



HOUSTON COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2004-2005

- ✓ Advised and made recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Department regarding their program and services for individuals with disabilities and the accessibility of parks and recreation facilities.
- ✓ Co-sponsored the first ever Health and Wellness Town Hall Meeting for People with Disabilities.
- ✓ Assisted the Mayor's Office and City Council with the development and passage of legislation banning the use of mini-motor bikes in the City.
- ✓ Heard public testimony from a citizen with a respiratory disability, who asked for the Commission's support for a City ordinance prohibiting smoking in all public places.
- ✓ Conducted the annual Mayor's Disability Advocate of the Year awards culminating in a ceremony with the Mayor and Council at City Hall.
- ✓ Worked with the Health and Human Services Department, the MOPD, and staff at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on efforts to build an accessible playground on the site.
- ✓ Provided feedback on how the City's Safe Clear towing program can accommodate people with disabilities & specially equipped vehicles.
- ✓ Asked the City to investigate the accessibility situation at Airport Landing.
- ✓ Commissioner de Leon worked with MOPD and the Convention and Entertainment Facilities Department to add accessibility information to the George R. Brown Convention Center map.

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- ✓ Commissioner Chou worked with Bob Eury, President & CEO of the Downtown Management District, to add accessibility to a map of the downtown underground tunnel system.
- ✓ Commissioner Soto represented the Commission on the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center Advisory Board.
- ✓ Chairman Bartlett represented the Commission at Mayor Bill White's Ethics Briefing for City Officials. A copy of the ethic handout was distributed to all commissioners.
- ✓ Improved HCOD's knowledge of city government and kept abreast of local, state, and national efforts to serve people with disabilities with various briefings and presentations including the following:
 - Ø Herb Lipsman, Chairman of the Mayor's Wellness Council, provided the Commission with a presentation on Mayor's "Get Moving Houston" health and fitness campaign. Lipsman also announced that Mayor White appointed Commissioner Colvard to the Wellness Council as a representative for the disability community. Commissioners requested that the website and other campaign elements be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
 - Ø Commissioner Roy Morales provided the Commission with an update on the City of Houston's public safety and disaster-planning efforts. He presented a map of the city's flood plains and requested help from the Commission in identifying organizations, such as accessible housing complexes and assisted living centers, so that emergency response teams could target the facilities that might have special evacuation needs.

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- Ø HFD Captain Gilbert Bennett briefed the Commission on the Houston Fire Department's involvement in CERT, Community Emergency Response Teams – a program developed by Harris County.

- Ø Council Member Ada Edwards offered an update on flooding and drainage issues that are being investigated by her council committee.

- Ø Gloria Bingham, Manager of the City's 311 Call Center, provided a system update to Commissioners.

- Ø Matt Russell, Citywide ADA Coordinator, briefed the Commission on his efforts to work with the Parks and Recreation Department on an accessibility review of their facilities, which include 320 parks, 57 community centers, and 38 pools.

- Ø Issa Dadoush, Director of the City's Building Services Department, briefed the Commission on the accessibility status of the City's facilities.

- Ø Robert Nowak and Brian Hecht with the City of Houston's Information Technology Department gave a presentation on their efforts to increase accessibility of the City's website and their work with AIR Houston.

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- Ø Alvita McKinney, MOPD Constituent Relations and Program Coordinator, briefed Commissioners on the types of services offered by MOPD's Citizens' Assistance Section. She also presented certificates of honor to Commissioners' Foutch and Jackson to thank them for assisting the office in effectively responding to two citizen requests.

- Ø Ralph Faulkner, from the City's Emergency Management Office, provided a presentation to Commissioners about the types of emergencies the city is likely to face and about the City's capabilities and resources for responding to a disaster.

- Ø Kym King introduced the Commission to Liliano Rambo, newly appointed assistant director in the Municipal Courts Administration Department, who will head up the City's parking division.

- Ø Staff of AIR Houston, a statewide effort to increase website accessibility, gave a presentation to the Commission.

- Ø Peter Tyler with Congressman Lampson's office spoke to the commission about possible legislation to include audible pedestrian signals and funds for the City's sidewalk programs.

- Ø The Commission received a written report from the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. The report contained recommendations presented to Governor Perry for the 2005 legislative session. One of the goals was to increase the availability of recreational areas for people with disabilities.