

Houston Commission on Disabilities' Special Task Force on Intersection and Sidewalk Safety

Houston Commission on Disabilities July Meeting

- a. Introduction of Meeting Topic and Overview of Taskforce
- b. Introduce task force members who are present
- c. What will happen with participants' feedback
- d. Ground Rules
- e. Questions & Participant Feedback

Taskforce Purpose:

The Houston Commission on Disabilities Task Force on Intersection and Sidewalk Safety will present written recommendations to Houston's Mayor, City Council, and key public officials, for resolving unsafe travel conditions for persons with disabilities, including streets, intersections, sidewalks, transit stops, rail crossings, and other related barriers.

Objectives

- Identify and describe the nature of unsafe conditions of streets, intersections, sidewalks, transit stops, rail crossings, and other barriers affecting travel safety for persons with disabilities.
- Determine the scope of the problems.
- Make and prioritize recommendations to create lasting resolutions of the problems.
- Make recommendations of a schedule of resolution.

We will take notes regarding your feedback and:

- a. The feedback will be provided to the relevant city department to research offline, after the call has concluded. Note that not all sidewalks and intersections are owned or the responsibility of the city of Houston, so in those cases we will attempt to provide the feedback to the appropriate entity, where needed.
- b. Representatives from Public Works and other entities will be on the call and they will research the concern offline.
- c. The feedback will be included in a transcript of meeting minutes on the MOPD website; we will also provide it via email if you RSVP'd directly.

- d. This feedback will be included in the Task Force report which will go to Mayor Turner and will include recommendations for improvements.

Ground rules:

- a. Each speaker will have three minutes to make a comment.
- b. All speakers must use the mic.
- c. We will take questions in order that they are received.
- d. If you feel like you didn't have enough time to ask your question or make your comment, you can get back in the que or submit via further comments email to mopdmail@houstontx.gov, or call MOPD office at 832-394-0814.

Questions

1. Have you as a person with a disability experienced intersections, sidewalks, or other locations that are unsafe as you roll or walk in Houston? For example, are there places or intersections in your community that you:
 - a. Consistently have to walk in the street because the sidewalk is broken or in disrepair?
 - b. Consistently have to go out into the street because there isn't a ramp?
 - c. Have encountered problems at transit stops or rail crossings?

2. Let's dive deeper into intersections and crosswalks. Are there intersections that are difficult or dangerous to cross? What about them makes them difficult? For example:
 - a. Areas where the crosswalk timing isn't long enough? (Timing of traffic signals that make it difficult to get through the intersection before the signal has changed).
 - b. Really wide roads that take a long time to cross?
 - c. Crosswalks but heavy traffic flow and/or traffic don't stop at the crosswalks?
 - d. Potholes or broken pavement in the middle of the crosswalk?

- e. What about medians without ramps? Are there areas where there are ramps on either side of an intersection, but the median is not accessible? If so, where?
 - f. What about crosswalk ramps that are frequently blocked by cars waiting at a traffic signal that pull up too far?
 - g. What about ramps that are too steep at intersections?
 - h. Or ramps that seem poorly constructed at intersections?
3. Let's talk about transit issues.
- a. Are there places (e.g., sidewalks or intersections) in your community that, if repaired, you would be able to use a standard bus instead of METROLift?
 - b. Are there areas where your destination bus stop is unsafe due to issues with crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.?
4. Let's talk about traffic signals. Are there specific areas you have seen where:
- a. The crosswalk button is out of reach of a person using a wheelchair?
 - b. What about Audible Accessible Pedestrian Signals that are hard to hear, poorly located, or difficult to find?
 - c. Are there areas where Audible Pedestrian signals are needed to better accommodate people who are blind?
5. Let's talk about sidewalks. Where specifically have you encountered:
- a. Sidewalks that are cracked or broken, making them dangerous.
 - b. Overhanging branches that make it difficult or impossible to pass along the sidewalk
 - c. Automobiles parked in such a way as to block sidewalk travel
 - d. Areas where a telephone pole or other feature was added to a sidewalk, and now it is no longer accessible?
6. What about construction areas – have you encountered situations where pedestrian traffic is re-routed to an inaccessible sidewalk?

7. Weather can impact accessibility – are there areas where you consistently experience standing water or mud even when it has barely rained or hasn't rained that day?
8. Are you aware of specific intersections where there happen to be a lot of people with disabilities crossing, that should be assessed to determine whether the crosswalk can be improved?
9. Have you encountered other barriers affecting your travel safety that we haven't already discussed today?
10. Priority: Of the problems you have described and those you have heard others mention, which should be addressed first by the city?
 - a. Which should be at the top of the list to fix, repair or change?