

FAX ADA Transition Plan Outreach Meeting 04-28-2021

Transcript from Disability Advisory Commission (DAC) Transportation Subcommittee

Syroun Sanossian: So thank you Shannon and thank you to everyone watching for taking the time to come to the meeting today and participate we've been working with the FAX transportation district for several years on this plan so we're really excited to be able to talk with you about it today.

First of all, I'd like to talk a bit about the definition of disability, the reason transition plan is necessary is because there are barriers to access that are at bus stops and perhaps involved in policies and practices, so the definition of disability is really important. Under the ADA, there are three categories of disabilities that are defined that are protected by the ADA.

The first one is a category that I think we're all familiar with. So they are things that are that can substantially limit a major life activity so breathing, walking, running, eating, speaking, those kinds of things. Those are things that we those kinds of disabilities are things we see in people oftentimes so people with mobility impairments or hearing impairments or vision impairments.

The second group of people that are protected by the ADA are people with a history of a disability or a record, that means people who've had cancer in the past, perhaps they have heart disease or another medical issue that causes them to have a disability.

The third group is a group of people that are not disabled but are regarded as being disabled or thought of as being disabled. So I have a friend from high school who works for a refinery and long ago, when he had first started working he was involved in a fire. The fire affected his face and his hands but didn't cause of disability but it caused disfigurement and because of that, the way that people treat him is different, he experiences discrimination because but he's not disabled. He is part of that third group of people with disabilities that are protected by the ADA.

In California, the protection that the ADA provides is actually more broad it doesn't have to be a situation that substantially limits, a major life activity, it only has to limit a major life activity.

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Syroun Sanossian: Under the ADA there are five titles five sections and today we're going to talk about Title II because FAX and the City of Fresno are an ADA title to entity, a public entity. The four basic steps of this process were first to make a public statement. So FAX made a statement back in 2016 that this process would start that they were going to comply with the ADA and make improvements, appoint an ADA Coordinator so someone responsible for the process was established a self evaluation was started, that is an evaluation of the policies and practices that govern the programs and services and activities that take place and a transition plan was going to be developed to remediate physical barriers to access.

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Syroun Sanossian: This slide is meant to depict how complex this process is. This actually comes from a State Agency that oversees access compliance originally, it was multi page. They condensed it down into one page, but even when you look at this page you see the self evaluation only occupies one small blue box. Because that alone would be at least a page in terms of a flow sheet and what we're talking about

to today that the transition plan is at the bottom right hand corner, it also occupies one single box, so this entire flow chart is intended as an overview.

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Syroun Sanossian: First of all, a lot of new construction will take place at bus stops when new construction takes place under Federal and State standards. If this new construction is required to be readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities so accessible to, usable by, not code compliant, this is actually a higher standard than building code requires. So a transition plan under the US Department of Justice has to have four minimum requirements, the first is that every physical obstacle be identified, not some of them or sub groups of them, but all of them. A method to remediate them needs to be established a schedule for remediation needs to be put in place, and someone has to be shown as the responsible official so that when people have questions they know to whom they can reach out for answers.

So our methods focused on standards and requirements that put the transition plan and the self evaluation place recommended barrier removal priorities, so that barriers that affected more people would be remediated first rather than later.

Barrier severity ratings - these applied to individual barrier so at one bus stop you can have multiple barriers to access and some are more have more of an effect upon people with disabilities and others, and then we developed an implementation plan and a schedule.

So existing facilities are treated differently under the law than new construction existing facilities so facilities that were in place before 1992 are required to be brought into compliance. Full compliance, where possible, lower where it's not possible, the requirement is to make them comply to the maximum extent feasible to new construction standards, so it is a different standard.

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Syroun Sanossian: This slide intends to depict the elements that we identified at bus stops some bus stops had all of these elements, some had a few of them. Somehow one or two, so you know some bus stops have no bus bench they have a sign, others have a shelter and assign and benches and trash receptacles and many different amenities.

