

LAWA DISABILITY ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Meeting held via Teleconference

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

1. Myrna Cabanban, Chairperson
2. Brandy Welch, Community
3. Kathleen Barajas, Community
4. Seyed Torabzadeh, Community
5. William Miranda, LAWA Planning

ABSENT

1. Louis Herrera, Vice Chairperson
2. Mark Frank, LAWA Administration
3. James Corpuz, TSA
4. Suzana Ahmed, (TBITTEC) Airline Rep

EXCUSED

1. Julia Mockeridge, Community
2. Tim Ihle, LAWA Airport Operations

Meeting Started at 1:03 p.m.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Cabanban requested a call roll from Ms. Bradley. No quorum.

II. Opening Remarks and Introductions

None

III. Chairperson Report

None

IV. Presentations

Presentation will fall under ADA coordinator report

V. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Richard Ray: The issue in regard to American Airlines offering me a wheelchair, I have filed complaints with American Airlines. They responded to me saying they are checking into it. From that point, I've heard nothing further. I'm still waiting for more information as to what kind of plan of action they will pursue to address and correct this problem. I will keep you updated. That's where I am with that.

VI. Approval of Minute

No quorum

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.

No quorum. Cause for a special meeting.

VIII. Regular Items for DAAAC Action

Ms. Cabanban: All right, guys. This is one of the exciting things for me always to do every year when we actually recognize someone in our sphere of influences to award the Sam Overton award. I think I mentioned last time, Sam Overton actually, his legal name is Gordon Overton, I learned that during his services actually. We created this award to sort of exemplify people within the airport community when it comes to service, exemplary service or knowledge or contributions that they have come, shown or displayed towards the community of the airport travelers. We've been awarding this how many now? 3 or 4 years and we've had really great people that we've been able to award this to.

Our 2022 Sam Overton recipient truly brings to life the spirit of the award under this committee, namely access and accommodation. Not to mention education. Our winner has been a true friend and resource to and for this committee.

So, I am proud to announce our winner. There goes the winner. It's Richard Ray!

Mr. Ray: I'm so honored. Thank you so much. I really appreciate that. Wow. I'm really truly honored and surprised. And I'm in shock.

Ms. Cabanban: Very welcome. We're very appreciative of everything you've done.

Mr. Ray: Thank you, Myrna and advisory committee. Thank you to the entire crew. Wow. I did not expect that.

IX. Landside Access Modernization Program (LAMP) Report

Mr. Ellars: Construction activities are continuing around both the central terminal area and on the roadways around the central terminal area. I think there's been some articles recently in various news reports about the APM and its continued push towards becoming operational. I can say in some of the meetings I've been in, we're continuing to discuss involvement with persons with disabilities and particularly this committee with future training opportunities. I don't really have any specific details on when that's going to happen other than it's in very preliminary planning stages. For those who are not aware of how the project is exactly structured, there's a design build joint venture portion, which is the team that was responsible for designing the stations and getting them built. There's an operations and maintenance joint venture responsible for the ongoing day to day operations and maintenance of it once everything is finished with construction. So, I'm part of the design and construction team. I may or may not be part of the operations and maintenance team. They're just now bringing on a lot of the staff and starting to do hiring for that part of the project. But that portion of the project will continue for 20, 25 years into the future. I don't know exactly what the changeover timing of what that is ultimately going to be other than I think it was announced about a year ago in this meeting that construction was extended through October of next year. I think that's probably about when the operations and maintenance team will formally take over everything. To that point they're just now hiring those staff. When that staff comes on board on the project, I'm sure

we'll have more to discuss in terms of trainings and additional presentations to this committee.

Ms. Cabanban: That extension on the construction, is that just due to COVID?

Mr. Ellars: I'm not aware of the precise rationale for why that happened. But I do know COVID messed up everything. Between COVID and impacting the availability of personnel and then the international supply chain issues that came up on the project. There were a lot of issues with that as well. I don't know specifics but this project was not immune to anything anyone else experienced in terms of construction and other businesses in the United States over the last 3 or 4 years. I think everyone is sort of in the same boat in that case.

Ms. Heredia: Mike, I know Ben and Sara were recently on calls for the APM, and I know Stacy Barnes is the one responsible not necessarily for the trainings and drills for the APM but proposed full scale exercise. Would it be okay if you reach out to Ben, Sara, and Stacy to see if they would be willing to give us a snapshot of who they are and what the plans are for a future agenda?

Mr. Ellars: Absolutely. I can reach out to them. I'm not technically part of their team but at some point there will be an ADA coordinator for operations and maintenance portion of the contract. I haven't been contacted if that's going to be me. There's no contractual obligation that it would be me but obviously there would be nice synergy there. Depending on whether they'll bring their own coordinator, I'll liaison with that person or if I'm selected to continue on with the project, obviously I'll be in a better position as well. I can reach out to Ben and Sara. I'm not sure about the third person you mentioned.

