

Wichita/Sedgwick County Access Advisory Board

Wednesday, January 24th, 2024

Envision/Zoom

10:00—11:30 a.m.

Agenda

Members Present

Brian Powers – Chair	Raven Alexander	Harley Anderson (z)
Andrew Crane	Kyelene Flaming (z)	Karen Flateau (z)
Shea Hanson (z)	Shelley Herrington (z)	Jay Hinkel
Emily Jensen (z)	Tiffany Nickel (z)	Jayne Otis
Tom Page (z)	Craig Perbeck (z)	Lisa Vayda (z)
Virginia Zapote		

City/County Staff Present

Jacque Butler (z)	Elizabeth Ewers	Paul Gunzelman
Miriam Lopez	Daniel Schrant	Armand Shukaev (z)
James Wagner		

Guests

James Gamez –Nelson\Nygaard

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- I. Welcome, Announcements & Introductions – Brian Powers
 - II. Roll Call of the Meeting Attendees – A quorum was present.
 - III. Meeting Minutes
 - a. Motion to approve November 2023 minutes made by Lisa Vayda; seconded by Virginia Zapote. **10-0 with two abstentions.**
 - IV. Monthly Updates
 - a. Transportation Committee
 - i. Craig Perbeck shared that Penny Feist has been appointed as interim transit director.
 - ii. There will be a nationwide search for the new director.
 - V. New business
 - a. Harley Anderson requested to add an item to next meeting’s agenda focused on the accessibility of coin-operated family restrooms at the library.
 - b. Network Plan Study
 - i. James Gamez, lead consultant with Nelson\Nygaard, was present to share about Wichita Transit’s year-long network plan study that kicked off in the fall.

1. The goal of the project is to develop a plan to optimize and expand transit over the next several years.
 2. The first phase of the project includes understanding all aspects of the current transit system, including COVID-19 recovery, route design, demographics, travel patterns, etc.
 3. The first round of community engagement is beginning; an online survey is being launched.
 4. Once input is gathered and a plan is created, there will be another chance for public input on the plan.
 5. The project is also looking at comparison communities.
- ii. Members of the board shared that they would like to see expanded transit hours, wheelchair van access, etc. Raven Alexander said that James is here to simply introduce the project and that the survey would be a great place to share specific feedback.
 - iii. Raven Alexander will ensure that the survey is shared with the board.
- c. Sidewalk closure discussion
- i. At last month's meeting, board members expressed concern about sidewalk closures in front of Temple Live near 1st and Topeka.
 1. Virginia Zapote shared that Temple Live has permits for closures for both 2023 and 2024.
 2. Tom Page said that he is surprised that they can obtain a permit to completely block the corner/sidewalk. He said that the biggest problem is that there is no warning for when the sidewalk will be blocked.
 3. Virginia said that the permit is event-specific and that there is a list of events attached to the permit. She said the City has worked closely with Temple Live to ensure they understand and follow advanced signage and closure signage requirements.
 - ii. Tom Page asked why Wichita does not use access paths when sidewalks are closed.
 1. Virginia Zapote did not have a response to this question but will discuss with the City's traffic engineer.
 - iii. Craig Perbeck asked if Temple Live is allowed to supersede the ADA requirement because they have a permit for the event.
 1. Virginia Zapote said that, with appropriate signage, they are allowed to do so. She said that there have been a lot of construction projects requiring closures within the same area over the past few years, and the City tries to ensure that at least one side of the street is accessible. If any portion of the sidewalk is closed, there should be advanced signage directing people where to go as well as closure signage.
 2. Tom Page and Andrew Crane expressed concern that these requirements are not being met, or at least are not being met in a

way that is accessible or helpful to members of the blind community.

