

Departmental Submissions for FY 2009-2010

Austin / Travis County
Health and Human Services Department



Health and Human Services Department

The Town Lake Animal Center (TLAC):

- For the past three years TLAC has sponsored a Spring Animal Health Fair partnering with Meals on Wheels to take the pets of homebound clients in Austin and Travis County for vaccination and sterilization. Volunteers also deliver pet food to homebound persons from pet food donations.
- An interpreter is available for persons with hearing difficulty at rabies clinics.

Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) unit:

- The Immunizations Unit designed "Drive Through" Flu clinics to accommodate people with disabilities. They also include a "special needs" area at all mass flu clinics for clients who have difficulty with mobility and/or climbing stairs. This year's "Drive Thru" Flu clinics, was at Givens Recreation Center in the fall of 2010



Austin Convention Center Department

The Austin Convention Center Department, in its effort to be the best managed Department in the best Managed City, undertook the following projects to support ADA improvements in FY 2009-2010. Since last year's report, the Department completed several ADA related projects (see below) and set goals for FY 2010-2011 and beyond, to including the following:

ACCD projects completed in FY 2009-2010

- Mandatory ADA tude training requirements for all employees. As of December 2010, within the past two years, more than half of ACCD employees have attended the training.
- Updated all ADA posters located at the Austin Convention Center and Palmer Events Center. The posters were customized with ACCD logos and the departmental contact information for ACCD ADA coordinators is included.
- Completed on-demand computer based training class refresher course for employees on various topics, to include accessible evacuation, evacuation chair training, AED training and crowd control for patrons with disabilities.
- Improved access to the 4th level of the convention center via an elevated walkway. This project was completed using funding from the Capital Improvement Project (CAP).
- Purchased a mobility scooter to expand the services offered to people with disabilities, the purchase was made by the Security and Safety Division.
- Designated additional accessible parking spaces for guests with disabilities to meet the anticipated service needs based on clients/show demographics.

FY 2010-2011 Projects and Future Goals

- Continue to update accessible evacuation procedures.
- Provide training on updated procedures to all employees.
- Install motion light sensors to all restrooms located throughout the Austin Convention Center and the Palmer Event Center to upgrade hands free operation. This will be a multi-year project.
- Place notices in departmental newsletter with contact info for ADA issues.
- Survey employees who can assist hearing impaired guests for bilingual pay.
- Install hands-free door opening options on designated accessible restrooms.
- Research adding hands-free door opening options at 5th Street Garage entrances and exits on accessible route to/from the Austin Convention Center.



Library Department

During FY 2009-2010, the Austin Public Library (APL) continued its ongoing efforts to improve services for library patrons with disabilities, focusing on the following:

New facilities and planned renovations:

- **Twin Oaks Branch** was reviewed on June 6, 2010; bathroom accessibility exceeds requirements in maneuverability; excellent library overall design allows for wide aisles and easy accessibility for wheelchairs. The branch has front automatic sliding doors that open onto a wide accessible path. The branch opened to public on August 21, 2010.
- **Austin History Center** The ADA ramp project progressed through the design phase, receiving approval from the Historical Landmark Commission to go to the construction and bid phase. In FY 2010-2011 APL will complete this ramp.
- **Howson Library Branch** During the renovation process this branch was retrofitted with a new accessible entrance from the parking lot and includes the installation of automatic doors.



The new Twin Oaks Branch located near the intersection of South Congress and Oltorf opened on August 21, 2010. Operating as a “library for the future,” the New Twin Oaks Branch is patterned after a popular new design model for community libraries, which incorporates many features found in upscale bookstores. Stephanie Strange a local artist was contracted to design a sculpture pictured above that pays homage to the records world entitled *BlackWell*³



Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

During FY 2009-2010, the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) has continued its commitment to serving the needs of the disability community and to making efforts for increased reasonably priced and accessible housing options for people with disabilities.

NHCD PROGRAMS

NHCD funded the following programs to promote equal access to housing for people with disabilities:

Renters' Rights Assistance/Fair Housing Counseling:

- FY 09-10 15.6 million in funding.
- NHCD contracts with the Austin Tenants' Council (ATC) to provide tenant counseling and landlord/tenant dispute mediations.

Architectural Barrier Removal Activity:

The Austin Housing Finance Corporation's ABR Program modifies or retrofits the living quarters of eligible, low-income elderly and disabled renters to make their housing more accessible.

