

LAWA DISABILITY ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 18 Aug 2021
Meeting held via Teleconference

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

1. Myrna Cabanban, Chairperson
2. Julia Mockeridge, Community
3. Kathleen Barajas, Community
4. Louis Herrera, Community
5. Amir Torabzadeh, Community
6. Grant Firestone, LAWA Admin Representative
7. Paul Herrera, LAWA Ops Representative
8. Tung Nguyen, TSA
9. Joe McGlynn, Airline Representative (TBITEC)

ABSENT

1. LAWA Engineering Representative
2. Linh Nguyen, City Attorney

EXCUSED

1. Brandy Welch, Community

Meeting Started at 1:02 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Ms. Cabanban requested a call roll. A quorum was present.

II. Introductions

Paul Herrera – Introduced himself as taking over for Rodney Thompson. Geoffrey Straniere Dept of Disabilities City of Los Angeles,

III. Consent Calendar

Meeting Minutes approval for May, June, and July 2021. Motion to approve made by Louis Herrera, seconded by Kathleen Barajas. No further discussion. Approve: Myrna Cabanban, Kathleen Barajas, Louis Herrera, Amir Torabzadeh, Julia Mockeridge. Abstain: Paul Herrera. Absent: Brandy Welch, LAWA Engineering Rep. Motion Passed.

IV. Chairperson Report

Ms. Cabanban presented the draft cover letter for the MSC concourse walk through

report to be submitted to the LAWA CEO. Mr. Torabzadeh suggested adding a list of the ADA codes and standards to the letter. Motion to approve draft cover letter with minor grammatical edits made by Ms. Cabanban. No further discussion. Approve: Myrna Cabanban, Kathleen Barajas, Louis Herrera, Amir Torabzadeh, Julia Mockeridge, Paul Herrera, Tung Nguyen. Deny: None. Abstain: Joe McGlynn, Grant Firestone. Absent: Brandy Welch, LAWA Engineering Rep. Motion passes.

V. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VI. LAMP Project Report

Mr. Ellars. Nothing to report.

VII. LAWA Operations Report

Mr. Herrera reported that airport operations continues to trend upwards, though is not near 2019 numbers. The Delta variant has softened the surge of summer passengers, which was expected. LAX currently averages between 70,000 – 75,000 passengers per day. Construction continues as the airport prepares for the Superbowl in February 2022 and other future events, such as the 2028 Olympics. Airport Operations will continue to work with stakeholders and service providers to gather feedback and gain an understanding of how to provide better service for all travelers.

VIII. TSA Report

Mr. Nguyen stated that the federal mask mandate has been extended through January 18th 2022.

Mr. L. Herrera questioned whether or not TSA is properly trained on how to process individuals with service animals. Mr. Herrera stated that there have been two separate occurrences at LAX where the TSA screener has asked him to let go of his service dog to complete the screening process. He stated that this is not acceptable because he is vision-impaired and his service dog is his source of navigation.

Mr. Nguyen thanked Mr. Herrera for this information, provided his email address to gather additional details, and stated he would address this with his leadership team.

Ms. Goldkorn mentioned that she has experienced similar issues with TSA staff at other airports and suggested that someone contact the main office in Washington D.C. to provide all the policies, procedures, etc. so that all TSA employees at airports nationwide understand what they are supposed to do when screening a passenger with a service animal.

Mr. Nguyen provided the weblink for the TSA Cares program. Team, below is the link for TSA Cares for assistance through the screening checkpoint. Traveling with a service animal is one of the type of assistance. <https://www.tsa.gov/contact-center/form/cares>

IX. CBP Report

Mr. Hicks was not present.

X. City Attorney Report

Ms. Nguyen was not present at the meeting.

Ms. Cabanban asked the City Dept on Disability to contact the CAO on this issue. Mr Strainere stated he would follow up on this item immediately.

XI. ADA Report

Ms. Surmenian stated that she and her team have been handling various ADA-related questions and matters at LAX. Currently there is a project underway through the LAX Guest Experience program that utilizes artificial intelligence to analyze how guests passing through the airport are sensing the environment, what they feel about it, etc. The Guest Experience team has asked the disability community to become involved, and she asked Ms. Cabanban to evaluate the initiative and appoint the right committee members to the project if necessary.

Ms. Goldkorn inquired if the details of the ADA related questions and complaints would be shared with the committee, as well as whether or not they have been mediated or addressed, and what solutions were implemented. She asked if these could be included in the monthly ADA reports.

Ms. Cabanban stated that will likely be the format moving forward as Ms. Surmenian becomes more familiar with the duties.

XII. West Gates at TBIT Observations Report

Because of the extent of information relayed for this agenda item, the full transcript is provided, with minor

edits.