The barrier severity rating system more specifically helps us to determine when remediation is scheduled. But the basis for it was to ensure that all barriers weren't looked at the same because some barriers have more of an effect upon a person with disabilities than others.

The construction date - so whether it was pre ADA or an existing facility or new construction - was also part of the determination process, and then the ratings were assigned in one of these five categories necessary recommended a hindrance a low severity or, in some instances, technically infeasible.

So our findings discuss different elements at bus stops, so the location you saw in that earlier slide with many photos that some bus stops are looking at on medians some are located in the sidewalk along a roadway some are in a shoulder where there is no developed pedestrian facility. So we looked at sidewalks where they exist, it will look at what's called a boarding and alighting space that is where people enter the bus or exit the bus. And the maneuvering clearance required whether there's a shelter or a bench or neither in place at the stuff. With fixed route systems we looked at the vehicles that are

being used and took measurements to determine how many Individuals using mobility assist devices so scooters wheelchairs electronic convenience vehicles of some sort or manual wheelchairs. How many of them could actually fit on the vehicles in comparison to what the manufacturer of the vehicle designated because sometimes those numbers aren't the same. And within the bus vehicles, we also did some assessment work and took some measurements in terms of the ramps that are used and the audible information is provided for people with vision impairments, and the places where people wish secured that use mobility assist devices, so the wheelchair resting spaces.

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Syroun Sanossian: So, in the end the implementation schedule that we developed had have a balance that was quite large, I will say that a little over \$9 million and FAX's committed to spending a half million dollars a year which will create a plan that takes about 30 years to remediate in in total with an estimated annual inflation rate about 2.5%. So the determination was made that the routes, with the highest use would be remediated first so that the largest number of FAX users could be served first. That list of those routes that are experienced the highest use are here on this slide so they begin with route number one, apparently, that is, the busiest route, the route use the most and the rest of the routes here are much the same so that is a sensible solution actually.

There's a photo on this slide that depicts one of the bus stops in a median and this particular bus stop was actually constructed recently, this is a new construction site. Because our assessment indicated that the original location of this bus stop on the same median but some distance further down the road was in another location on the median that was too narrow to have a bus stop that was fully compliant. So FAX decided to move it, so this is a successful resolution of a barrier, well have multiple barriers, most likely at this one single bus stop within a route that was already taken, it has already taken place by FAX, so a good example of the progress is already being made into the plan.

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Syroun Sanossian: So the priorities in terms of what bus stops and what routes are remediated is the standard process, the US Department of Justice recommends. This was followed, to some extent, although, as I explained on the last slide the frequency of use of the routes was really the primary focus for the remediation plan, but even so that choice follows this recommended prioritization fairly closely because many of those bus stops are located on what's called arterial or corollary roadway - so major roadways where state and local agencies oftentimes have facilities.

The second priority is to some extent much the same with our materials and corollaries but those that serve places where libraries, Community centers parks, recreation facilities are located.

The third priority, and the last priority would be in residential areas that serve specific areas but less of a wider view of the entire city.

An official responsible was named in this person is sandy. Sandy she can be reached at this email address here or she can be reached by using the phone number on the slide and so that there is a number of ways that you can reach her regarding a format information that you can provide or obtained from her.

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Syroun Sanossian: So one of the reasons for presenting the plan today is we'd like your input. It's really important that the city understand how the public views the plan and the decisions made to develop the plan. So we're inviting you to provide comments. They can be provided online in a survey that is already live right now, they can be provided in a printed format on a paper format of the same input form and that can be mailed in. Or you can just call the number here and provide your comments and they will be entered into the system that we are using to have all comments entered into, so that we have demographic information and it provides a perfect overview of everything that was commented on.

So please provide feedback that's really valuable to this process, and this is a second or two meetings that we're providing to discuss the plan transcribe the decisions made and what was the what was develop and so it's really valuable that we get some information that can help our plan to be more robust. So this is my presentation, I'm open for questions.