- Up to \$5,000 per home/ per year can be provided to a single home.
- Eligible income is 80 percent or below of Median Family Income.
- In FY 09-10, the ABR Budget was \$263,431.00; this budget helped served 90 renters and 360 owner-occupied homes. Though, fewer households were served in FY 09-10, the program was able to provide more extensive services per household. The ABR owner program provided the following types of assistance to clients: ramps, bathroom modifications, shower wands and bars, lever handles, and handrails.

Voluntary Compliance Agreement Program and Housing Information and Referral Service:

The Voluntary Compliance Agreement Program verifies compliance with applicable federal, state and local accessibility standards. The Housing Information and Referral Service provides information and referrals for S.M.A.R.T. Housing™ approved developments with accessible units by geographical location or zip code.

Austin's Visitability Ordinance and S.M.A.R.T. Housing™

Policy Initiative requires new single-family dwellings, duplexes, and triplexes constructed with city assistance to utilize design features that provide accessibility and usability for visitors with disabilities referred to as "visitability."

- All new single-family and duplex units are visitable.
- At least 10 percent of the multi-family units are accessible

- At least 25 percent of the multi-family units are adaptable.
- All ground-level single-family, duplex, and triplex construction are required to be visitable.
- Voluntary Compliance
 - Completed legal commitment under Voluntary Compliance agreement in 2002 (1,950 multi-family units inspected by third party consultant).
 - 102 developments in full compliance

Other Developments:

- Third party contract (Buck Group) to conduct plan review and inspections. Contract through 09 with two 12-month extensions
- Adoption of the 2003 International Building Code (2003 IBC)
- City staff continue to be trained on federal, state, and local housing accessibility requirements.



SMART Housing Unit with a no step entrance



City View at the Park is SMART Housing and Green Building complex design for low income seniors.



OUTREACH

Information about NHCD’s programs and services is available in alternative formats in their offices and by request. Two NHCD staff members use virtual TDD modems.

NHCD works with the disability community during its annual planning process. Members of the disability community including, the Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities and ADAPT of Texas, participate with other stakeholders in stakeholder meetings, public hearings, and community needs surveys throughout the planning process. Copies of all published documents are available by mail and in alternative formats, upon request.

Through its partnerships with various organizations and development of initiatives to eliminate some of the barriers to affordable accessible housing options, NHCD continues to demonstrate its commitment to serving the needs of the disability community and to increasing affordable, accessible housing options for people with disabilities.



Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) remains committed to making all of their programs, services and facilities fully accessible to everyone. Since the inception of ADA, more and more park facilities and programs have been improved for accessibility; this has allowed many individuals with disabilities to enjoy the public parks, lakes, recreation centers, hike and bike trails, disc golf courses, museums, golf courses, nature preserves, wilderness parkland, swimming pools, transportation for senior citizens and various summer programs.

PARD continues renovations to Austin parks, adding ADA playscapes and swimming pools thereby making Austin's parks accessible to everyone.

- **PARD ADA Playscapes:**
 - PARD completed three playscape renovations in FY 2009-2010 and has identified nine additional sites for renovation.
 - To improve accessibility, PARD is moving forward with the use of fiber mulch as a surface for some playscapes.
- **PARD Aquatics Facilities:**
 - PARD has completed six conversions of wading pools to spraycapes.
 - All completed spraycapes are ADA compliant.
 - PARD has begun the design on three major pool renovations at Bartholomew, Deep Eddy, and West Austin Parks. The pools will include ADA accessibility and incorporate some of the new pool standards.
- **Mc Beth Center Updates:**
 - One vacant program specialist position for the summer program was filled.
 - PARD temps will serve all registrants including 200 participants with disabilities.
 - Expanded services with building addition from old Park's Police HQ will have ADA Bathrooms, a fitness room, adult ceramics and serve younger members in a fitness program.
- **Other PARD Updates FY 09-10:**
 - The Walnut Creek Trail project is an initiative to develop an extensive trail system along a major Austin creek. The 3.25 mile trail project extends from Balcones District Park to Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park. The project seeks to link neighborhoods, businesses and schools; it also preserves open space and water quality while providing safe access for cyclists and pedestrians. Ultimately, the plan is to develop a trail to the Colorado River.
 - An ADA redesign and relocation of the entrance increased accessibility at the Elisabeth Ney Museum. The museum's carriage drive was also restored; this drive will serve as the entry to building and ensures ADA code requirements for pathways. The project is in the construction phase.