Ms. Cabanban: This is actually again on June 19th. And by the way, these observations because they're just so elementary and so simple that it just really stood out. I mean, again, we weren't there to do this observation and yet it just jumped at you because it's just so obvious. So, you could see here and this is actually Amir, if you don't mind me outing you on this picture. This is Amir just see how the problem pictures are already, the picture to the left shows an individual in a wheelchair at a table work station that has a flat power strip in the middle of the surface of the table. So below this work station surface there's a strip that runs the length of the table preventing a person in a wheelchair from sliding the wheelchair under the table. So, you can see, we can't even go near because his chair is already bumping the table.

And then this the seating area and the picture to the left shows another view of the table. You can see the barrier underneath the table and this prevents the wheelchair users from enjoying the benefit afforded to other travelers wishing to use the table. Okay. Next, please. And these were the seating arrangements that we observed. Now, Julia, you're on the call, right? But you can't see?

Ms. Mockeridge: Okay. Regarding page 15, I think the pictures on page -- oh, yeah, the bottom of the page it says 14. Again, one of the things that I noted was

one the arm chairs are not able to move, they're stationary. And that doesn't allow someone to transfer. It also makes the width of the chairs not accessible to all people. I think that is roughly, again, this is just eyesight, 18 inches wide. That doesn't fit everybody. So, if somebody had to sit and stand with those fixed armrests, that becomes potentially a skin integrity issue. The other thing I noticed is that the embroidery on the back of the seats when someone is sitting in that chair whether or not they need that specific seat, the signage becomes covered by their body. No one would know that that is designated. On the following page, there is an example that extended above the seat so you can see it at a different level.

Ms. Cabanban: This picture here to the left of the picture, it is an attached table. The left side has a stationary armrest. The right side is attached. Seating is not accessible. The table is too short for the sliding. There is also the plug for the chargers. For USBs. They are too low. They are quite difficult to reach for someone, even myself and I am pretty short to the ground. This one shows a picture above a sink with an automatic dispenser in the back of a long sink. The reach is too far. The other is a smaller picture. With these things, it is hard to reach. Unless you are tall and over that. Poor design all together. It is poor design. It is useless whatever they are trying to achieve, practicality is 0. The picture to the left is a door leading to an accessible stall. Missing is the symbol of accessibility.

Ms. Barnes: I will go back to the gate check in. The one thing we did note is that, I don't know if I can highlight it here, the keyboards that the airline workers use, those can raise and lower. This white hard top counter is not able to raise and lower to accommodate a wheelchair.

Ms. Cabanban: They are used by the agents. What about the passengers? We will move on.

Mr. Torabzadeh: I think it was mentioned that where the seating area was is a need for some of the chairs to be removed so a person in a wheelchair may not decide to transfer to one of these. They can park their chair and not be in the middle. I think it was in the report. I thought we may bring it up for the sake of the other members.

Ms. Cabanban: Thank you. Good point. Picture below is a large monitor is color picture of LAX at sunset. The lower part of this screen are three icons that are prompting the screen. They are not reachable by a person using a frontal approach. It doesn't have clearance for the approach by individuals with a wheelchair. Imagine every wheelchair has a foot rest. It will never fit there.

Mr. Torabzadeh: Not only it does not have foot-rest clearance, the way it is angled towards the front, it does not have knee clearance for a person using a wheelchair. Your knee hits the front counter where the monitor is installed. There is absolutely no way to reach the screen facing the screen. You need to be at a 180-degree angle to reach it.

Ms. Cabanban: There is a comment about side approaching. Just this thought that you can use a side approach is very bad. How do you know the person has the ability to make that motion to do a side approach? Even for a regular person, that would break your neck, I think. Any other comments?

Mr. Torabzadeh: it would be hard even for an able-bodied person to touch the screen, if you are parallel to the screen, but if you park your wheelchair parallel, there is almost no way to touch the screen. I wanted to make that comment.

Ms. Barnes: A question from the committee—Are there charging stations near the seating area?

Ms. Cabanban: I think it was part of the pictures.

Ms. Barnes: It is too low to the ground for someone in a wheelchair to safely reach. If someone stays on the chair and there is someone sitting there. In the other photo, where the chargers are in the middle of the table, they are inaccessible because wheelchairs do not physically fit under the table as they are now.

Mr. Torabzadeh: If I may add, as you can see, my knee is hitting the table. The armrest is not even fitting under the table. To reach the middle of the table, there is no way. Even if I had to park sideways, I couldn't reach the outlet in the middle.

Ms. Cabanban: If there are more, let me know. As a last comment on this one, I really hope that the executive committee looks at this. They are simple issues. We are not going into major modifications or anything. These are simple things. We will go to public comment.

