

LAWA DISABILITY ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 15 March 2023

Meeting held via Teleconference

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

1. Myrna Cabanban, Chairperson
2. Louis Herrera, Vice Chairperson
3. Brandy Welch, Community
4. Kathleen Barajas, Community
5. Seyed Torabzadeh, Community
6. William Miranda, LAWA Planning
7. James Corpuz, TSA
8. Tim Ihle, LAWA Airport Operations

ABSENT

1. Mark Frank, LAWA Administration
2. Suzana Ahmed, (TBITTEC) Airline Rep

EXCUSED

1. Julia Mockeridge, Community

Meeting Started at 1:01 p.m.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Cabanban requested a roll call from Ms. Perez. Quorum present.

II. Opening Remarks and Introductions

Ms. Gwiazdowski – I'm Sueli Gwiazdowski a guest invited by Seyed. I'm excited to be here.

III. Chairperson Report

Ms. Cabanban: This past weekend, for those who are not familiar was the abilities expo. I ran into some of our members. It was really nice. We had it in the convention center. I don't know about the rest of you but it seemed more organized to me. Either that or I was becoming more familiar with what the setup is. I saw some interesting things over there. We used to be able to have a booth in the past. We can try next year. We should think about that. I completely forgot about bringing that up these past few years.

IV. Presentations

None

V. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Ms. Gwiazdowski: I'm an undergraduate student in Eastern Washington State, and I regularly use a powered mobility aid wheelchair and manual wheelchair. I also use crutches. But when I'm traveling long distances I'm using my chair and usually my power chair. I'm on Whitman College's debate team, and we often travel for tournaments. As of I think February 8th, Alaska Airlines which operates out of the regional airports is no longer letting folks bring their powered mobility aids onto their planes citing an embargo on powered mobility devices. This is only happening out

of their small regional airports like in Spokane, Pasco, Tri cities, Walla Walla. I was denied boarding in February which is how I got in touch with Seyed through some folks in the center and AEPD which is where I was going to intern. They denied me boarding, and I tried to get to Seattle with my crutches. They said if you can't get there with your chair, you're stuck here. I was able to get my hands on an internal document that talks about this embargo and instructs the Alaska employees, how to have these conversations with passengers. I had to leave Walla Walla urgently. I don't have the document right now but I'll send it to you all as soon as I can. Just something I wanted to bring to everybody's attention because I know it's very problematic and people are being denied boarding right at the gate. Not told beforehand they can't be boarding their chairs and the reason I got from one of the engineers is there's cracking in the bottom of the cargo pit or something like that. Like, making it hard to load heavy items. Unsafe for heavy items. Doesn't make much sense because they let people fly with boxes of wine. If they're quite heavy, why can't we fly with our mobilities? I don't know.

Ms. Cabanban: Thank you so much. Hopefully, you can get those documents and forward it to us.

Mr. Torabzadeh: I want to thank Suelie for joining us and bringing this issue to our attention. Although this incident happened in another airport, it's something we need to discuss because it could affect LAX as well. We need to be aware of the fact. I'm glad Suelie had the opportunity to talk about it and bring it to our attention so we can get to the bottom of this and see what's going on. This is something that I had never heard of before. Should have not been denied access to get on board. So hopefully once Suelie sends me the document, I'll share it with all the members.

Ms. Perez: Michael Ellars found the article and posted it in the chat.

<https://www.alaskaair.com/content/travel-info/accessible-services/airport-accessibility?lid=nav:info-accessible>

Ms. Goldkorn: I was trying to find the chat to find that document. Do we have any information that Alaska Airlines have pulled this at LAX? Has any information about this or any complaints been filed with the ADA office at LAX about this? Because they obviously fly out of LAX.

Ms. Heredia: No. I haven't heard anything about it. I am looking at the article that Michael shared. And it's specific to mobility scooters. That's why I'm confused as to why she would have been separated from her DME if it's not a mobility scooter. I know that's posing a challenge for the feds in terms of regulatory. But a power wheelchair should not fall into that category. But I don't have any reports on that, Ruthee. From LAX.

VI. Approval of Minute

- January 18, 2023 DAAAC Meeting Minutes – Minutes approved
- February 15, 2023 DAAAC Meeting Minutes - Minutes approved to include the comments.

Ms. Goldkorn (chat): The questions/comments I have in the Feb 15, 2023 minutes are as follows: Page 3, discussion with Mike LAMP Cassandra's comment about Ben and Sara being on calls in re: the APM and full-scale drills. Is the DAAAC going to be actively participating in evac drills? Page 3, Planning report, MSC South design review is 90% done. Will the DAAAC get a formal presentation on the plans as they

stand now? Page 4, ADA Coord report, as to the TIBIT presentation, we've been invited previously. Can we count on this in the future? Page 6, report on evac assistance areas, may DAAAC be involved in the development of this process and designated areas? Page 7, continuing ADA Coord report, as to Richard's comments in re: written and communicated information, again, may the DAAAC be more involved in this matter? Page 7, the CBP report it is appreciated if the term "wheelchair pushers" not be used to indicate wheelchair assistance providers. Page 8, continuing CBP report, there is a mention of Ontario. What exactly is this designation? Thank you, Ruthee.

