Development. There have not been any Fair Housing Task Force meetings.

No action was taken on this item.

B. Update on Easter Seals Project Action Accessibility Planning

Will Sun Metro continue to be the lead agency?

This item was put on and Rene Pokrzywinski is going to respond. There has been a call and an e-mail from Rik Opstelten with Easter Seals Project Action that will be responded to. There needs to be a meeting scheduled and get the players together. The West Texas El Paso Coordinated Regional Planning group is writing their second plan. Several of the items are focusing on accessibility issues. Anything that would come out of the plan would be of value in helping to finish larger plan. Several members of the group were at the meeting. They know what is coming forward is important. A meeting will be set up for after the first of the year. A meeting was scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup>. Sun Metro needs to be there as the lead agency. No action was taken on this item.

C. Presentation on the Interactive Voice Response System

Rene Pokrzywinski is not here to tell about the system. When she is able to attend the meeting, she will make a presentation.

No action was taken on this item.

D. Presentation on the Google Trip Planner

Rene Pokrzywinski will give a presentation on this item. You can access the Google Trip Planner on the Sun Metro Web page. You put in the destination as well as the origin and it will give you the different bus routes and numbers to get to the destination. It also gives the time the bus reaches each stop and tells where the stops are. It is very effective. The problem is that it is not screen reader friendly. IT is now working on getting the entire web site to be accessible. There is a phone application for the trip planner. Go to the City's web site, access Sun Metro's page, and about half way done it has the listing for Google Trip Planner.

No action was taken on this item.

E. Curb Ramp on Request Program

The 36<sup>th</sup> year curb ramps have started to be installed. The ARRA funding was not completely spent, but all of the ramps on the list have been done. The 35<sup>th</sup> Year ramps are about done. The application for the 37<sup>th</sup> year was turned in with a list of about 900 ramps. Some of the list may have already been done, but on Google Earth it did not appear that they had been done. For ramps that go no where or if there is a pole in the middle of the ramp, is any thing being done to correct the situation? What is required by the ADA is the removal of the barrier and the installation of ramps at intersections. The ADA does not say any thing about getting from one ramp to the other. That is why there ramps, especially on TxDot properties, that do not have the gap filled in between the ramps. It still requires individuals to be in the street. The ADA says that if you have an accessible route it must meet certain requirements, but it does not require the accessible route. The Engineering and Construction Management Services has a gap program that fills in gaps but will not correct the driveways that are already existing. It is the abutting property owner's responsibility to make the corrections at the driveway and to install the sidewalk. It is the abutting property owner's responsibility to install the sidewalk when the property is developed. As far as poles in the sidewalk or ramp, if there is not 32 inches clear, the pole will need to be moved. There has been a request for all of the president streets to have curb ramps installed in addition to the 900 ramps already on the list.

F. Audible Pedestrian Signals

The bid paperwork is being worked on to purchase the equipment for the intersections to be done. A quote from the engineer to design the intersections has been obtained, but it seems to be a little high. Negotiations will be done to try to reduce the cost. The Street Department is ready to do the construction when the design is complete. Three intersections are being done this year. Eight intersections

are being requested for next year. There are nine intersections that have been designed and are out to bid that will have the signals installed. The three intersections are Mesa and Cincinnati, Yarbrough and Montwood, and Paisano and Val Verde. The nine that are out to bid, will replace the lights hung on wires, with mast arms and all of the intersections will have audible signals, because TxDot funds are being used. One of the first of the nine intersections to be done is Viscount and Hawkins. All of the sidewalk areas will be done. There are 45 or 46 intersections that have the signals.

No action was taken on this item.