Public Works



PURPOSE

The ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Program (ADA program) under the Public Works Department (PWD) manages current curb ramp and sidewalk projects. To facilitate the selection and prioritization of sidewalk and curb ramp projects, PWD works with the ADA Access and Sidewalk Task Force (ADA Task Force) and the project selection criteria to set priorities. The ADA Task Force is comprised of members of ADAPT, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services –Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, City of Austin staff, Austin Energy, Capital Metro representatives and interested citizens. They assist in providing recommendations and input, as well as site specific suggestions for the ADA Program’s general protocols.



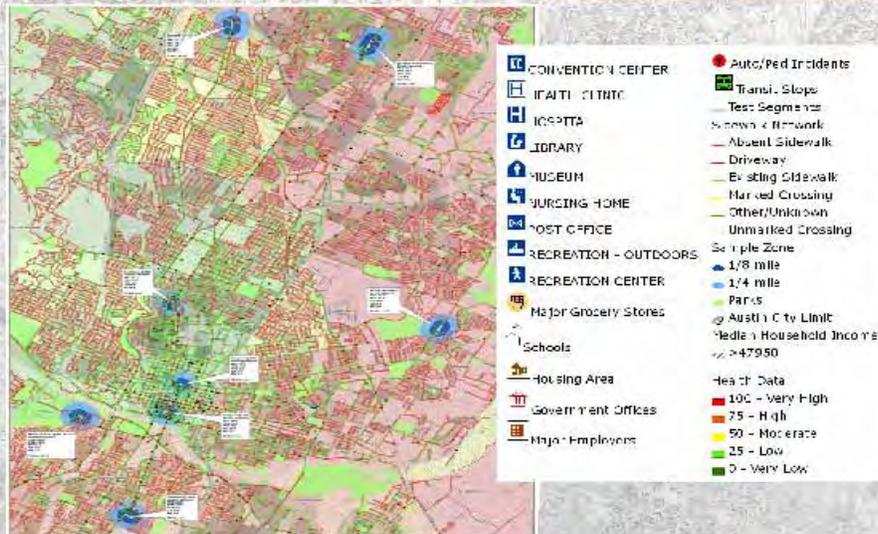
BACKGROUND

The City of Austin contracted in 2003 to complete Phase I of a Pedestrian Master Plan to include: meeting Austin’s need for assessing and prioritizing sidewalk infrastructure and to update the existing ADA Title II Transition Plan. The scope of the project was to create an interactive software tool that uses spatial analysis of a pre-determined set of criteria to identify and rank absent sidewalks, as well as, provide a plan to execute improvements. Phase I covered 31% of the City’s area. In 2006, work was began on Phase II of the Pedestrian Master Plan, (later renamed Side Walk Master Plan), to incorporate the entire City limits and further develop the prioritization matrix. The Phase II Matrix is more sophisticated and was developed through an extensive public process. The Phase II Matrix also includes an emphasis on components and elements that will improve pedestrian mobility for the ADA community.

Table 1 Pedestrian Master Plan Timeline	
Year	Action
2000	Resolution No. 001130-12 adopts the Pedestrian/Sidewalk Master Plan Timeline
2003	Transportation, Planning and Sustainability Department initiates updates to 2000 plan
2005	Phase I of updated 2000 plan is completed
2006	Phase II of updated 2000 plan initiated
2007	Public process for Phase II plan conducted
2008	Phase II of 2000 plan completed



Absent Sidewalk Score Sampling



Aerial view for mapping absent sidewalks based on factors, (in key), that make up pedestrian attractor and safety score.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The absent-sidewalk prioritization matrix (the “matrix”) is the basis of the Sidewalk Master Plan and facilitates the prioritization of absent sidewalks throughout the city, based on objective, fact-based analysis.

The matrix is divided into five parts as follows:



The Pedestrian Attractor Score accounts for 50% of the base score. Points are awarded to a sidewalk segment based on the segment’s proximity to pedestrian attractors such as schools, transit stops, government offices, median household income; residential population density; presence of existing facilities on the street; ADA Task Force and/or citizen requests; proximity to a core transit corridor; and existence of bicycle lanes on the adjacent street.