Ms. Heredia: I can reach out to Stacy. So, if you wouldn't mind. I didn't want to step into your lane since it's LAMP related. But let me know if I can help.

Mr. Ellars: Absolutely. Again, I'm only really part of the automated people mover project. If there's a larger sort of LAMP coordination like with Bill Stewart. He's given several presentations to this committee in the past. But I can reach out to Ben, Stacy, and Sara and have them plan to give a presentation to this committee. Just a little intro on who they are.

X. Operations Report

None

XI. Planning Report

Mr. Miranda: Currently, here in LAWA we have MSC South 90% design is reviewed internally by the LAWA subject matter experts. Previously, in the last meeting, I mentioned the APMP roadways was going to be a topic on the board. It's gone through the board so far. That's the roadways project that will change how the streets and highways come into LAX. That's gone through the board of airport commissioners. The next step is to go through I believe city council. But that will take about two months or few months. Not quite sure on the timing on that, but that the project just got pushed forward. That's a big one for LAWA. Besides from that I have not much else to report.

XII. ADA Coordinator Report

Ms. Heredia: my presentation will probably cover the majority of the items on the bullet points just so everybody is aware.

- Presentation topics for 2023 DAAAC meetings
- Update regarding CASp
- Wheelchair service provider 2022 reports

I made a presentation to TBIT specifically to that audience, the airlines, service providers and federal partners to kind of brief them on what the LAWA ADA office is, ADA specific topics Then this morning I did it again for Terminal 5 and 1.5.

So, I'm just using this basically the same presentation that I used for TBIT. So based on the metrics that I received from wheelchair service providers, I'm still owed some minor amount of data. Based on the data I have, wheelchair service providers at LAX provided assistance more than 1 million times in 2022. My current count, I'm at 1 million, 12,000. But there's still data being submitted. More than half of those requests and those assisted passengers came through TBIT. So, I commended all the wheelchair service providers because that is a really impressive number, especially considering the number of complaints that come to the ADA office. My calculations show less than 1% of the population are dissatisfied. So, I did want to make sure that everybody's aware. I did tell the wheelchair service providers and their air carriers they should be proud of their level of care.

I briefed them on what the LAWA ADA office supports, with regard to compliance and passenger support. We obviously only investigate complaints submitted by the passengers. We respond to complaints filed directly with the FAA office of civil rights, collaborate with tenants to help identify and resolve issues with access to support the passengers and satisfy required assessments such as the self-evaluation program. I know I mentioned on a couple occasions already, required by the FAA and will be part of my high-level projects this year as well as the transition plan to remedy physical issues with access. The CASPs are putting together a report from the walk throughs we conducted which was a sample assessment for TBIT and MSC. That will be Step 1 moving forward to get an overall transition plan for all the airports done.

We also review and summarize reports related to passenger demands for wheelchair service. As I mentioned, everything has to do with metrics getting reported to the ADA office both on how many passengers were assisted and how many complaints maybe on file. I made it clear to wheelchair service providers and ground transportation that in the instance where a passenger reports any type of an incident, that I want them to ensure they don't wait and let the ADA office know. Additionally, we facilitate obviously the DAAAC, review and provide feedback on accessibility and plans documents related to any capital improvement projects. Right now, that's the APM, Conrac, and MSC south. Those are the primary CI projects in my queue for taking review.

I summarized the complaint process. I'm not sure if I mentioned this before, but passengers or their advocates obviously can submit a complaint. They can do so to various platforms or directly to the ADA office. I can get input from any of four different portals or somebody can e mail the office directly. I'll work with IT to try and streamline that. Sometimes what happens it goes to the ADA office email or sometimes to my e mail. It has different nomenclature. So, I'm trying to streamline that process. That can take a little while.

We then confirm receipt of the complaint. I usually ask for additional information to narrow the window of time and location of the incident. So, if somebody

