



9/9/13

Late Backup

The City of Austin has made a great deal of progress in the area of sidewalk accessibility. However, we still have miles to go. Since 2005 The Department of Public Works constructed 82 linear miles of sidewalk and constructed 2,200 curb ramps. Everyone in ADAPT is proud of the progress that has been made. That is why members of ADAPT feel betrayed by staff and the recent developments that occurred during the budget process.

ADAPT members were told during the August 28, 2013 City of Austin ADA Sidewalk Taskforce meeting that the proposed FY 13-14 budget included \$7.5 million for construction of new sidewalks and curb ramps. The next day, right before the final public hearing on the proposed budget, we learned the funding being proposed is **less than half** that number at \$ 3.2 million dollars. That is not acceptable to members of ADAPT!

It has become all too common to read and hear news stories about pedestrians being hit by vehicles. Just three weeks ago there was an accident involving a man who uses a wheelchair and a truck. *How many pedestrians and bicyclist must be injured or killed before the City of Austin takes this public safety issue seriously?*

The Americans with Disabilities Act became law in 1990. The ADA required that a transition plan be implemented in 1992 and all of construction accessibility improvements be **FINISHED** by 1995. Yet 23 years later thousands of locations throughout Austin need access. The City's own Sidewalk Master Plan estimates the city still needs to do more than \$ 800 million worth of sidewalks and curb ramps. That is why in 2008 City Council approved the Department of Public Works plan to fund sidewalk accessibility projects every year for the next 20 years (with adjustments for inflation) by a minimum of \$5 million per year, to reach compliance with the ADA. Sadly, it has taken staff only **four** years to forget that commitment.

ADAPT DEMANDS THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DO THE FOLLOWING:

Fund The ADA Accessibility Improvement Projects Program at \$7.5 million as promised.

Direct the City Manager and Director of Public Works to meet with members of ADAPT and get the 20 year plan back on track.