

# CITY- COUNTY

## Task Force on Disabilities

March 21, 2022

### Task Force Members In Attendance

#### City

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

#### County

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

#### 13<sup>th</sup> Member

Paul "Rich" McGann

### Task Force Members Absent

#### City

Janet Evans  
Michelle Walker

#### County

Cori Frazer  
Karen Warman

### Staff Present

Hillary Roman, City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator  
Audrey Wells, Dept of City Planning Communications Specialist

### Welcome & Introductions

Chris Noschese called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and welcomed all attendees. Task Force members introduced themselves.

#### A. Regular business

- Minutes approval
  - Paul O'Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes from February 2022. The motion to approve was seconded by Joe Wassermann and carried unanimously.
- Treasurer's report
  - John Tague gave a report on the status of the CCTFD's current funds at a balance of \$7903 from the annual \$12,900 budget. Upcoming expenses to include an Executive Committee meeting and potentially an Employment Committee meeting.

- Vote: letter to DOMI & MovePGH regarding SPIN scooters
  - Paul wrote a letter to the Dept of Mobility and Infrastructure requesting more information on the safety and accessibility of SPIN scooters. Paul made a motion to send the letter, it was seconded by Rich McGann and carried unanimously.

#### B. Annual update to Allegheny County's Consolidated Plan

- Kate Molinaro presented Allegheny County's annual update to the Consolidated Plan. She and Karen Brean are seeking feedback on improving community development and housing in the county.
- Kate reviewed recommendations from last year that included sidewalk improvements, additional sidewalks where they don't exist, and other pedestrian improvements.
- Last year, the County reserved \$465,000 for accessible housing improvements, primarily in the North and South Hills.
- They also completed an analysis of impediments to fair housing choice, one of which was accessible housing. The updated plan encourages an increase in accessible and visitable housing, enforcement of reasonable accommodation requests, and new housing development near transportation and other vital resources.
- Chris advocated for housing closer to bus lines and other public transportation.
- Rich added that the age of Pittsburgh's infrastructure can be a challenge.
- Paul pointed out that disabled people also face the challenges of poverty in addition to their disability, so affordability is as much a disability issue as accessibility. He is concerned that folks with disabilities are no longer able to purchase homes.
  - Kate responded that this plan excludes the Housing Authority for the City of Pittsburgh but is in communication with the County Housing Authority. One issue often discussed is increasing homeownership for low-income people.
- John asked whether they were coordinating with Port Authority to improve transportation. Karen responded that they would make sure to connect with them.
- Hillary Roman distributed the project schedule and surveys to the Task Force via email. Karen also offered to help folks complete the survey over the phone if that is a more accessible option.
- Karen added that there would be a hearing on the draft at the end of April 2022.
- Paul emphasized how bad the sidewalk conditions are in the surrounding municipalities outside of the city. He also remarked that there are still far too many businesses with one step barriers.
- John inquired generally about the City Consolidated Plan. Hillary offered to look into it if the Task Force is interested and sends an email with their questions.

#### C. City Planning, DOMI, and Port Authority: Greater Hill District Master Plan mobility discussion

- Thomas Scharff (DCP), Steve Auterman (DOMI), and Dave Munson (DOMI) presented the Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHMP) mobility discussion. Ose

Atkinlotan (DCP) and Moira Engler (Port Authority) were not present but are also members of the planning initiative.

