

Present: Jean Benfield, vice chair; Jo Booms, interpreter; John Madrid, member; Barb Yaeger, guest; Ron Burke, member; Carla Sykes, City of Pueblo Law Department; George O'Brien, Co-chair; Kip Morphew, City of Pueblo Facilities Manager; Ralph McPherson, Co-chair; Don Bruestle, member; Mary Leonard, guest; Tina Armstrong, guest; Sherry Slate, Pueblo County Design Engineer; Bob Schmidt, Pueblo County Public Works Director; Eileen Dennis, guest; Sam Vigil, City of Pueblo Engineering Manager; Kristen Castor, Secretary, Rob Gilkerson, Rocky Mountain ADA Center; Bob Keating, Colorado Legal Services; Chanell Turner, MV Transportation.

Approval of the Minutes

Jeannie Benfield moved and Ron Burke seconded that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion passed.

Public Rights of Way and the ADA: Rob Gilkerson

Rob Gilkerson is an Information Specialist with the Rocky Mountain ADA Center, which provides non-legal information about ADA compliance to citizens, government entities, and businesses in the Rocky Mountain region. Meeting the Challenge is the for profit parent company that hosts the ADA Center and can provide additional services, such as surveys, for a fee.

He gave an overview of the proposed Guidelines for Public Rights-of-Way <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/nprm.htm> The guidelines take into account conditions typical of roadway geometry and common constraints unique to public rights-of-way in order to facilitate compliance and minimize impacts. For example, the grade of accessible pedestrian routes is permitted to follow those of adjacent streets. The proposed 4' minimum width provides additional space for maneuvering, sway, and leeway which is considered important in this environment due to potential hazards such as nearby curb drop-offs and vehicular traffic. Types of curb ramps and where to place detectable warnings were also discussed.

For an overview is available here
<http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/nprm-guide.htm>

Toward a Sidewalk Policy

After the formal presentation, there was some discussion about what constitutes a sidewalk maintenance and repair policy. It was generally agreed that a Justice Department review is in order after the renovations to City Hall, Memorial Hall and City Park are complete. It is clear that other issues may be identified at this time and the question of sidewalks is open for further assessment.

At the current time, the City Manager has made it clear that city departments share their plans so that when any kind of street or sidewalk repairs are done, all elements are addressed at once. Any formal plan for sidewalk replacement and repair is included in the neighborhood plans made with Housing and Citizen Services to meet guidelines for Community Development Block Grant funding. There is also a citizens' request program that recently advertised in the paper for more input.

All of these elements are important components of a repair and replacement policy, but they are not sufficient in themselves and need to be written out. A complete survey of the condition of sidewalks in the city is expensive and time consuming. While it isn't possible with current funding levels, it might be possible to apply for a planning grant. Such funding is easier to get than capital improvement to implement the plan.

George O'Brien described how difficult it is to travel by wheelchair or even on foot in the downtown area. It was recommended that the Committee survey the downtown area for curb ramp replacement requests to Public Works, noting that potholes are the responsibility of the Streets Division.

Transit Update: Brenda Broyles

Pueblo Transit is running a budget deficit of about \$500,000 because fuel costs have risen beyond expectations. The federal government is allowing 10% of the operating budget to be used for fuel, but this is not enough to meet current need. The only other way to bring the budget into balance is to cut service in some way. There are several factors to consider. Ridership on the two most recent route additions is substantial, bringing in more federal money, so it doesn't make sense to cut back that service. Ridership is lowest in the low income neighborhoods, but federal standards frown on cutting back service to the most in need.

Pueblo Transit staff has come up with seven different proposals to make before City Council. Once Council gives a directive, the changes will be put out for public comment. Committee members maintain a presence during the work session scheduled to begin at 5:30 on May 7, although no public

input is accepted during work sessions. A more exact time for this presentation should be available on the city website on Friday May 4.

Ralph McPherson moved and Jeannie Benfield and John Madrid seconded that we discuss transit at the work session on April 19th at SRDA.

CitiLift Report: Chanell Turner

CitiLift is averaging 2.9 passengers and hour on each van. MV Transportation has been awarded another five year contract to operate CitiLift.

Ron Burke brought up his concern about compliance with the origination to destination policy at Urology Consultants on Jerry Murphy. He was there when CitiLift arrived to pick up a woman in a wheelchair. Other patients had to wheel her out the van. Brenda countered that drivers do not wheel people in and out of places. While they can and do go inside to locate a client, pushing a wheelchair is something only a personal attendant can do. Passengers can bring an attendant at no cost. If they have identified that need, then they must always travel with an attendant. They can also bring a friend at full fare.

George O'Brien pointed out that dispatch often doesn't indicate that the passenger has a need. Brenda said it is the passenger's responsibility to identify that need when the appointment is made. These policies are stated in the welcoming letter and client handbook that all passengers receive. Pueblo Transit is conducting trainings at agencies such as Bluesky who rely heavily on CitiLift.

It is still the best policy to advise riders who are having problems to contact Brenda or Channel directly. It is important to identify which issues can be resolved with training.

County Update: Bob Schmidt

Access to the sidewalk from the handicapped parking at the new Judicial Center will be achieved by dropping the curb.

Tina Armstrong asked if it would be possible to have a family bathroom at the courthouse where people could go with children, or adults that need attendant service. Jo and Jean explained that when adults wear diapers because of a disability, they need a place to change and clean up in order to participate in public business. Single toilet rooms can serve this purpose if there is a changing bench. Bob Schmidt said he would look into it.

Sherry Slate will be representing the county from this point forward. She has prioritized county buildings and whether they require engineering or maintenance to bring them into compliance. Please let her know of specific concerns.

There will be an ADA attendant at the County Courthouse, available either by phone or in person at the ground level office.

Chairperson's Report: George O'Brien

George reported on his meeting with Jerry Pacheco. The City Manager acknowledged that Public Works does not get enough funding to do what it needs. He explained that 78% of the city budget goes to personnel costs. Of that, 67% is for police and fire. The city charter mandates that Pueblo pay its police and fire force a salary based on an average of similarly sized cities. This puts Pueblo in competition with Lakewood, which has a much bigger tax base and is mandated to pay its police and fire the highest salary in the state. If there is a dispute, the Pueblo city charter also mandates that city council accept the decision of an arbiter.

Kristen added that at the Citizen's Advisory Committee, Earl Wilkinson referenced a recent study that found Pueblo's infrastructure is at a point where it cannot even be maintained at the status quo with current funding levels. He said a dedicated funding stream is essential just to maintain our current standard of living and supports either a fee or a Regional Transportation Authority, both of which are admittedly unpopular with citizens.

Bob Schmidt said the county is reviewing its salary scale, but currently pays its law enforcement and fire fighters a salary within 10% of the average of like sized cities.

Jerry Pacheco also said that the nearest thing to a written sidewalk improvement plan is rolled into the neighborhood plans, which do not cover all the residential areas.

Sam Vigil offered that in places where potholes impede access, the complaints should go to the streets division. He will handle curb ramp requests. Bob Keating said that CSU might be willing to complete sidewalks surveys.

No New Business

The meeting adjourned at 2:50.

The next meeting of the Pueblo ADA Advisory Committee is Thursday May 3, 2012 from 1:00 to 3:00 at the El Pueblo History Museum at 301 North Union.

The next work session is Thursday April 19, 2012 from 1:00 to 3:00 at SRDA at 2:30 North Union.