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Universal Design

The 16th Symposium on Institute for Transport Policy Studies

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Federal Transit Administration

Federal Transit Administration

- U.S. DOT Agency for Mass Transportation
- Other DOT Agencies for:
  - Highways
  - Air Travel
  - Maritime Shipping
  - Auto Safety
  - Railroads
  - Etc.

FTA Office of Civil Rights

- Responsible for civil rights functions as they apply to Federal transit assistance
  - ADA
  - Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Environmental Justice
  - Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
- Staff in Washington and Regions
  - One Regional staff in each of FTA's 10 Regional Offices

FTA Office of Civil Rights

- Ensure compliance by transit industry with civil rights regulations and laws
- Ensure that the law is enforced
- Tools:
  – Technical assistance to transit operators
  – Compliance assessments
- Compliance is a condition of eligibility for Federal funding!

What is the ADA?

- A comprehensive civil rights law

- People with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizen

- Enacted through grassroots effort by the American people

What is the ADA?

- Covers all places that are open to the public, whether privately-owned or government facilities

- Requires that existing barriers be removed

- Sets standards for construction of new buildings and facilities

Relation of ADA to Transportation

- Public and private transportation systems must be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities

- U.S. Department of Transportation is responsible for ensuring access through regulation and enforcement

Relation of ADA to Transportation

- Transportation is the critical link to full participation in society.
- ADA Requires:
  - All new buses, railcars, subway cars, streetcars, etc. must be accessible
  - By now, at least one car per train must be accessible
  - All new stations and facilities must be accessible
  - "Key Stations" must be modified
  - Paratransit must be provided to persons unable to use the fixed-route system.
- Not just wheelchair users!

The Philosophical Perspective

- "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"
- Rights – Not "Privileges"
- ADA and other Civil Rights Laws are based on this perspective
  - Regulations correct contrary action by others

The Philosophical Perspective

- The <u>Right to Exist</u> (within Society)
- The <u>Right to Integrate</u>
- The <u>Right to Value and Meaning</u>

Universal Design

- The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

- Increases usability for as many people as possible at little or no extra cost.

- Benefits people of all ages and abilities.

Universal Design

- Many features of accessibility actually benefit everyone

- Such features can be commonly provided and thus less expensive, unlabeled, attractive, and even marketable

- The foundation for the universal design movement!

Universal Design

- Examples:
  - Oxo International "Good Grips"
  - Voice-recognition software
  - Low-floor buses

Universal Design

- Commercial designers can learn from people with disabilities and rehabilitation technologists who are familiar with the ergonomics of disability and aging

- Rehabilitation technologists and people with disabilities can benefit from designers' expertise in creating products and environments that are functional, safe, attractive, and marketable for a wide diversity of users.

Universal Design

- The term "universal design" was coined by architect Ron Mace
    - Nationally and internationally known
    - Advocate for persons with disabilities

- Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University

Universal Design

- Principles of Universal Design:
  1. Equitable use
  2. Flexibility in use
  3. Simple and intuitive
  4. Perceptible information
  5. Tolerance for error
  6. Low physical effort
  7. Size and space for approach and use

Visions for the Future

- Emphasis to date has been on removal of physical barriers and discriminatory practices
- Other barriers include:
    - **Difficulty in planning a trip**
    - **Getting to a bus or rail station**
    - **Getting *through* a bus or rail station**
    - **Boarding a vehicle**
    - **Information!**
    - **For Demand-Response Riders:**
        - **Difficulty in scheduling a trip**
        - **On-time pickups**
        - **Timely arrival**

Visions for the Future

- **Barrier Reduction Through Technology**

    – GPS systems can provide real-time information via web, mobile phones and kiosks

    – Mobile phones can be used as navigation aids

Visions for the Future

- People are living longer, surviving better
- People with age- or disability-related functional limitations are increasing
- Future will need to be more accommodating of individual differences
- Universal design provides a blueprint for progress

Visions for the Future

- Three principal areas of progress:
  - Accessible, transit-oriented communities
  - Technology
  - Intermodalism

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