- Thomas shared his screen and also described slides about the goals of the GHMP, which include improved mobility, transportation, and parking. The presenters are hoping to get accessibility feedback from the group.
- Steve described a map of the Greater Hill District, noting how the geography of the neighborhood makes accessible transportation very difficult. The focus of this project is to improve infrastructure wherever possible to promote greater accessibility.
  - Areas in need of improvement include sidewalks, public steps, curb cuts, and enforcement against illegal sidewalk parking.
    - Steve showed an example of a section of Chauncey St without any sidewalks and a curb at Chauncey St and Webster that includes compliant curb cuts without any connecting sidewalks.
    - He also described a slide showing an intersection at Kirkpatrick, Centre Ave, and Mahon St where curbs and sidewalks are in need of repair. Similarly, as a five-way intersection, pedestrians who are blind or visually impaired are unable to cross without putting themselves in danger.
  - The GHMP will improve upon this intersection by repairing sidewalks, expanding the curb area to include more pedestrian space at the corners, and closing a 100 ft section of Mahon St to create a four-way (instead of five-way) intersection.
  - At Chauncey St and Centre Ave, the GHMP will repair sidewalks and ramps to be ADA compliant.
  - At Kirkpatrick and Reed St, the City will be adding protected bicycle lanes and ADA parking. They will also be extending curbs for intersection safety and converting much of a parking lot into green space and a mobility hub. Lighting, trash receptacles, benches, and bus stop amenities will also be improved.
  - The Reed and Kirkpatrick intersection will receive curb extensions, sidewalk improvements, and city steps that connect the top and bottom of the hillside. They are exploring ramp options but the area in the right of way is quite steep.
  - The Plan also proposes traffic calming improvements on key east-west streets.
  - Bus stops will be improved with shelters, benches, and trash receptacles according to daily usage.
- Rich asked that the group consider the steps leading to Fifth Ave and other stairways close to Oakland. Steve said that they have prioritized areas close to public housing where folks are less likely to have a car.
- Paul highlighted the need for owners, including the City and URA to maintain sidewalks. Some areas in the Hill District never had sidewalks due to changes in Zoning code over the years.
- John inquired about money for property owners to fix sidewalks. The City does not currently have a matching fund system, however, it is applying for funds to help some people pay for sidewalk repair.

D. Councilperson Wilson's Office & DOMI: review of outdoor dining and retail legislation follow-up

- Kim Lucas, Acting Director of DOMI, Caroline Seifert, DOMI Policy Analyst, and Angie Martinez, DOMI Public Right of Way Manager presented a review of outdoor dining and retail legislation.
- The City is making the temporary outdoor dining program permanent. Regulations are informed by past meetings with the CCTFD as well as the ADA Coordinator.
- This legislation helps to codify standards for accessibility as well as strengthen enforcement against non-compliant offenders.
  - Legislation clearly states preference for clear space along the building side of the sidewalk unless greater accessibility and safety indicates otherwise.
  - DOMI is adding right of way training to the permitting process at the request of the ADA Coordinator.
  - Violations can result in permit revocation.
- Draft guidelines are published on the DOMI website and should be finalized in April. Public feedback is welcome.
- Paul asked about the furniture accessibility, Kim clarified that furnishings fall under PLI licensing as private businesses. DOMI can only extend oversight to the protection of the public right of way.
- In response to Rich, Kim clarified that these regulations do not apply to things like food trucks, only seated dining, outdoor cooking and retail.
- Kim went on to describe various regulations published on the DOMI website, including clear sidewalk requirements and licensee training (to begin summer 2022).
- Mark Schmeler requested that the City inform licensees that propping a door open in pedestrian clear space is hazardous. Leah added that four feet might not be adequate. Kim noted that there is a tension between adopting the Task Force's suggestion to keep the clear space on the building side and navigating building doors, but DOMI will highlight that to businesses during training.
- Violations can be enforced through 311 reporting under the issue type "outdoor retail & dining."
  - John asked about the turnaround time for enforcement, Kim responded that they are in the process of creating a workflow for these complaints.
  - Kim responded to Rich's question about how quickly 311 can respond to emergencies by emphasizing that true emergencies should always be dealt with by 911. 311 requests are organized by urgency, generally, but should not be used for emergencies.
  - 311 can be contacted at
    - <https://pittsburghpa.gov/311/>
    - Calling 311
    - Texting (412) 328-2771
    - Tweet @PGH311
- Paul brought furnishing accessibility again, as well as how to indicate inaccessible areas for blind or visually impaired people.
- He also noted that adding retail and dining space in the "cartway" can have implications on loss of accessible midblock parking.

Agenda items cut for time:

Community updates

- a. CCTFD appointments
- b. Ad-hoc committee
- c. Community forum

Adjournment

Rich made a motion to adjourn, it was seconded by Paul and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Relevant links and information:

- YouTube link with closed captioning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88I2DOQvVbA>