The Pedestrian Safety Score accounts for 40% of the base score. Points are awarded based on the street classification, health status of the area and occurrence of automobile / pedestrian incidents.



The Fiscal Availability Score accounts for 10% of the base score. Points are awarded if fiscal funding can be made available for the segment under consideration.

The Neighborhood Plan Score is added to the base score for sidewalk segments requested in an adopted neighborhood plan. This is an additional score since not all neighborhoods have adopted a plan. The score is based on the age of the plan; one point per year can be added with a maximum of ten points.



The Special Consideration Score is also added to the base score and allows for consideration of specific areas known to attract a higher volume of pedestrian traffic than would be suggested by the surrounding criteria (i.e. Zilker Park). Additionally, the special consideration score may be awarded to absent sidewalk segments which serve to implement an identified trail system within the City's Trail Master Plan or included in the City's safe route to school program. Points are discretionary and must be approved by the Director of Public Works with a maximum of 10 points.

This matrix tool integrates with GIS software to evaluate each sidewalk segment based on the criteria listed above and then rank them as: Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low. These ranking categories will be used by the City to prioritize segments for future sidewalk programs.



Through these and other efforts, the ADA Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Program constructed approximately 120 curb ramps and 25,000 linear feet of sidewalk in FY 09-10. Below is a list of some of the projects completed by PWD:



PWD SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FY 2009-2010

The Neighborhood Connectivity Division expended over \$4.7 Million in funding for ADA sidewalk improvements throughout the City of Austin in Fiscal Year FY 09-10. The work included repair/replacement of ADA non-compliant sidewalks and ramps, and installation of new ADA compliant sidewalks to help complete the sidewalk network. Some notable projects completed include the following:

- Anderson Lane, Shoal Creek to South Lamar
- Metric and 183 to Howard Lane, East side
- North Lamar, 5th to Sandra Muraida both sides
- W 6th, Baylor to Blanco, North side
- 1826/Slaughter Lane, pedestrian improvements, partnered with Travis County and Texas Department of Transportation.

In addition to the sidewalk improvement projects, the Neighborhood Connectivity Division's RAS (Registered Accessibility Specialist) has provided numerous consulting services and informal reviews of projects for TAS (Texas Accessibility Standards) to other divisions and departments throughout the City, as well as third party entities, as appropriate, in the community. A partial listing of these requests includes the following departments with the descriptions for services provided in FY 2009-2010 below:

1. ADA Coordinator –citizen consultation for ADA & TAS standards in sidewalks
2. Signals and Markings - ADA & TAS standards
3. Engineering Services Division - ADA and TAS standards, site reviews
4. Planning & Development Review – ADA and TAS standards in sidewalks
5. Street and Bridge – ADA and TAS standards for curb ramps and sidewalks
6. Project Management - ADA and TAS standards, site reviews
7. Capital Metro - Coordination on Projects
8. Transportation Engineering - ADA and TAS standards
9. Neighborhood Planning and Zoning - ADA and TAS standards
10. Inspection Division - ADA and TAS standards
11. Economic Growth and Development - ADA and TAS standards
12. ESD Standards and Details - ADA and TAS standards, site reviews
13. Austin Contractors and Engineers Association - ADA subcommittee
14. Code Enforcement - ADA complaint resolution
15. Urban Planning Commission, Transportation Subcommittee - ADA and TAS sidewalk reviews
16. Austin Water Utility – on site reviews of projects for ADA and TAS standards
17. AISD – ADA and TAS standards, site reviews
18. ACC – ADA and TAS standards, curb ramps
19. Austin Transportation Department - ADA and TAS standards



PLANS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

Phase II of the Pedestrian Master Plan also included an update to the City's Title II ADA Transition Plan with a field condition assessment for approximately 300 miles of existing sidewalk (13% of existing infrastructure). It is estimated that the City will require \$120 million to improve existing sidewalk infrastructure for ADA compliance including the city-wide evaluation of sidewalks. The Transition Plan includes a recommended example schedule for implementing improvements to existing infrastructure. An example of an aggressive schedule to make the repairs in 15 years includes spending \$5 million for 2009 and 2010 and \$10 million for each subsequent year.

In FY 2009-2010 the Public Works department contracted with Austin Energy in the amount of \$100,000.00 to assess utility poles affecting accessibility in the Right of Way. Two hundred evaluations have been completed; assessments are ongoing and will continue.