

**Walla Walla/Columbia County  
Accessible Communities Advisory Committee  
In-Person/Zoom Meeting Minutes for  
3/16/2022**

**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 5:32.

**Attendance**

**Present:** Timothy Barrett, Angie Peters, Connie Taylor-Randall, Betsy Hadden, Larry Hector, Cindy Wolski, Jeanne Walter, Joleen Ferguson (guest)

**Excused Absence:** Joseph Huether, Anikó Kuschatka

**Unexcused Absence:** Joshua Hepler, Kati Tureman, Aracelli Castro,

**Minutes**

Moved by Larry, seconded by Betsy. [February Minutes](#) approved unanimously.

**Guest Presentation - none**

**Sub-Committee Reports (update accordingly)**

**By-Laws Committee:** Connie

[Proposed By-Laws update](#)- (will not be voted on until the next meeting) The group will need to review between now, and at the next meeting. Submit any questions to Connie, and be prepared to discuss and vote at the next meeting. Minimal changes have been made, but there is a recommended change in the number of required members for the committee.

**Membership Committee:** Connie - the [recruitment list](#) has been updated. We need to consider veterans, race, gender, mental health,

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developmentally disabled, and age to cover our currently underrepresented demographics as we continue recruiting.

**Community Outreach Committee:** Kati - no report

**Grant Proposal Committee:** Connie - [provided a written report](#), and we should consider a grant for home office supplies to support this group and printing costs for the rack cards and business cards. Connie has completed draft grant applications for these projects because of the looming deadlines. She recommends that we table the bike program due to the many projects we have going on at this time. Cindy may be able to pay for the rack cards rather than a grant being required. They will coordinate offline.

**Communications/Media Committee:** (Need chair) Connie and Larry solicited feedback on the [rack cards](#) and [business cards](#). **Final** feedback is needed, please contact Connie. She will coordinate with you on printing needs.

[Read more in Larry's Report.](#) Larry, Betsy, and Connie met with Nabil Shawa, Elizabeth Chamberlain, and other city staff on The Plaza and downtown accessible parking. The city has committed to 4 accessible, 2 of which will be van accessible parking spots at The Plaza. The city will also create new accessible parking map rack cards with QR codes for easy location.

Joleen will be helping to ensure accessibility for those with vision challenges, and this is the first time she/her group has been asked to participate in this way, with the city. This is a great step toward increased accessibility for the City of Walla Walla.

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Larry has reached out to two students to help manage a social media presence for our group. Please send recommendations to Larry for this.

**Transportation Update:** Timothy Barrett - The City of Walla Walla applied for a Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant for a series of Pioneer Park Improvements, including new crossings and more paved pathways. They will find out if they received an award by the end of March. They are also having to postpone numerous transportation projects due to a lack of staffing in their engineering department at this time. The Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization/Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (WWVMPO/SRTPO) Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) is going well so far. They will be distributing a transit user survey soon, and there will be two open house meetings around the end of April (final dates to be determined).

## **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, 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.

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**Goal Progress**

1) **Employment Update** - Cindy - the committee has not met yet on the rack cards, but Cindy will keep moving this project forward. Further Developmental Disabilities (DD) report information is listed below.

2) **Housing Report Update** - Larry, (needs chair) - reached out to the county commissioners and they shared they are considering putting in a low-cost/low-income housing on Tausick way (140 units on 7 acres) near the skate park. At this time they had not been considering accessible units, but Larry got this on their radar. The rack cards could be great to hand out to developers that bid on the project. The affordable nature of 'affordable housing' was also discussed because those on SSI/SSDI cannot afford what our area is calling affordable housing on the very limited income they have (less than \$900- check with Cindy for the exact number). This would be another opportunity to utilize the checklist that Anikó and Betsy are currently working on. This has been paused due to some health challenges, but work will continue on this to get the checklist into the permit package builders/developers receive from the city or county. The list will focus on 'universal housing' which is more accessible, without significantly increased cost to the builder/developer.

3) **Accessibility Report Update** - Larry and Betsy - Betsy had a call with Mike Rizzitiello, the College Place City Manager, she partnered with him and the Blue Zones project related to accessibility and the ADA Transition Plan for College Place. They discussed the upcoming apartment complex on Myra (behind Home Depot), and the current lack of planning for accessible units. Mike will be speaking with the developer. Betsy will also reach out to the developers for the new complex at the old K-Mart location.

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She will also be meeting with Scott Doggett to assess the level of accessible seating at the new concert venue the Wine Country Amphitheater, which is currently calling for stadium seating only. This poses a barrier to accessibility based on the type of chairs guests are asked to bring. Betsy will stay on top of this to prevent the misstep of Gentlemen of the Road that put the accessible seating area off in a corner.

Betsy has also been touring hotels for accessibility and has encountered a couple of interesting conversations where locations may have assumed incorrectly that the ADA does not apply to them. Joleen questioned if the checklist for these reviews includes checking for braille signage, Betsy will report back on this at a later meeting. Joleen is working with Anikó on QR codes to reach audio options instead of braille on local menus, as not all those with vision impairment can read braille.

