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ADAPT of Texas Comments on the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2008- 2009

ADAPT wants the City Council to increase funding for curb cuts and sidewalks to at least \$5 million for fiscal year 2008-2009. We are cautiously optimistic about the City Staff's recommendation to use \$10 Million TxDot reimbursement to fund sidewalk accessibility projects over the next 2 years. It is a great idea but it is unclear when the City will receive the money from TxDot. If there is a delay in funding it could do a great deal of damage to the program. ADAPT would like to work with the City Council and staff to secure this funding.

ADAPT wants Council to continue to support the completion of a transition plan to ensure that The City of Austin has a network of sidewalks that is compliant with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA required that a transition plan be completed in 1992. ADAPT fully supports the Public Works Department's proposal to fund sidewalk accessibility projects every year for the next 20 years (with adjustments for inflation) by a minimum of \$5 million per year to reach compliance with the ADA.

ADAPT is concerned about the recommendation that ADA compliance projects be funded in a future bond election. ADAPT members believe that it is very risky and just plain dumb to fund ADA compliance with a single source of funds. First, the City will have a difficult time putting together a bond package in 2010 and again in 2014. Secondly, a bond election is not a guarantee of funding, as it may not be supported by the voters. What's more, by not continuing to make sidewalks and curb cuts a priority, the City has remained in violation of ADA compliance requirements for well over a decade. The civil rights of people with disabilities should not continue to be relegated to some bond election pipe dream. They must be funded now. The City Council needs to support the City Manager proposed funding to ensure that there is \$5 million in FY08-09 budget for sidewalks and curb cuts.