



## Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Mark Washington, Director, Human Resources and Civil Service

Date: September 24, 2014

Subject: John Woodley – Request for ADA Requirements

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We are aware that at least some Council Members received an email message on September 17, 2014 from an individual named John Woodley expressing concern about the City's efforts to accommodate his hearing disability at various public meetings.

The City is strongly committed to compliance with the Title II provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which require that public entities such as the City of Austin provide *an equal opportunity to participate, or, specifically, to ensure that communication with people with communication disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities*. The City makes reasonable efforts to make all public meetings accessible to individuals with disabilities. In Mr. Woodley's case, these efforts have included captioning for Council meetings and other City public meetings and providing special seating to enable Mr. Woodley to better view the captioning.

As you may know, the City maintains an ADA Program Office that focuses exclusively on accessibility issues. Dolores Gonzalez, who manages that Office, has had numerous communications with Mr. Woodley to address his concerns, and I have personally communicated with him several times as well. We have also consulted with the Law Department and other available resources to ensure that our accessibility efforts are appropriate.

Based on these discussions, we are confident that the City's existing accessibility steps are sufficient both to meet our obligations and to address Mr. Woodley's specific concerns in a reasonable manner. Nonetheless, in an effort to ensure that we are following best practices, we are engaging an external resource, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), to conduct a review of the City's existing accommodation practices. Once we receive the assessment from DARS, we will share the results with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

We are available to answer any specific questions you may have about this topic.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Anthony Snipes, Assistant City Manager  
Judy Wallace, HR Assistant Director  
Dolores Gonzalez, ADA Coordinator