G. Subcommittee reports for Goals and Objectives

Employment of People with Disabilities

A letter was being worked on. This committee can provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. It cannot send out letters to departments. After discussion and looking through the City's programs, it has been found that there is a program in place that allows for volunteers to fill positions and they would gain experience. A study could be done to determine the number of individuals with disabilities that are employed. Another thing that could be done is to have universities that have disabled programs, encourage their students to apply for government jobs because the jobs typically have better insurance and benefits. One of the problems now is that the individual has to be qualified for the job, where in the past hiring was done on a quota basis. The individual has to be skilled. The disabled community needs to be more focused on education of their disabled students and then give them opportunities. It has been found that the parents don't expect their kids that are disabled to produce. If they are not forced in grade school and middle school, they will get to high school and they don't go to college and they are not going to get a job. Then DARS gets the individuals. There should be a mentoring program that starts in grade school and start beating up the parents to push the kid as hard as any other kid, because they can produce. They need to focus on their strengths and build on that. There are studies by the federal government that disabled employees are more stable, more dependable, and more conscientious than employees that are not disabled. If you have people picket a building because it is not accessible, it is more of a show, but if people show up every day in wheel chairs and they were paying customers, the company will build it to get the money. You build it and they will come is not always true. If you are a qualified candidate you need to apply. If you don't apply you won't know what will happen. A lot of people with disabilities don't want to make waves, but if someone has the skills they have to put them out there. That is the point of education. The entitlement needs to go away. The parents have to be mentored to actually push the children. Jaime Barceleau had the Children's Disability Information Coalition, and that is where they need to start. The Hispanic culture also tends to protect their disabled children more. There are still CDIC meetings, but employment is not being addressed. With computers now, individuals can be functional a lot easier. It is a culture change that needs to be worked on. The sub committee needs to be set up and then go from there.

No action was taken on this item.

Sensitivity Training

Nothing has been done on this item since the last meeting. The training based on the new ADA was started and is coming along. .

No action was taken on this item.

Barrier Free Construction

A lot of the issue for this item is education. A flier should be put together and given to the realtors and even put on the web page identifying the items that an individual

can ask for when the home is being built. If everyone asks for certain items the builders will build what the customer wants. If the builders are told to do it, they won't. If the people buying the house don't ask for an item the builders will not do it because they are trying to cut corners. It is very cheap to build in barrier free items before the construction is finished. The work can be done for between \$200 and \$500. A no step entry can be installed, doors can be widened, blocking behind the walls, lowering light switches, and raising the outlets. The builders claimed that to change the plans would be very expensive, but this is not true. If a person knows at the beginning that it will not cost anything they will ask the items to be done and it will become the norm. There are not narrow hallways in expensive homes. Any room can be accessed in a \$300,000 house and the builder does not need to be asked to install the wider doors or hallways. It is done automatically. In some accessible apartments that were looked at had a gas stove with the controls on the back, which required an individual to have to reach over the flame to turn the gas on or off. There are several different methods to get the word out about barrier free construction. There have been articles in the paper and the builders have called after the home show because they were told about problems with the way the features were constructed or installed. The builders had never thought about some of the items. That is where sensitivity training is helpful. That was done at UTEP. Individuals were put in wheel chairs and sand bags were placed on the foot peddles to represent the dead weight. They were tasked with trying to get around and open doors. There was an architect somewhere that made his entire staff go through wheel chair training, so that they would know when they were designing how it could be done. Every disability has different needs and different degrees of disability.

No action was taken on this item.

H. Formal complaints regarding ADA/Accessibility Compliance

There have not been any formal complaints. There was an email from a man that had requested curb ramps on Sioux Street in January and he wanted to know why they had not been installed yet. The ramps are on the list but there are about 300 in front of him. There was a complaint on a restaurant on Mesa. The individual needed to use the restroom, but it was not accessible. She left the food on the table and went somewhere else. About the only thing that can be done is to file a complaint with the Department of Justice. The building is old and they have put in some ramps to get to the restroom, but once inside the restroom, it is hard to maneuver. The Department of Justice is the agency that enforces the ADA. That would be for areas in a store that are not accessible. Other agencies that could file a law suit to obtain access would be Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project or Advocacy Inc. There have been a couple of complaints about lifted sidewalks. These were referred to code enforcement.

No action was taken on this item.

I. Plan Reviews

The A.B. Fall is going out to bid. It has been reviewed by the State. A variance was applied for. Partial variance was granted. There are a couple of parks that were reviewed and are under construction. There was a set of plans for Memorial Park Library is being reviewed. There were some issues that were not corrected in the past and a project is being put together to do the corrections. There are a couple of street and drainage projects being done. The design work is being done on several Community Development Projects.

J. Next Meeting Agenda, Date, and Location (1-27-2011)

The next meeting will be on January 27, 2011.

Item 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Hall will be closed between Christmas and New Years. Jim will not be coming to the meetings any longer. Malcolm Walker is no longer at Ft. Bliss. So the disabled committee for Ft. Bliss may be reestablished. There are still disabled seats for the Sun Bowl.

Item 6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m.