



**County of Santa Cruz
Commission on Disabilities
2011-2012 Biennial Report**

I. Roles of the Commission

The Commission on Disabilities is an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues concerning persons with disabilities. The Commission was established to:

- (a) Review existing County policies that affect persons with disabilities and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding proposed changes;
- (b) Review Sections 503 and 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations and advise the Board of Supervisors on any actions necessary to bring the county into compliance with the federal requirements and to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- (c) Review the provision of access for persons with disabilities to public places within the County and recommend improvements where needed;
- (d) Review the County's Affirmative Action Plan and policies and recommend to the Board of Supervisors and Affirmative Action Commission any revisions which may be necessary to eliminate employment discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- (e) Review the County's Personnel rules and job descriptions and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and to the Civil Service Commission, as necessary, to assure that any unnecessary barriers to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are removed;
- (f) Advise the Board of Supervisors on any other appropriate programs and actions which would increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- (g) Evaluate services provided to persons with disabilities in the County and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors based on their conclusions;
- (h) Review requests by persons with disabilities or organizations for County assistance and advise the Board of Supervisors;
- (i) Investigate citizen complaints related to concerns of persons with disabilities and make appropriate recommendations for action to the Board of Supervisors;
- (j) Review Federal and State Legislation of interest to persons with disabilities and advise the Board of Supervisors of their recommendations; and
- (k) Exercise other responsibilities related to the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in the County.

II. Meetings Dates, Time, and Location

The Commission met the second Thursday of each month from 12:30 until 1:30 P.M. at the Regional Transportation Commission offices located at 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz. The commission did not schedule meetings in July or in December. However, in response to interest in matters before the Coastal Commission, the March meetings were rescheduled to December. In September 2011 and October 2012, the Commission held its annual retreats. The mailing address is 701 Ocean Street, Room 30, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

III. Commission Structure

The Commission on Disabilities is comprised of ten members representing five districts. The Board of Supervisors appoints two Commissioners for each district. The Chair or Vice-Chair who are elected every April to facilitate commission meetings. For 2011 to 2012 the Chair was



Peter Heylin (5th District) and the Vice-Chair was Charles Stone (2nd District). The Commission members, as of December 31, 2012 are:

District	Commissioners
1 st District	Ernestina Saldana, John Daugherty
2 nd District	Charles Stone, Vacant
3 rd District	Deborah Lane, Joseph Quigg
4 th District	Jeanette Cosentino, Dan Chauvet
5 th District	Peter Heylin, Nikona Keesaw

The Commissioner(s) that completed their terms, resigned, or were replaced in the last year were Thomas Crain, Robert McGaw, Robert White,

The Commission is supported by a ten hour per week staff person – the Commission Coordinator. The Coordinator takes minutes, prepares correspondence, coordinates Commission projects and events and represents the Commission in some of the Commission activities. Mary Thuerwacher staffed this position during 2011-2012.

V. Attendance 2012

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Charles Stone	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X
Jeanette Cosentino	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X
Joseph Quigg	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X
Peter Heylin	X	X	o	X	X	E	o	X	X	X	X	X
Robert McGaw	E	X	o	E	X	X	o	X	-	-	-	-
Dan Chauvet	X	E	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	A	X
John Daugherty	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X
Deborah Lane	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	E	E	X	X
Nicona Keesaw	X	X	o	X	X	X	o	X	X	E	X	E
Ernestina Saldana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	A

X= present A=absence E=Excused Absence - =Not seated on commission

The scheduled March meeting was cancelled due to conflict with the Commission presentation to the California Coastal Commission on the Big Wave Project.

There was no meeting in July. In October, the commission held a planning retreat in lieu of a regular meeting to review projects for placement on the September agenda.



VI. Annual Goals and Accomplishments

The Commissions' activities and priorities are determined by the Commission mandate, and emerging needs as expressed by the community and identified by Commissioners. Our Mission Statement is as follows:

The Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities is a pro-active advisory board that serves to insure that children and adults with disabilities have opportunities to reach their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and self-sufficiency as well as to insure equity and access within the community.

Summary of Objectives

The Commission on Disabilities' objective is to be the eyes, ears, voice, and conscience in assuring equal access to persons with disabilities of Santa Cruz County and to advise the Board of Supervisors and serve persons with disabilities in our community in the following ways:

1. Provide an accessible, inclusive forum for persons with disabilities to express community concerns.
2. Identify and address visible and invisible barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to exercise the right to live full and productive lives.
3. Encourage community action through education, referral, collaboration and integration of resource utilization to remove barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to live full and productive lives.
4. Influence public policy by advising and working with the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors and the County to affect Local, State, and Federal legislation to optimize the functional potential of those persons with disabilities in the County of Santa Cruz.

Objective 1 -Provide an accessible, inclusive, and appropriate place for persons with disabilities to express community concerns.

