

**Walla Walla/Columbia County
Accessible Communities Advisory Committee
In-Person/Zoom Meeting Minutes for
10/19/22**

PLEASE NOTE: I have included links to documents. You will have to make a copy of them when you begin to open them so you can view them. If you have any issues, please let me know.

Welcome

Call to order at 3:31.

Attendance

Present: Timothy Barret, Roxanne Bowen, Anikó Samu Kuschatka, Vicki Ostrander(guest), Larry Hector, Connie Taylor-Randall, Joe Decker, Angie Peters, Janet Vaupel, Joe Huether, Shonta (interpreter), Barb Casey (guest), Nancy Riggle (Guest), Joleen Ferguson (guest)

Excused Absence: Jeanne Walter, Betsy Hadden, Tobi Powell

Unexcused Absence: Aracelli Castro, Joshua Hepler-End, Kati Tureman

Minutes

Moved by Larry, seconded by Tim. [September Minutes](#) approved unanimously.

Establishing Work Groups

- Sidewalk & Business Accessibility (Chair-Angie)- [Vicki Ostrander, Roxanne Bowen, Anikó Samu Kutchatka, Tim Barrett, Joe Huether, Joleen Ferguson, Betsy Hadden](#)
- Recreational Access (chair Joe Huether)- [Connie Taylor-Randall, Jeanne Walters](#)
- Roundabout Accessibility (Chair Larry)- [Barb Casey, Anikó Samu Kutchatka, Tim Barrett, Roxanne Bowen, Joleen Ferguson](#)
- Rack Card Completion (Chair Connie)- [Tim Barrett, Vicki Ostrander, Tobi Powell](#)
- Building Permit Checklist Completion (Chair Joe D.)- [Larry Hector, Vicki Ostrander](#)

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Workgroups will meet outside of the meeting and bring their work product to the November and/or December meetings.

ACAC Advocacy for Local Government Accessibility Education Classes- potential grant opportunity for a future cycle, to create a grab-and-go presentation box with adequate information to present to local groups from service groups to elected officials on the work the ACAC is doing. This would also help us to present a unified message at all presentations, with all of the information needed.

Sub-Committee Reports

Membership Committee: Connie - The bylaws are being reviewed by the County Commissioners, and we are awaiting confirmation on final approval. When that is done our pending members can be voted on for approval to join. We will likely see a couple of members reduced in the coming months due to extended unexcused absences.

Community Outreach Committee: Joe Decker has agreed to be the new chair, and to help with business outreach. One discussion in this area is tree branches that are too low for people with visual impairments to walk safely without running into them. These are also issues with vehicle damage. As part of this outreach we will work on establishing a strong relationship with the Deputy City Manager and the future new City Manager now that Mr. Shawa has retired. Connie and Joe will meet with local businesses about the issue with signage and planter boxes downtown on the sidewalks. All members are encouraged to respectfully do this as well. This is a project that Betsy has done a lot of work on as well.

Grant Proposal Committee: Connie - Connie re-submitted our bicycle application, with a reduced number of bicycles (2) due to inflation in prices. The trail in Dayton was not included in the grant because this project has been put up on hold in Columbia County. Joe H. suggested that rather

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than working on the trail in the coming months, our group could advocate for accessibility at the pond project in Columbia County instead. That project already has a lot of local support, and will likely be successful moving forward. On 10/26/22, at 4:55-5:15 Connie will be presenting on the grant application to the Governors Committee. [Bicycle Grant Proposal Questions and Answers](#)

The Rack Cards need to be completed so we can get them printed and close out our currently open grant. Please review the drafts for any final changes prior to our November meeting.

Communications/Media Committee: (Need chair)- We have asked Tobi to consider chairing this committee. Aniko presented her Roundabout Letter at the College Place and Walla Walla City Councils. There were some struggles with transcription at the College Place meeting so she was not able to participate in the full meeting, the Walla Walla meeting went smoother and transcription was working so she was able to attend the entire meeting. There was very good feedback and thoughtfulness from the Council when considering the safety issues surrounding the roundabouts.

Max Hughes from NBC Right Now, through Betsy, reached out to Connie to have a discussion on accessibility in our community during all of the construction in our area. We are seeking County Health Input on what the message will look like as we are working together with community partners and want that to be reflected appropriately. Bringing the city in to be a part of the conversation could be a positive addition as well, as their good work is not always seen due to community frustration with accessibility in general. The group did discuss general community education approaches we could take as there continues to be a break between need vs. desire based on the use of accessibility features.

Transportation Update: Timothy Barrett - For transportation projects there are not a lot of details to report. Walla Walla is working hard to wrap

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up all of their active construction projects this season, though delays may end up pushing some portions of these into 2023. Progress on these will largely depend on the weather over the next month or so. There are also a few projects that will be under construction over the winter, most notably the 1st Avenue Plaza which will level out the current plaza space and add more permanent features.

Walla Walla County is also working on their sidewalk project near Walla Walla High School. That project needed to relocate some utilities and it should be completed in the next couple of weeks.