- March 9, 2023 DAAAC Special Meeting Minutes (not ready)

VII. Consent items for DAAAC Action

Item 1-Determine in accordance with AB 361 Section 3(e)(3) that this body has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency and that the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person and/or state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

Virtual meeting approved.

VIII. Regular Items for DAAAC

None

IX. Landside Access Modernization Program (LAMP) Report

Mr. Ellars: Construction continuing.

X. Operations Report

Mr. Ihle: No new air carriers that, I'm aware of. The airlines are in the process of doing their summer schedule, which means additional routes and flights. So, they're just expanding their existing service. In terms of upcoming openings, I know we did the tour in Terminal three in the gate area, but the head house had not opened up yet. The head house will be opening up in late May of this year. So that will free up space on the terminal curve front. And then the T three connector, which will join Terminal three to the Tom Bradley. Terminal is expected to be open late July and early August. There will be significant progress in terms of final completion of Terminal three. And with that connector that basically connects all of our terminals. So, person can theoretically go from once they get through security at terminal one, they can go around through post screening through all the terminals all the way back to terminal eight. It will be a very long journey that they would have. Probably take about an hour to do, but a person can conceivably do that. This will benefit passengers, especially Delta passengers going from Terminal 3 and they have a connection through sky team alliance partners. They don't have to go outside of screening again.

There are several projects on the horizon. During the MSC South project, I know DAAAC had done the tour at MSC North about a year ago. MSC South, doing finals on that and construction should be starting. If not, maybe some initial elements of the construction have begun. They're doing still in the planning stage for Terminal 0 and Terminal 9.

For the MSC, they are in the steps of evaluating furniture. I already rose our hand up saying I would like disability access accommodations committee to be part of that team for the furniture. They'll look from an ADA perspective. So that is all I have for my report this month.

XI. Planning Report

Mr. Miranda: Regarding planning, Tim touched on a lot of the projects currently under design regarding the terminals. Previously we mentioned there's an extension for the taxiway for Delta going east towards Sepulveda. That's still under design, currently being paused as we wait for a couple other larger project programs to come into play such as the ~~AT&T~~ ATMP roadways. We're still waiting for final approval. Other than that, no other items for planning.

Ms. Cabanban: When they do get approval, is there something we can see as a committee so we can preempt any kind of problems that might occur already?

Mr. Miranda: Regarding which terminal?

Ms. Cabanban: Whichever projects are going to be coming up?

Mr. Miranda: That's something we can coordinate. So, what I was mentioning the approvals. That's more for the ~~AT&T~~ ATMP roadways. To go through the process of being going through the committee and being approved by the city, that's more external to the terminals. Regarding the terminals for C0 or MSC South, we can try to coordinate a meeting.

Ms. Cabanban: Or presentation.

Mr. Miranda: I can work with Cass and Tim on a presentation.

XII. ADA Coordinator Report

- Presentation topics for 2023 DAAAC meetings

Ms. Heredia: I wanted to bring up first the presentation topics for the 2023 meetings for the remainder of this year. We have a list that I came up with. I didn't really get any feedback or any specifics from the group on topics that they wanted a specific presentation on. I'm just going to propose presentations basing conversations I kind of already had either with Tim or when Tim and I met last week. The presentation topics, I can post them later so people have them. But I think these five topics for this year will be sufficient. But one of the presentation topics will be- I've been getting a number of requests for information on options for persons with disabilities outside of taking the LAX shuttle to the large share lot. So, there are options for persons. But those options have not been well socialized. So, what I'm going to have to come up with is basically an approach to communications plan so that information is generating either across the ADA website or other websites that are public facing for LAWA as well as share it with our stakeholders regarding what the options are for persons with disabilities. Address the gap. Assistance at the curb and they don't have a way to connect to the wheelchair service providers at the terminal. Tim has been supportive of that. The intent would be to give a presentation at some point as we go down the road.

Self-evaluation. The approach will be what type of template I intend to use, questionnaires, etcetera.

That will be another presentation. That will be another presentation.

The last two that I will likely bring up is I'm going to try a pilot program with the wheelchair service providers, TBIT and MSC for coordinated evacuation for persons with disabilities. Wheelchair service provider there or at least one of them has

indicated to me they would like some sort of guidance and support in terms of trying to drill their agents on what to do in case of an emergency. Theoretically they all know but they haven't been able to go through all the steps. I'll be working with them. If it works out well, then I'll offer it to the other terminals and see if I can get additional engagement for that.

Finally, I will be getting some I'll provide future updates on the results from the preliminary assessment of the MSC and TBIT. Tim and I will do this jointly.