- a. Virginia Zapote clarified that if any organizations is not following the requirements, they will be fined.
 - b. Craig Perbeck shared that often he has to go out in the street due to do closures. The issues are compounded for those who use guide dogs or are visually impaired. He says that ADA requirements for signage are not followed in Wichita. Tom Page agreed. Craig Perbeck would like the City to look into this and let the board know what they are doing to address it.
- iv. Brian Powers asked if it is legally permissible for the City to use permits to supersede requirements of the ADA.
1. Jay Hinkel said that there are options available for temporary closures. He explained that information announcing closure can be shared online to be accessible by screen readers.
- v. Virginia Zapote shared that they are working towards including a map with sidewalk closure information on the City website.
1. Tom Page shared that the City website is currently not screen reader accessible. The board has been told that the website is being updated soon and asked if there is any information on that.
 - a. City staff believes that the new website that launched about a month ago should be accessible, but Tom Page said that he has recently used the website and it has not been accessible.
 - b. Jay Hinkel said that staff will get in touch with the City communications team for an update on the website.
- vi. Tom Page asked if there is any inclination to change the practices of indefinite closures.
1. Virginia Zapote said not at this time, but that she would go back to the traffic engineering department to make sure that the City is covering all bases. They are reviewing MABCD's updated manual currently and will stay on top of it.
 2. Tom Page said that the current system forces citizens to make a complaint and then wait decades for federal intervention. This has been an ongoing issue and there has not been movement on the part of the City.
 3. Lisa Vayda shared that many groups she is in have discussed how difficult it is for citizens to have a course of action; it takes years and is an ongoing battle for many. She has had to take freight elevators, be lifted up in her wheelchair, and even miss events because of a lack of accessibility. She shares that individuals with disabilities cannot get to the table to share input if they can't get through the door.

- vii. Brian Powers thanked Virginia Zapote for sharing.
- d. Discussion on Kansas Reflector article
 - i. Lisa Vayda brought this article to the board's attention. The census bureau's community survey questions may reduce the count of people with disabilities and thus reduce services offered.
 - 1. Local governments and organizations use census data to determine funding and service provided.
 - 2. From what Lisa understands, they are changing the questions in a way that makes it more difficult for people to qualify as disabled according to the bureau's definition.
 - 3. The bureau asked for public input but the window of opportunity was very limited and the date has already passed.
 - ii. Brian Powers asked if this would affect federal reimbursement to City/County. Lisa believes so.
 - 1. Raven Alexander believes that it would affect several entities beyond transportation.
 - iii. Brian said that we can speak to our representation in Congress about this as well. He thanked Lisa for bringing this to our attention.
 - iv. Lisa shared that as a health economist, she uses census information quite a bit, and she thinks it is disheartening that the federal government wants to reduce input from people with disabilities.
 - v. Andrew Crane asked Tom Page if the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas is aware of this. Tom Page said that they are aware of the community survey, but he is not sure if they are aware of the changes. He was not aware of the small window of input but imagines others have been following.
 - 1. Andrew asked if we can get the federation involved. Tom recommends writing an email to leadership.

VI. 2024 RAISE grant letter of support

- a. City of Wichita Engineer James Wagner shared that the City submitted a RAISE grant application for a planning project near US 54-400 interchange with Eisenhower Airport Parkway and surrounding area.
- b. Project goals: modernize interchange, reduce risk of accidents, upgrade adjacent surface streets and sidewalk/bicycle paths, include transit improvements to serve the airport
- c. The City was not selected for the grant last year; after debrief with Federal Highway Administration, they are updating their application and resubmitting for this year.
- d. The City is requesting a letter of support from the board similar to the one provided last year
- e. Tom Page asked if pedestrian access in the area will be made possible through this project.
- f. The board took a roll call vote to approve sending a letter of support for the City of Wichita's 2024 RAISE grant application. **13-0 with one abstention.**

- VII. Old business
 - a. Bylaws discussion
 - i. Brian has reviewed the bylaws and recommends the following changes:
 - 1. Section III, Item B
 - a. Remove Kansas Disability Coalition and Wichita Association for the Visually Handicapped (no longer active)
 - b. Update names for other organizations as needed
 - 2. Section III, Item F: strike
 - 3. Section II, Item J: update language to read: Board members must reside in the Wichita, Kansas metropolitan statistical area.
 - ii. Jacque Butler shared that she is working with the County Counselor's office to ensure the bylaws are compliant with the court settlement and will keep the board updated with potential proposed changes.
- VIII. Announcements
 - a. Andrew Crane shared that there will be a Guiding Paws fundraiser on Thursday, January 25th at the Texas Roadhouse on West Kellogg.
 - b. Tom Page requested adding audible pedestrian signals on next month's agenda.
- IX. Jay Hinkel's final meeting
 - a. Jay Hinkel recognized board members for their work and dedication as well as their impact on the City of Wichita. He appreciates their cooperation and understanding.
 - b. Brian thanked Jay for his work and the board offered a round of applause.
- X. Public Comment – No public comments were made.
- XI. Adjournment