4) **Care Options** - (needs chair) - Connie will reach out to Cindy Knight to move this goal forward, no report at this time

**Walla Walla County Department of Health Report and DD Report -**

Cindy presented a list of [ASL Interpreters](#) and the following report: DD employment remained the same at 26 in WW and 1 in CC. These numbers represent those employed in the community, at minimum wage or higher.

There are several individuals who (as of January 1, 2022) are paid minimum wage and work on maintenance and landscaping crews in the community but are not included in my count because they are not fully integrated. I am working with our DDA Region 1 Employment Specialist to see how we might account for these individuals.

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With the lower COVID activity (3/15 data: 7 positives and 3 hospitalized) and recent indoor mask mandate expiring, our Community Inclusion participants are ready to get out and about! The warmer weather and sunshine (when we can get it) are also helpful factors!

All of our CI providers have completed Community Inclusion training to cover the purpose of the services, billable activities, writing goals, and encouraging discovery activities to expose participants to new and/or additional activities that match their individual skills, gifts, and interests.

Due to a recent request to help locate an “in-person” ASL interpreter which proved to be quite challenging; I started a list of resources that I would like to share with members of ACAC. If you know of resources I missed, please let me know and I will add them to the resources list. Aniko was very helpful. I also reached out to the GCDE and Jim House at the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP).

Legislative Updates/Budget Proposals:

Residential providers (DDA): Keep temporary rate add-ons (covid essential worker increase) through December 2022, then decrease by 20% every six months until dissolved.

Residential providers (DDA): Increase supported living and community residential rates to those providing direct care to DDA clients by 23%.

Employment/Community Inclusion provider temporary contract rates made permanent did NOT pass, and rates will return to base beginning July 1, 2022.

Employment/Community Inclusion – allow both employment and community inclusion services concurrently passed. It is unclear if the budget will allow concurrent services to all who want it, If they will have to

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split their hours, and if the State has provider capacity to provide both services to participants.

Expand School to Work (DVR) to connect students with supported employment services, establish a statewide council for referral and information. Ensures transition services are available to all students. (Note: locally, we are launching a Job Foundations service that connects students in their last two years of high school with DVR, DDA, and supported employment providers. The goal is a placement in a community job at minimum wage or higher in the last year of high school). This is a collaborative project between DDA, DVR, and OSPI. Angie Witt is the new Transition Coordinator.

BenefitU – a free benefits planning service to WA residents with disabilities (even non-DDA) was refunded. This service helps individuals determine how much money they can earn and not lose their SSI/SSDI benefits.

Increased dental procedure rates for children were funded. This will hopefully encourage dentists to accept Medicaid insurance and/or become an ABCD (Access to Baby and Child Dentistry) provider. Although, rates are still much lower than private insurance pays. ABCD covers children with developmental disabilities up to age 13. We do not currently have any providers in town that are participating. This may be due to the low reimbursement rate, but we are waiting on the legislative changes that may be changing those rates and could be an opportunity to get local providers trained and certified to be an ABCD providers.

3/30/22 at 6:30-8:00, [Transition Expo](#) for middle school and high school special education student events with service providers will take place at Walla Walla Community College in the Water & Environmental Center. Numerous local service providers will present the services they have available for people with disabilities.

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Resources if you are interested in reading more:

Final Compromise Operating budget documents are available at:

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2022/ho2022Supp.asp>

The agency detail summaries, comparing Senate, House, and final budgets, are available at:

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2022/coh3WayDetail.pdf>

Budget bill:

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2022/cohConferenceH-2990.1.pdf>

**Announcements and Further Discussion Items**

- 1) Waiting on scheduling from shared meeting with local Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- 2) Waiting on scheduling for affordable housing ad hoc committee presentation and city council work session presentation for Connie and Larry

**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 - Need new ad hoc chair - we could consider asking Nancy Wriggle to be a member and chair the housing conversations?  
Connie will reach out to her.
- d) City of Walla Walla Next Steps
  - i) WWACAC member to serve on Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee Issue - current opening, receiving applications
  - ii) Develop a checklist for Downtown Alfresco Accessibility for Policy Development - Betsy and Anikó



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- iii) Develop pamphlet and materials on Accessibility for Building Permit Office - Betsy and Anikó
- iv) Partner with Developmental Disabilities in Inclusion Stickers and Informational Pamphlets for Walla Walla Businesses
- v) Possible Grants and Revenue Options
- vi) Downtown Accessibility Study of Parking Options and Sidewalks Walkways with Alfresco Outside Dining - Larry

**Public Comment** - Joleen asked what level of oversight or comment our group has been providing for all of the street work that is ongoing as well as scheduled to take place this summer. While this group has been working closely with the city manager on accessibility in general, this hasn't been addressed yet, but Larry will coordinate this conversation. Joleen also asked about the underlying purpose for this group, and Connie explained at a high level, and Angie will follow up with our By-Laws via email.

**For the Good of the Order** - none

**Next Meeting Date** - April 20, 2022. [Meeting Dates - 2022](#)

**In-person** at [Valley Transit](#), hybrid **Zoom option available.**

**Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned by 6:22

**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.