Mr. Ellars inquired as to whether or not the LAX design standards required an ISA at the wheelchair accessible water closet compartment. It is not required under the ADA Standards of California Building Code.

Mr. Rolon: Under the 2010 standards for accessible design, federal regulations, and under 24, the building code for the state of California, the symbol of accessibility, the ADA symbol, the figure on a wheelchair, we are required to have it on accessible stalls. The committee had asked the former CEO about that being included. They are to the best of my recollection. Not only is it required by state and federal regulations, it is also by LAWA.

Mr. Ellars: Thank you for that. I keep getting questions from our design team. The construction team and our IT team that was contracted. Some of our accessibility issues. I was surprised. Part of what we require people for is to have experts on staff. They asked for regulations references. I provided the one I had. I am glad I was on the right track with the legislation.

Mr. Rolon: It is so upsetting to hear about the issues. The committee made a trip and had meetings in the design team about ADA issues and things that needed to be done. They went out there to see what would be accessible and what wouldn't be. It appeared nobody ever listened to what the committee was saying, they seem to be more interested in aesthetics than functionality. And to make it aesthetically pleasing does not necessarily mean that they're going to make it accessible to people with disabilities, and I think that's shameful. And really, it's something that needs to be addressed. I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I mean,

Madam Chair, I had to express my feelings about the incompetence of that, of these people.

Ms. Cabanban: Thank you. And I do remember going on that furniture trip in a bus with you and other people. So, and again, that's where the disappointment I think for this committee is. You know, we are charged to give, you know, our opinions, our lived experiences, our expertise and then we come up with the most simple, again, these are just the simple, simple things that were just so obvious that you can't help see it. And I really do still request a formal walk-through of that Midfield project, people are going through now so there should be no reason that the committee cannot go through that now. So again, this is gonna be the report that we have to push through and, you know, do this for the community. Okay. Any other comments from anyone? Where's -- let's see who else is here? Geoffrey, because you are an officer from the disability office.

Mr. Straniere: Madam Chairperson, I want to thank members of the emergency management team for allowing me to review and evaluate the facilities prior to opening. I believe during that evaluation day that a number of features were called out as concerning to me whether the absent of those features IE signage or what appeared to be some concerns with dimensions, of seat widths and table heights and reach range. I was very pleased with the response of my escort and I am still pleased with the way she has handled all that has come at her with this particular facility.

But I must express my displeasure at seeing these things post-opening still being the case. As a person who has credentials in construction and architecture, I must, I must express my displeasure at seeing the post occupancy conditions as they're being shown today. If okay with you, I'd like to call a meeting amongst some of the stakeholders who are attending here today for a remediation plan, it can't be as we find it. It cannot stay as we find it. Not the facility with the problem this has for international implications. This is an opportunity to really make a flagship facility and I know that it is not a far, it is not a far path to get there. But there is still a path to get there. And we are going to need to address these. So, on behalf of the department, and myself as the ADA compliance officer, please allow me to call for another meeting on the specifics of this report. Thank you.

Ms. Barnes: We have a public comment from Ms. Goldkorn.

Ms. Cabanban: Go ahead Ruthee.

Ms. Goldkorn: Thank you. This is where the city attorney needs to jump in. This is where participation by the city attorney's office with this body is so critical. I think that if the city attorney's office had been paying attention to any of this and I know Karen was, she was paying close attention. She went on our field trips. They would understand that this is, this is beyond comprehension as to how this happened and the city attorney's office needs to understand what has happened here. This is the Grand Canyon of liability exposure. This is beyond anything and Ms. Surmenian, I know you're the new kid on the block here but we've been at this for four years, I don't know if you know that I'm a former member. I left California because the umbilical cord of my granddaughter was yanking on me. And I appreciate being allowed to participate in these meetings every month, Madam Chair, and to everyone. And when Ms. Surmenian, I'm not going to tell you what to do here, but I'm just going to quote my mother: When these people are calling you and

asking you these questions, I would tell them what my mother said: Look it up! It's not your job to do their job, it's not our job to do their job. And this comprehensive report, this is a consultation report. This is going out -- pointing out everything that's wrong. There is nothing that is right here! And as far as getting them more information, no! Look it up!