In MPO news, they have successfully submitted the new Transportation Improvement Program which details the secured funding for nearly \$120 million dollars of projects in our Washington area and over \$13 million dollars of projects in our Oregon area - all over the next four years.

The blind/deaf pedestrian roundabout safety subcommittee has had its first meeting, where they explored what we know now, who they know that can help, and what things can be done to move the effort forward. Tim has been tasked to research solutions and reach out to people who can help. Tim has been in contact with a wide range of people so far and has not been able to get into the peer-reviewed research yet.

Just as this committee approaches accessibility from four angles with employment, housing, accessibility, and care options, solving the blind, deaf, and deafblind safety issues at roundabouts will similarly require four approaches: developing the knowledge of elected officials, engineers, and the blind, deaf, and deafblind; establishing new engineering design standards; enforcing laws such as the white cane law and other laws requiring vehicles to stop for pedestrians; and finally, implementing new infrastructure through intersection renovations and new projects.

Tim also provided clarity on what is happening at Division and Whitman, and the pause on the project currently due to supply chain issues. That project, with candlesticks, will be temporary, but when funding becomes available the improvements will be made permanent.

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Goals

- 1) **Employment** - Improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities
- 2) **Housing** - Increase affordable housing for individuals in the disability community, providing more choices in where they can live
- 3) **Accessibility** - Increase accessibility in Walla Walla Valley and Columbia County, making it more desirable for residents and tourism
- 4) **Care Options** - Increase care options for parents/guardians of children and adults with disabilities to provide respite alternatives, care options, and enrichment opportunities.

Goal Progress

- 1) **Employment Update** - (needs chair) - no report at this time

- 2) **Housing Report Update** - Tim, chair - no report at this time, the last housing meeting was canceled.

- 3) **Accessibility Report Update** - Larry - Chair, Anikó, and Betsy - Vicki spoke with Saint Mary's about accessibility since they currently have their accessible parking spots blocked off since they are not using the front of the building at this time. She encouraged them to reconsider this decision to maintain more accessible spots, even if it meant a little longer travel time, it would help with the major parking issues at the facility. Anikó will seek membership on the Walla Walla Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

- 4) **Care Options** - (needs chair) - No report at this time

Walla Walla County Department of Health Report and DD Report -

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Janet has been working on the job foundations program with the school district, and has kicked off in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and the proclamation with the county. There have been three applications thus far for early assessments before leaving school so they can start with employment service before graduation. The goal is to help them graduate with a job lined up. With the large reduction in COVID cases, County Health is moving forward in a positive way. They are focusing on booster shots as well as a flu shot clinic. They are also continuing to recruit for employees at this time. The clinic will be 10/22/21 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Southgate Clinic Complex.

Announcements and Further Discussion Items

- 1) Larry and Connie presented the [annual report to Columbia County](#) on October 3rd. The presentation went very well, and it was well received by the county commissioners. It was requested that they come back to present to the Dayton City Council as well. They also attended the NDEAM proclamation in Walla Walla County that day.
- 2) We should start planning now for awareness campaign(s) our group could do in October with NDEAM

Moving Forward - What are our next steps?

- a) Membership Recruitment and Application for Members Whose Terms Have Expired
- b) Employment
 - i) Inclusion Stickers
- c) Housing - Tim Barrett Chair
- d) City of Walla Walla Next Steps
 - i) WWACAC member - Aniko to serve on Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee Issue - Larry to help with completion of application
 - ii) Develop a checklist for Downtown Alfresco Accessibility for Policy Development - Joe Decker - Chair, Larry Betsy and Anikó
 - iii) Develop pamphlet and materials on Accessibility for Building Permit Office - Joe Decker - Chair, Larry, Betsy and Anikó

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- iv) Partner with Developmental Disabilities in Inclusion Stickers and Informational Pamphlets for Walla Walla Businesses
- v) Possible Grants and Revenue Options - Bicycle Grant
- vi) Downtown Accessibility Study of Sidewalks Walkways with Alfresco Outside Dining - Joe Decker - Chair and Larry

Public Comment - None.

For the Good of the Order - Anikó spoke about the downtown sidewalks and planters. When she first moved here she heard about Downtown Walla Walla Foundation having a series of rules for downtown businesses. We should reach out to them on this issue, and request that they be a part of the workgroup. Vicki spoke about an issue she's been encountering issues with businesses putting cart corrals in striped area between accessible parking spots that are supposed to remain clear so vehicle ramps can be deployed. It sounds like there is an issue with the building owners rather than the business that is present for some businesses that don't even have an accessible parking spot. Joleen requested an update on those who have applied for membership and not heard yet. We are awaiting approval from the County Commissioners on the Bylaws and we are hoping to hear back from Janet on this issue by the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date - November 16, 2022 at 3:30pm. [Meeting Dates - 2022](#)
In-person at [Valley Transit](#), hybrid Zoom option available.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned by 4:41.

NOTE:

If you have not yet done so, **please** fill out the survey and send it to Connie so we can ascertain if the meeting time needs to change.