submits a complaint and said they didn't get access to the ADA shuttle band, then my next questions are going to be can you tell me what terminal and what time of day? That helps us narrow down the circumstances surrounding the incident. If an access issue has been identified, that's when I share the information with the wheelchair service provider or ground transportation service provider. Again, the number of occasions when there's actually been an access issue are few and far between. But those are the instances when I'm going to notify the provider of the findings based on the information supplied to the ADA office so that that provider can take corrective action to mitigate future issues for the same type of incident. If it's a customer service issue, such as long wait times do I my best to address the concerns, but customer service issues really aren't within the purview of the ADA office and I have frankly no authority outside of accessibility. So, it's dependent on my working relationships with the providers in that terminal to bring something to their attention. But I can't really I can't resolve the issue. I have to defer to someone else. The ideal turnaround time for a complaint is roughly 30 days but there are instances it's taken longer to close out. Typically, when an injury is involved, even minor injuries because that takes a different sense of urgency even though we try to expedite. I get information from multiple sources. I did mention both during the TBIT meeting last week and during the meeting today that any passenger has the option if they are dissatisfied with the response from the LAWA ADA office. To go on their own with civil rights and DOT and those types of complaints are more involved. I tried to stress with the air carriers and service providers by responding to the ADA office when making inquiries regarding information on an incident. It actually helps provide a more transparent communication with the complainant, and they're less likely to feel they weren't heard and elevate the complaint. I try to make that case as much as possible with the service providers and air carriers.

My takeaways from the complaints in the last 90 days. There was an increase in the number of complaints submitted by sons or daughters. Sometimes other types of family members. But of elderly passengers traveling alone. In some instances, it was a customer service issue as I've mentioned, such as long wait times to get from Point A to Point B. I know that we currently try to address an issue with wait times in the FIS at TBIT where people are going through the customs process. It takes an amount of time. Takes more than what is convenient for the customers to get through the customs process and assisted to get their baggage and through the process. Again, that is customer service, not accessibility issue but brought to our attention quite a bit. So that is being looked into. I know the service provider is trying to address that.

Other instances related to leaving passengers unattended or asking them to transfer from a wheelchair to gate seating prior to departure. I wanted to stress to the wheelchair service providers and air carriers that the circumstances allowable under the situation. You can't decide you need that wheelchair and get the passenger taken to the gate and get them to transfer and say see you and off to the next passenger. I didn't say it that way, but I was clear they have a 30-minute window and they have to continue to check on that customer or that passenger in a maximum 30-minute window period. I did stress that if you left somebody at the gate and especially if you left them where they're no longer in a wheelchair and they need to use the restroom prior to departure, you've now violated the regulations as required. So far everybody's been very receptive. I think they just needed a refresher but I did bring those to light.

We also had a number of complaints citing a language barrier, which complicates the circumstances and causes frustration in passengers. While obviously a

language barrier is not under ADA per se, the FAA does expect that the limited English proficiency population, those passengers be adequately supported. I tried to emphasize to the service providers and the air carriers that if you have a passenger whose proficiency of English is limited, you do your best to be cognizant or support them. They can't always plan for that. That can be a challenge. But it can't be the excuse. We had an incident roughly six months ago at this point where passenger was traveling with her mother. The mother was given some instruction by wheelchair agents. The mother did not speak English. The instructions were not understood and she sustained a minor injury. This is what we want to avoid. I believe this is the time by me bringing it up in a proactive fashion that the wheelchair service providers and air carriers will understand the importance of it and try to get ahead of those kinds of circumstances.

The current challenges. This has been a current challenge and long-standing challenge, ensuring curb side assistance if passengers don't have a way to contact the wheelchair service providers in the terminal. This is especially complicated when it comes to international carriers who repeatedly tell passengers that they have to go into the terminal to get a wheelchair service agent, which is absolutely not true in the United States but can be true in nations around the world. There are just different rules that apply depending on what country you're traveling to. So, what I'm trying to do is be proactive in that area. I'll get to that in the next slide.

I mentioned already completing the self-evaluation to comply with FAA requirements. I will be taking the lead on this. It will be quite time intensive and labor intensive trying to pull together information from all the different entities. We are taking the steps on that, ensuring updated mapping. I am looking into what I think may be a gap. There were identified areas for persons with disabilities and their caregivers to assist them. The challenge is when these are in post screening areas at the exit or door the first responders need to know what door you are going to. You are in stairwell 58, are there markings so they know you are at the door? It is a doable project. It will require getting a list of all the evacuation points. Making sure there is an updated map so that LA fire, if they are responsible, they know what door corresponds with what staging area. They know if they have gotten, if someone within that point has used the dispatch button and said, we need assistance. The Fire Department knows where to go. We have taken care of every other piece but that. Proposed solutions, I am working with IT to post QR codes at the passenger loading zones. If you pull up to an ADA passenger loading zone in terminal two, there is a QR code. They will scan the code. It should connect them to the service provider. Not everyone has a scan function on their phone. There will be the ADA office phone number posted underneath. I am working to build a phone tree. If you can't use the code, you can call the number. If you are having issues getting curb side assistance from a wheelchair service provider, press two. It should forward their call to the provider dispatch. I am hoping this way people have layers for closing that gap. Not all the carriers have sufficient resources to make the requests or assist people. This has been an ongoing issue. We will hope it becomes the cream filling to correct that gap issue. I mentioned the self-evaluation program. I will be doing the self-evaluation. I'm working to update information on those muster points. If the QR code is found to be effective to connect people, it may help support agents. This is about certified service providers. It includes companies such as wheelchair service providers, ramp workers.

