

Public Input – Housing ADA Coordinator –

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To: Melinda Espinoza <Melinda.Espinoza@santamonica.gov>; James Kemper <James.Kemper@santamonica.gov>; Anna Topolewski <Anna.Topolewski@santamonica.gov>
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EXTERNAL

Dear Housing Commission and Disabilities Commission,

This is to request that as soon as possible the two commissions begin cooperating on the most effective manner to advocate to the City to follow the January 2020 Fair Housing Assessment recommendation to provide a housing ADA coordinator.

Ms. Glauber, Esq, who prepared the Assessment recommended that the City provide a point of contact for a dedicated ADA Coordinator to track and maintain a list of ADA accessible housing and coordinate the housing needs of people with disabilities. Please see #3 in the pertinent excerpt from the Fair Housing Assessment:

Goal 4: Increase community integration for persons with disabilities

Strategies:

1. Conduct targeted outreach and provide tenant application assistance and support to persons with disabilities, including individuals transitioning from institutional settings and individuals who are at risk of institutionalization.
2. Require at least 15% of total units in all newly constructed multi-family developments receiving public funds where City funds are leveraged with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to be accessible to persons with mobility disabilities and at least 4% of total units to be accessible for persons with hearing and/or vision disabilities.
3. Provide a point of contact for a dedicated ADA Coordinator to track and maintain a list of ADA-accessible housing units and coordinate the housing needs of people with disabilities. Additional responsibilities would include assessing risk of violations, coordinating with City departments, and providing education and instruction.
4. Explore strategies for allowing occupancy of City-funded affordable senior housing by non-elderly persons with disabilities through compliance with the criteria for "housing for older persons" listed in 42 U.S.C. § 3607(b)(2)(C).

The AFH lays out a series of achievable action steps that will help Santa Monica to not only meet its obligation to affirmatively fair housing but to continue to be a model for equity and inclusion in the Region.

To date the City has made no effort to follow this recommendation.

Disabilities Commission Chair Elliott stated at this week's City Council meeting that the Disabilities Commission is the voice of the people living with disabilities and asked the Council not to take that voice away.

Now that we know the Disabilities Commission is here to stay, I count on Chair Elliott and the Disabilities Commission to come through and advocate for people with disabilities who currently have great difficulty locating and securing modified housing units in the city or obtaining reasonable accommodations from the Santa Monica Housing Authority and the city's social service programs.

Currently the City has no clue where the modified units are, and offers no assistance to SMHA clients or others who are looking for them. SMHA clients who ask SMHA for assistance locating modified units are told to seek assistance from Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC), a private nonprofit organization which has no information about the location or availability of modified or accessible units. Where would DCRC get this information if even SMHA does not currently have it?...

Additionally, the City claims that it does have an ADA Coordinator, but it is not exactly true. There exists no job or duties description for the city's ADA Coordinator – I have confirmed that by making records requests to the City Clerk's Office and Chief People Officer Lori Gentles.

There is a city staffer in Risk Management, Ms. Mirna Medina, who apparently has the ADA Coordinator's duties "assigned," however a public records request disclosed that there is no description of such duties attached to her position or a separate position within the city. The staffer in question does not assist with locating modified units, has no clue where they might be located or whether any are available.

Furthermore, it appears that this faux ADA Coordinator is not willing to respond to residents regarding housing related ADA issues, and prefers to dodge communications that request such assistance. Multiple community members have reported this problem to the City (specifically to the City Council, Chief People Officer Lori Gentles, former Interim City Manager John Jalili, Risk Management Analyst Oles Gordeev), to no avail.

My efforts to convince the Disabilities Commission and the Housing Commission to advocate to the City regarding this matter have been ongoing for approximately five years now.

It is my hope that the two Commissions will undertake to cooperate as soon as possible in order to bring a qualified housing ADA Coordinator to the City of Santa Monica as recommended by the most recent Assessment of Fair Housing.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Regards,

Olga Zurawska

PUBLIC INPUT - 12/16/21

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Thu 12/16/2021 12:01 PM

To: Melinda Espinoza <Melinda.Espinoza@santamonica.gov>

EXTERNAL

On December 7, 2022 Mayor Himmelrich and Councilmember Davis manipulated the Housing Commission appointment process, and the Council violated its own resolution, by appointing one applicant to a seat she had not applied to, and unlawfully keeping a person who is a puppet for SMRR and SM Forward on the Commission after she has already been on it for a DECADE and received a vote of no confidence from the community she's supposed to serve. Five speakers offered public input to the Council regarding this matter on 12/14/21 and asked the Council to redo the two appointments in question.

Video is cued up:

[Santa Monica City Council Meeting December 14, 2021](#)