The fact that you have provided the codes and the descriptions, that's very nice. And I'm sure they'll be relatively happy. But if they don't know their job, it's not anyone else's job to tell them except a judge and our job as a committee was to get in front of that and I have a couple questions and the tables are just, ugh. It's so intuitive. You look at it and you go oh, a wheelchair can't go under there. Really, they can go sideways, really, you think so? I have a question about the knee clearance at the gate and ticket counters, I have a question as to whether or not the touch screen has an audio component and how one would use that and that screen, I can tell you right now just looking at it, I don't know if Larry will agree with me, but it isn't 508 compliant. It has to comply with section 508. And the accessible stall, yeah, we all know it has to have signage on it. And even though it's not required by law, it's a really good thing to do. We look for those. And I had told more places of public accommodation including airports take the sign down because it's not. If you're going put the sign there, it has to be.

When I was looking at that door when it was closed, it looked to me as if the locking mechanism, it was circular. I don't know whether or not it's the horseshoe that is supposed to be, is it a self-closing door? How wide does it open? Is the door itself fully compliant? We always have to ask that question. And I also wanted to say that, and Larry, you saw this. Myrna, you saw this. When T-1, Southwest opened, my job I was there with the [Indiscernible] was to gather information and write a glowing article for a statewide newsletter. But instead it turned in to exactly what you all have already done. In terminal one. When it opened, what's it been, three years now? Two years? That's not what's supposed to happen. And it's just so frustrating and Madam Chair, if you all are going to be doing another walk-through and the lighting, the lighting in the tunnel, are you kidding me right now? People with low vision are going to be blind in there. They're not going when they walk in, they're going to be blind when they go in there because of the lighting and there are specific candle-footage requirements in building standards and it sounds like not even the candle footage requirement in these building standards are being met if there's a lighting issue.

You want it make have a nice ambience, that's very nice. I'm happy for you. But you have to tell people where to go, you have to tell people where they are. And Madam Chair and Geoffrey, when you all arrange this, I want to go. I would appreciate the accommodation, I would appreciate your graciousness, I've been fully vested in this since the very beginning and it just [Heavy sigh.] It breaks my heart, it just freaking breaks my heart and I think that the city of Los Angeles if I just have one little comment to the city of Los Angeles, get your money back! These people stole your money! And they have put you in a position of exposure. It is immoral and unethical and nauseating and thank you again for allowing me to be so graphic I'm as vested as you all are who are still on the committee and I literally, I'm having a hard time not crying over this. And Myrna, you all that did such an amazing job this report is outstanding, and people should take a cue from how to do this and unfortunately it is not the glowing report that it should be. Thank you again, Madam Chair, members of the committee, members of LAWA and Ms. Surmenian, wow, you've got some work cut out. I don't know if you're going to be commenting in this report as your position of the ADA Compliance Officer having

reviewed this if you're going to be making any comments. But if you are, I'm sure that we'll all, we'll all get copies of it. So, thank you, again, everybody. I appreciate it. I'm going to stop talking.

Ms. Cabanban: Thank you, everyone for the comments. Clearly this is, this goes way, way, way personal for all of us and as Geoffrey said, we have a way to fix this. We're here to help. I keep saying this from the beginning. We are here to help. But in order for us to help, we need to point these things out because clearly they're being ignored. And I just have the hope that we can all work and fix it. You know, we can make LAX what we want it to be, which is a premier example for the whole world. And we can do that, we just need the willingness for people to come and work with us on this one. Step up, basically. I'm going to end it on that. And hopefully that we do follow up with this. Well, we are going to follow up. So, I just hope the other side follows up too. So on that note!

Mr. Torabzadeh: Myrna? I know we are late but, for the sake of time, I just wanted to bring up one other major accessibility issue and maybe we can put it on the agenda for our next meeting and that is the accessibility to enter the parking structures for people who use wheelchair and you know when, at the gate when you have to reach and grab the ticket for the arm to go up and enter, that area is totally inaccessible for wheelchair users. I know we did not talk about this in this report, I experienced it. When I had to park to join you for that field visit, but that's something I experienced. Every time I go to the LAX area. So maybe we can talk about this issue which is I think is a major accessibility issue for wheelchair users. So, I would appreciate if we can maybe put it on the agenda and talk about it in our next meeting. Thank you.

Ms. Cabanban: Thank you, Amir. Yes. We'll reach out to the people in charge of that so we will.

XIII. New Business

Ms. Cabanban reminded everyone to submit their nominations for the Sam Overton Awards. It is to recognize members of the LAWA community who are going above and beyond to support passengers with disabilities. Nominations will be accepted until the beginning of November so the Committee can vote in time for the award to be given during the December meeting.

IV. Adjournment

Chairperson Cabanban called to adjourn, with no objections the meeting adjourned at 2:18 pm.

Minutes were presented to the Disability Access and Accommodation Advisory Committee (DAAAC) for approval at its regularly scheduled meeting on 18 August 2021. The minutes of the 21 July 2021 meeting were approved/not approved by DAAAC.

Secretary

Date