

CITY- COUNTY

Task Force on Disabilities

March 15, 2021

Task Force Members In Attendance

City

Paul O'Hanlon, Cochair
Joe Wassermann, Member at Large
Mark Schmeler

County

James "Chris" Noschese, Cochair
John Tague, Treasurer
Cori Frazer
Sarah Goldstein
Georgia Petropoulos

13th Member

Paul "Rich" McGann

Task Force Members Absent

City

Janet Evans
Leah Northrop
Kai Roberts

County

Karen Warman

Staff Present

Hillary Roman, City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator
Caylin Snyder, Allegheny County ADA Coordinator
Danielle Nicol, Dept of City Planning Senior Secretary

Welcome & Introductions

Paul O' Hanlon called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and welcomed all attendees.

Agenda

A. BRT: DOMI update on accessible parking II

- Steve Auterman returned from last month's meeting to present more information about accessible on-street parking along the BRT in Uptown.
- The project will currently limit parking along the right-hand side of the street, but Steve has spoken with project partners on ways to design more inclusive parking.
- Steve shared his screen and described the map showing Forbes Ave between Jumonville & Seneca St. This block includes residences on both sides and new

- sidewalk and bicycle lanes will be installed on the north (left) side of the street. The south (right) side of the street will be undergoing sidewalk reconstruction.
- Steve has consulted with one of the residents with who has concerns about losing an accessible parking space on the right-hand side provided by the City. To accommodate this resident and their neighbors, the block will have striping along the lanes that will shift traffic over, away from the curb, allowing for parking to remain in its current condition.
 - A caveat exists in that the striped portion of the road shifting the traffic creates a net reduction of all parking spaces.
 - Steve is confident that this improvement provides a reliable mechanism for traffic improvement while accommodating existing accessible parking.
 - Throughout most of Uptown, accessible spaces are located on the left-hand side of the street and similar changes won't be necessary.
 - The Parking Authority agrees that the City should maintain and create accessible parking on side streets near intersections that have the added advantage of being near corners with curb cuts.
 - The BRT project will include angled parking spaces in front of the Forbes Stevenson Building, two of which will be fully van accessible. All of the parking on the Stevenson side street between Forbes Ave and Watson St will be accessible.
 - One accessible space will be moved about 20 ft, around the corner on Pride St.
 - These adjustments to the BRT should alleviate the accessibility concerns that the City is aware of.
 - Paul asked how many other blocks of the BRT could affect accessible parking. Steve replied that about five out of 18 blocks along the BRT do not currently have on-street parking at all. A number of them utilize off-street parking lots. Additionally, most of the blocks with accessible parking spaces are already on the left side.
 - Rich McGann commented that there are a number of disability-related services in this area including the Deaf Club at Gist and Locust. Steve responded that he would have to look into it; since the BRT runs along Forbes and Fifth Ave, he doesn't have an intimate familiarity with the exact place Rich is referencing.
 - Cori Frazer commented that they are disappointed in the approach to Uptown's accessible parking. Steve clarified that the City provides accessible parking upon request, it cannot designate space for needs that have not been communicated. He agrees that the BRT project did not fully integrate accessibility initially and is confident in the changes they are making now.
 - Chris Noschese commented that the CCTFD has been communicating its concerns about the BRT for a long time.
 - Paul responded that he's been working well with Steve since the last meeting's BRT discussion. While he remains concerned about some unknown aspects of the project, he is torn about fighting for parking spots that may not be needed right now.
 - Paul asked how the City can analyze what the parking needs of the future will be. Steve responded that the City is often in the position to be responsive rather than proactive about disability needs.
 - Wes Speary commented that the City should be more proactively considering the accessibility concerns of these projects. He is also concerned about those visiting the affected areas, not just residents who have parking spaces.

- Steve responded that the spaces are only designated in response to applications from current residents. On being proactive, Steve understands that the City is undertaking a parking study on Uptown soon.
- Steve had to leave the meeting; Paul and Hillary Roman thanked him for being accountable to the project as someone who has only recently taken it on.
- Chris wondered why Jumonville was given special attention over other popular streets.
- Cori wondered whether the Task Force should ask residents to request more accessible parking spaces.
- Chris made a comment about bicycle lanes being prioritized over disability accessibility. Paul agreed that an ideal design works for everyone, however, people with disabilities have explicit civil rights protections under the law. He is concerned about a lack of urgency for finding solutions.
- Chris and Rich wondered why the City couldn't build a subway instead. Paul responded that the City doesn't have the finances for such a project.

B. Minutes approval

- Rich made a motion to approve the minutes from February. The motion was seconded by Chris and carried unanimously.

C. Treasurer's report

- John Tague reported that there hasn't been much change in budget since last month. On March 12th, he sent a budget request into the County, hoping to get feedback on increasing the budget for projects and events from \$1000 to \$1500-\$2500 based on the recommendation of Joe Wassermann.
- John added line items for CART and committee meetings. The increase from \$9000 to \$12,900 would allow for the CCTFD to undertake more in-depth project work and events facilitation.

i. Future projects funding and allocation

- The County has not requested that the Task Force provide any further detail on budget increases for future projects so far.
- Paul encourages the CCTFD to narrow down a few ideas for project meetings. He suggests further discussion on disability mistreatment in the County jail and broader concerns about inhumane treatment at for-profit nursing homes.
- Cori suggested further meetings on vaccine prioritization.
- Sarah Goldstein wondered whether the Task Force might want to reach out to a forensics expert to investigate issues with the Health Dept. Paul clarified that the issues he's concerned about have more to do with practices around restraints and medication availability.

D. COVID vaccination recommendation to Allegheny County

- Paul updated the group on the approved statement on vaccine priority rollout made in partnership with Pittsburghers for Public Transit and Put People First PA. The statement requests that the County designate a central point of access for vaccination available from multiple bus lines. Currently, one location is in Monroeville and another is in Castle Shannon; as of now there is nothing centrally located. The statement also asks for a communication design that will reach people with disabilities who receive care in their homes.

- The statement was sent in an email to C.E. Fitzgerald and the Health Dept. The Health Dept responded that they are in the process of finding a more centrally-located vaccine distribution center in the County. They are also designing a communication strategy for those who receive care in their homes.
- Rich offered that he had some difficulty finding information in the Health Dept system. Chris agreed that sign-up systems are not user-friendly.
- Sarah added that the County is making a lot of headway vaccinating older individuals, especially those living in high-rises and institutions.
- Paul recommends using the Achieva's "action alert" for further messaging and information on this issue.
- Cori added that DHHS can be reached for more information on vaccines at 1-877-724-3258. TTY is available at 711. United Way of SWPA can be reached at 211 and you can text your zip code to 89811 to schedule a second dose with the Health Dept.

E. Clear mask policy recommendation for public agencies

- Paul would like to promote the use of clear face masks at commercial establishments to facilitate effective communication for individuals who read lips.
- He suggests partnering with the Commission on Human Relation to help spread the word about this issue.
- Caylin referred back to Tommy Woods' efforts on this front, saying that he has spoken with representatives at AHN and Washington Health System about his recommendation for clear masks. He has also reached out to UPMC.
- Rich added that many stores have a clear shield at the counter and believes this could allow for mask removal for those who need it.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Paul and seconded by John. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

YouTube link with closed captioning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GehJ3AOd8kA&t=13s>