Back in 2018, the city council passed living wage ordinance. 16 hours of training had to be provided to the staff on an annual basis. That was drafted and

presented to the board. It was approved. The curriculum has a formal format to it. Initially, there were six of us helping to go through the process. There are less than 80 companies right now. They still make up about a third of the badge holder population. Part of that included the requirement to take the one-hour emergency training program. A 101 on different aspects. I am now the only person at the airport that can approve any packet or instructors to provide the training. It makes it streamlined if I want to make corrections. With regard to supporting passengers with disabilities. I have a direct hand in it. It makes it easier. That was making sure everyone is aware of my oversight. The critical icon is with me. I am the only approver for that. Airport police made a request that I take a look at the program to make it more robust. Maybe the managers for a wheelchair service provider company would have a specific responsibility to communicate with their agents who are in charge and where they would be located. I am hoping that by putting together a map, more information for responders on how to get to them and including a kind of organized process for critical icon holders in that terminal, to reach out and say, where are you? Do you have someone that needs assistance? That will help streamline how quickly there is a response.

Mr. Ray: Are they, are we covering the audio portion of the information at the airport?

Ms. Heredia: If it has to do with them getting notifications, yes

Mr. Ray: In looking at and focusing on how to make that audio information accessible for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, I would like to look at that very closely. For example, public announcements should be captioned on a screen as well as interpreted into American sign language for those people that rely on it as their primary mode of communication. That needs to be addressed.

Ms. Heredia: What I would like to ask is you send me your list of recommendations. While we do have system display alerts, they are not as dispersed. One of the things I proposed is if they have the option, to utilize the flight display systems. That is a way to ensure that that messaging goes out from a text format. I would have to look into how an ASL display would happen. That would have to be a different platform. I will try to work on it all.

Mr. Ray: The California association for the deaf has filed suit against the San Francisco airport for failing to disseminate information. The lawsuit was settled. We need to push forward. I will provide you with recommendations.

Mr. Straniere: The day is comprehensive and DOD offers their support.

XIII. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Report

None

XIV. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Report

Mr. Hicks: Just to continue a bit of the conversation about the availability of wheelchair pushers, the security seal application process is taking a long time. We have come up with a stakeholder friendly solution. We will present it to the entire community of entities. We hope that will solve the problem. That should be coming out within the next couple of weeks. That will hopefully be good news, some good

stats. Recovery of international travel. It is stuck at 75 percent. They seem to be taking a while to get back to normal. There is some discussion that travel will be resuming from a lot of countries that have decreased business with landing in LA as a result of COVID 19. Hopefully, we will see more international arriving passengers. One of the priorities was the use of bio metric exit. I believe we talked about what it means to those departing. They are under a mandate by congress to do total bio metric capture for outbound passengers. We are at about 26 percent. You look at all the flights. How many are processed using facial recognition technology. We are looking to get that saturation rate up. Our Summer landing right season begins next month. We have established our hours. Terminal seven will go until ten at night. We have Ontario. Not a lot of changes there. For those that were part of the processing area, we have a staging area for wheelchair passengers. They stage them in this area. The next wave, they take them through. We are moving the staging area from one part of the arrival hall to another. It won't be a huge impact to the wheelchair population one part of the room to another. Trying to make this a steam lined operation. Hopefully, we can get more people hired. That will relieve some of the wait times.

Ms. Heredia: I did hear about this from Tim Ihle about the move. I think that some of the concern was about the pushers. Not so much the processing time to get through customs. I hope wherever the relocation is, hopefully that helps any of the wheelchair service providers get people through quicker. That seemed to be more of the commentary. Wait time from A to B. I hope this helps mitigate that issue. I know that would be helpful.

Mr. Hicks: I agree. We will keep our eyes on that. It is hard to tell when there will be a lot of wheelchair passengers present. Maybe during an air flight, which is predictably high levels. It is the availability of the attendant to escort them through the process. Hopefully by moving them to against the one side, hopefully that will have an impact. I hope it does.

XV. New Business

Ms. Cabanban: Because we can't do Item 7, we will have to do a special meeting to get our meeting going for next month. We can't grab anyone else. Bad news. We will have to have a quick 5-to-10-minute special meeting to gather everyone to approve a meeting for March.

XVI. Adjournment

2:10 P.M

Minutes were presented to the Disability Access and Accommodation Advisory Committee (DAAAC) for approval at its regularly scheduled meeting on 15 March 2023. The minutes of the 15 February 2023 meeting were approved by DAAAC.


Secretary

03/15/2023
Date