- Update regarding CASp

That goes to our CASp update. We're having some conversations which are really valuable and insightful. We got the draft report from the CASp. But there's questions of what year of codes were being applied to the assessment versus being applied when these facilities were being built. Tim and I have been reaching out both to city attorney as well as to the FAA to get some guidance on whether or not we're applying these assessments correctly.

- Debrief on meeting with Doug Webster

Tim, are there any takeaways that you think are high points you should share with the DAAAC?

Mr. Ihle: The need for our assessment and transition plan to move forward with, but nothing specific.

Ms. Heredia: I think the one thing that will have the most visibility as we go forward is going to have everything to do with curb side. So those QR codes. I will provide a list of those topics for the next agenda. Part of it, I considered whether or not somebody doesn't have a scanner on their phone will be a manual phone number. If you need me to utilize something in addition to that, I'm open to suggestions. I'm not sure what the best way is going to be to do that. I'm not going to be able to say implement any kind of an audio saying if you're looking for wheelchair assistance, then please dial this number. That would take years for me to get approved. If there's another way for me to go about making sure that someone who has a visual impairment knows that signage is there, please let me know.

Something I forgot to mention, I'm having a great deal of difficulty locating somebody who can proof any braille that we're trying to get done. It's been a challenge. I have to get braille plates installed in certain parts of the airport. Took me about three months to get a vendor. Luckily, the vendor is local. And they do this on a professional basis. But we don't have anybody that can proof the braille so that we are sure that the instructions that we asked for are being translated Louis, if you have a recommendation for that, I'd appreciate it. I haven't had any luck getting through the braille institute or to Jeffrey downtown. So, I'm looking for suggestions on that as well.

Mr. Herrera: I can tell you as of now if you're working on this and you would like to have assistance with it, I'd be glad to coordinate some time with you to review some of the templates and some of the potential layouts, they will be deployed. We can do that. It will be very helpful to ensure that the braille is done correctly as well as understand that sometimes the verbiage can be critical also. I'll be glad to assist with that.

XIII. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Report

Mr. Corpuz: TSA report we had two. January we had 2.5 million passengers screened and 3 million passengers screened February. Three complaints in January. Two pertaining to wheelchair scooters segue related. Not sure what the complaints exactly were and one was for breast cancer situation. I'm not sure what that entailed either. I'll have to look at that. For February we had two complaints. One was for medicine and then that one, our officer failed to place the medicine back into the bag. The other

was mobility device related. That basically was waiting too long. They did make a proposal this month to our headquarters for innovation. Because it is a glaring hole. To me it is a glaring hole in our screening process when we have a person who is in a wheelchair or requires additional assistance. They're placed on a spot where they're not readily seen by our officers because the officers are doing their duties and focusing on other parts of the screening process. So, this innovation idea will hopefully get some return. That is the nature of the complaint in February. I see Ruthee's comment in the chat. I do want to dovetail. One is regarding the DAAAC involvement in new construction and new projects. I'm wondering for Tim and Cass if the Delta one project, which is due to open again in May, falls under the per view of the DAAAC or whether it's separate, all together. It's the private screening area on the lower level of Terminal 3. If it does fall in the per view of the DAAAC, then we should do a site visit when they open it up for open house before they open up for the public. The second thing. Ruthee's comments. The wheelchair pusher I believe is a non-favorable term. I use a term "wheelchair attendant". Ruthee, I don't know if that's acceptable. Or wheelchair assistance. Whatever the correct terminology, please let me know so I can self-correct as well.

Ms. Goldkorn: Yes, wheelchair attendant or assistant is appropriate. Thank you for recognizing that. I appreciate that. I put something else in the chat about a new bill sponsored by ~~Tim~~ Tammy Duckworth. The accountability, acceptability through air carrier consumer's act to be aware of. Thank you.

Mr. Corpuz: Madam Chair, we can certainly partner where we as an airport, can promote the cares program. We call the passengers who request cares. We can give them the speech. When you are at the curb and need assistance, please call this number. We can do that for every passenger. If you want to partner together, we can certainly give them better advisement.

Ms. Heredia: I think there would be great value in establishing a streamlined experience for passengers with disabilities. I find what is lacking is the outreach about, sharing information with them, educating them on options. I wouldn't have TSA share the phone number of the wheelchair service provider dispatch. That could change. Sometimes we don't want that information to go public. I think it would be a great idea if we can come up with a plan. What the expectation is. The standards. I think that would be a good idea.

Mr. Corpuz: Sounds good. We did improve our accountability here. We are now tracking the percentage of passengers we call back for help. We are shooting for 100 percent. We will let them relax and ask questions. We make contact with 100 percent. We can use that avenue.

Mr. Ray: Regards to communication with TSA, I would like to recommend moving tech to allow us to communicate to TSA. There are people that are deaf and hard of hearing. They want to consider that. There are several options we have. We like to have that for your consideration. We appreciate you very much.

Mr. Corpuz: I appreciate that. Please continue with feedback. It is valued. I appreciate that you are very open. I will take negative and positive feedback. I have no problems if you have something that is critical or constructive to say. Our ultimate goal is for continuous improvement.

