

City County ADA Task Force Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2019

Task Force Members in Attendance

Paul O’Hanlon
James “Chris” Noschese
Joe Wasserman
Karen Warman
Sarah Goldstein
Janet Evans
John Tague

Others in Attendance

Ali Abdullah – Disability Compliance Administrator, Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh
Andrew Dash – Acting Director, Department of City Planning
Hillary Roman – City of Pittsburgh ADA Coordinator
Caylin Snyder – Allegheny County ADA Coordinator
Alisha Grishman – AccessMob
Sue Tran—Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, Inc.
Grace Braxton—Intern for Sally Jo Snyder, Consumer Health Coalition
Steve Evrard—Allegheny County Department of Health and Human Services
Nicole Nagel— Allegheny County Department of Human Resources
April De La Cruz—ACCESS Transportation
Mark Lee—Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Dan Miller—State Representative, 42nd District
Mary Hartley—446 Bridges, Disability Consultant
Matt Berwick—Disability Advocate, UPMC
Heather Tomko— Accessible Universe
Kristin Saunders—Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI)
Todd Smith—Digital Communities Specialist, Dept. of Innovation & Performance

Minutes Reviewed/Approved

None

Treasurer’s Report

None

Items of Discussion

2019 Accessibility Summit

- Heather Tomko presented an overview of major issues discussed at the 2019 Ramping the Divide Summit on Accessibility in Pittsburgh
 - Accessibility strengths include accessibility in cultural institutions, museums

- Accessibility shortcomings include blocked sidewalks, one-step barriers, digital spaces—difficult to easily find online resources, assisted technology often regarded as “luxury items”
- Concerns remain about the enforceability of the ADA
- OVR services have been innovative, but waiting lists for services are long
- ACCESS transportation services are also innovative aren’t as flexible, reliable, or comprehensive as other transportation services like Uber/Lyft, bus routes are often insufficient
 - No alternative transportation services
- Heather expressed a need to increase a culture of inclusion overall, decrease persistent stigmas
 - More effort is needed to include people with disabilities in events of all types, not just disability-centric events
- Heather offered a proposed solution to the community’s highest priority problem: damaged or unusable sidewalks
 - Sidewalks should be regarded as community spaces akin to other community spaces in the City of Pittsburgh, building upon the “Open Streets” model
 - Sidewalks should be perceived as usable modes of transportation
- One of the problems is that disability issues are often siloed; ADA should collaborate with other relevant departments to close gaps in accessibility
- Paul asked Heather how she develops her initiatives on disability. Heather emphasized how her background in public health informs her work. She also stressed the import of feedback from the community.
- Chris noted the persistent communication barrier for the deaf and deafblind community
- Alisa stated that the summit was extremely informative and helpful
- Paul discussed how travel has informed his understanding of sidewalks as public spaces as living objects to be continuously updated and maintained
- Todd introduced Pitt start-up called PathVu, a global database of sidewalk and pedestrian pathway data intended to improve accessibility
- Mary introduced the idea of creating a metric with an annual assessment on sidewalk health that could be published and shared via news media outlets
- Chris asked Dan about the status of HB 2069 for the SSP program for deaf and deafblind services. He replied that there was confusion about it at the state level.
- Joe asked Dan a question about prescriptions.
- Dan said that he is using the 30th anniversary of the ADA as an opportunity to pass more disability advocacy bills next year
- Dan announced the March 3rd Disability and Mental Health Summit as a large regional event and opportunity to voice concerns to elected officials
- Paul asked Dan about resolving issues with sidewalks under PennDot jurisdiction. Dan replied that organizational fractures are an obstacle at PennDot
- Dan talked about “Cities of Inclusion” program as a potentially influential example for accessibility standards in cities—making inclusion a standard that cities strive for. He included adult changing tables as one of the standards to be included.

- Paul suggested that bathroom design should change to expand regular bathroom stalls so that people don't feel forced to use bathrooms intended for those with disabilities
- Dan stressed the importance of communicating with governmental representatives

Complete Streets Update

- Kristin Saunders gave an overview of updates to the Complete Streets initiative
- Link to Wikimap for the bike plan is now live
- Kristin and her team have been researching gaps in service; this year they hired a consultant to comb through comments from the bike community and broader community to create a network plan
- Network plan based on feedback will be published in 2020
- Chris notes that he has seen wheelchair users using the bike lanes because of sidewalks badly in disrepair
- Kristen acknowledged the tension over sidewalk maintenance between property owners responsibility and sidewalk users
- Kristen went over the current Pedestrian Safety Action Plan
 - The plan was informed by pedestrian crash data collected for the project including the top ten high risk intersections and other risky areas that require substantial improvements
 - The project intends to improve sidewalk and intersection design
 - Project design guidelines toolbox will be made available in winter 2020
- Janet underscored the concern about wheelchair users being forced into bike lanes and streets due to inaccessible sidewalks, specifically in Hazelwood and on Murray Avenue. She asked about the possibility of using "beware of motorized vehicles signs." Kristen reinforced the preference for exclusive bicycle presence in bike lanes.
- Paul noted that sidewalk issues vary widely by neighborhood, noting that Mt. Lebanon has superb sidewalk maintenance enforcement
 - Paul inquired about agencies offering sidewalk services
- Alisa emphasized the difficult problem of sidewalk maintenance enforcement
- Karen noted the problem with sidewalks and alleyways being too narrow
- Kristen said the action plan intends to address safety concerns for three different types of alleyways
- Heather brought up the issue of forced rerouting where throughways are blocked
- Kristen stated her desire to figure out a priority structure for high-transit areas within the action plan
- Paul emphasized that ADA enforcement should take priority as a federally mandated legal duty
- Joe asked about why grant funding isn't being used
- Kristen said there were some holdups regarding jurisdictional oversight, noting also that liens are often ineffective enforcement methods due to the financial hardship on property owners
- Mary asked about citywide design guidelines for sidewalk usage

- Kristen said that any sidewalk must have five feet minimum of “clear space” citywide, six feet of “clear space” in business districts, and ten feet of “clear space” downtown
- Mary stated that the city has inconsistent enforcement of the removal of a one-step barrier
- Paul brought up problems with inconsistent action with business-related step leveling project for Phase 2 of Penn Ave in Garfield
- Janet said that Elizabeth St in Hazelwood is in disrepair but the owner will not fix it despite several citations
- Paul asked about the communication process between PennDot and the City; Kristen suggested having a representative from PennDot attend CCTF meetings
- Paul wanted to know about sandwich board policy; Andrew and Kristen said that they are not aware of such a policy
- Kristen said that broken lines of communication between permit owners and their staffs were partly to blame
- Alisa mentioned other types of obstructions such as hanging flower baskets

Miscellaneous Issues/Concerns

- Mary and Alisa expressed desire to rebuild the Accessible Pittsburgh listserv
- John expressed concerns over voter suppression in terms of accessibility barriers for disabled community
 - Paul discussed that a major voting obstacle is a lack of voter registration initiatives in places where people are receiving state services including nursing homes, and other facilities

Discussion of Events

- Assistive Technology Maker Fair, 9/24-25 /19, Convention Center Monroeville
- We Count: Pennsylvanians with Disabilities and the Right to Vote, 10/10/19, Heinz History Center
- Disability and Mental Health Summit, 3/3/20, David L. Lawrence Convention Center

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.