



July 14, 2022

Report to Council

Re: Sidewalk Master Plan and ARPA Funds

To the Mayor and Council Persons,

The Disabilities Commission continues to address and respond to issues regarding accessibility throughout our city. We are aware that decisions regarding available funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will soon be finalized by Council. While the Council has worked hard to gather input from the public on how these funds should be spent, the Disabilities Commission has voted to also provide a letter to encourage consideration regarding the use of funds towards improving accessibility throughout the city.

Specifically, the Disabilities Commission is requesting that the City Council consider funding of infrastructure, and more specifically, sidewalks. Sidewalks are discussed consistently, if not monthly, in the Disabilities Commission meetings. This indicates that not only are sidewalks, or the lack thereof, a frequent barrier to accessibility, but that members of the public are consistently reporting sidewalk issues to the Disabilities Commission members.

Therefore, the Disabilities Commission respectfully requests that the City Council approve ARPA funds to fully fund the City's Sidewalk Master Plan, using those funds to build out the current plan, and accelerate construction on priority sidewalks as indicated by the Disabilities Commission and other groups and commissions including but not limited to PTAC and CATSO. (The current sidewalk plan as found on the City's website, can be located here: https://www.como.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20120401_SidewalkPlan_CMD.pdf).

The Sidewalk Master Plan's projects are constructed as funding allows. After reviewing the existing Sidewalk Master Plan in the June 2022 Disabilities Commission meeting, it is evident that very little progress has been made in the one decade this plan has been in existence. In order for this existing plan to succeed, \$23 million needs to be allocated. As this is a large expense that the City may not be able or willing to approve based on City budget alone, the availability of ARPA funds is an ideal time to finally meet the goals of this plan.

The City has a responsibility under the ADA to ensure all people have access to, and can benefit from, its programs, services and activities. And sidewalks are a critical component of accessible transportation in the community. It's the Commission's request that ARPA funds be used to improve sidewalk infrastructure which will benefit all members of the community.



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Disabilities Commission

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacquelyn Sample
Chair, Disabilities Commission