- Meetings are open for citizens to express individual concerns. Meeting time is allocated for presentation on topics relating to persons with disabilities. The following made presentations to the Commission:

Veronica Elsea – Elderly and Disabled Task Force
Richard Salazar – Pajaro Valley Prevention
Karina Aragon, In Home Support Services
Mark Dettle, Director of Public Works, City of Santa Cruz, and
Marlin Granlund, Parking Program Manager
Adam Spickler Aide to Assemblyman Monning
Margaret Ifland – Simpkins Swim Center
Corry Ybarra – Building Generations
Terry McKinney – Big Wave Project
Paul Horvat – Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services



- The Commission Coordinator is available as a contact and information and referral resource between meetings. During the past year, the coordinator evaluated problems of community members and made approximately 50 referrals to community resources for persons with disabilities. Some of those inquiries led to issues of a systemic nature being brought to the attention of the commission.
- The Commission bulletin board is maintained outside of Commission office, which provides information and events of interest to persons with disabilities.

Objective 2 - Identify and address visible and invisible barriers preventing children and adults with disabilities from exercising their rights to live a full and productive life

- ADA Pool Regulations – Publicized new regulations requiring public pools to be accessible for persons with disabilities
- Arana Gulch Accessible Trail – The Commission took extensive testimony on the pros and cons of creating an ADA accessible trail at Arana Gulch. The Commission recommended that the County convey its support to the Coastal Commission. The Board of Supervisors approved this recommendation. Commissioners testified at the public hearing before the Coastal Commission. After some revision of the plan by the City of Santa Cruz, the Coastal Commission held another public hearing at which Commissioners testified. The Arana Gulch plan was finally approved with an ADA accessible trail.
- Accessible Parking Enforcement - Parking information cards are distributed throughout the community to alert people to the penalties for illegal parking in handicapped spots and tell persons how to report instances of illegal parking.
- Brookdale Post Office – Investigation of a complaint regarding the removal of a green parking zone in front of Post Office. Remaining parking is currently across the street and up a steep unpaved slope. The Commission worked with Public Works and the Post Office. There is now an accessible parking space for disabled patrons.
- Porter Library – Worked to obtain materials and donations to add an access ramp and accessible bathroom for persons with disabilities. Currently working with a pro bono architect to create plans remodel.
- Simpkins Swim Center - Worked with Simpkins Swim Center on increasing access for persons with disabilities.
- Disaster Planning - Developed a disaster protocol for first responders to assist persons with disabilities with Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services
- KUDOS Award – For persons and organizations that demonstrated consideration for access for persons with disabilities. Awardees honored at a reception. In 2011, the KUDOS recipients were:



Ramona Turner, Santa Cruz Sentinel, - disability safety issues
Veronica Elsea and Doug Patrick, E&DTAC - pedestrian safety
Paul Schoellhamer and Charlie Dixon - Arana Gulch disability access path
Foster Anderson, Shared Adventures
Jack McDonald, Vitamin Store
Lisa Cotter, Staff of Life – accessible design for new facility

- Toon Show Along with the reception for KUDOS Award recipients, an exhibit of cartoons highlighting disability access issues in a humorous vein were shown at the County Government Center. As the artist, Charles Stone, said: It is an assortment of about '30 odd unique Disability 'toons '.
- Magnets - Free refrigerator magnets with the new Commission on Disabilities logo created by artist Tim Ward publicizing the commission's website and phone number were distributed at the KUDOS reception and throughout the county.
- Wound Brochure - Responses to the Safe at Home Survey conducted in 2010 indicated that there was a significant problem among the disabled individuals responding to the survey with wound care and wounds that refused to heal. As part of its community education and outreach efforts, the Commission developed a brochure that provided practical information on skin care along with humorous illustrations.
- City of Santa Cruz parking – Notified the Board of Supervisors and City of Santa Cruz on access problems in parking garages owned by the city.
- Dominican Rehabilitation Center – Notified Dominican concerning access issues at the Frederick Street facility.

Objective 3 - Encourage community action through education, referral, collaboration and integration of resource utilization to remove barriers for persons with disabilities that disrupt the ability to live full and productive lives.

- Regional Transportation Commission – Elderly and Disabled Task Force - Pedestrian Safety Group - liaison Commission member
- IHSS and Long-Term Care – liaison Commission member
- Central Coast Alliance for Health – liaison Commission member
- Office of Emergency Services – liaison Commission member
- National FEMA referral list for disaster support – Commission member

Objective 4 - Influence public policy by advising and working with the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors and the County to affect Local, State, and Federal legislation to optimize the functional potential of those persons with disabilities in the County of Santa Cruz.



- The Board of Supervisors requested the commission to provide comments on a caregiver licensing ordinance that modeled an ordinance in Napa County. The Commission solicited comments from the community, researched the implementation in Napa County and presented a report to the Board of Supervisors.
- From the results of the 2010 survey the commission found that many residents had no plans for what to do in an emergency and many had wound care/healing issues. As a result, the commission worked on the following:
 - Developed a disaster protocol for first responders to assist persons with disabilities with Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Services
 - Developed an outreach brochure on skin care and wound healing issues
- The Commission provided information to the Board of Supervisors on the accessible paths planned for Arana Gulch. The Board gave its support to the Arana Gulch Master Plan. Commissioner testified regarding the importance and benefit accessible trails would have for the community. After several hearings and revisions by the City of Santa Cruz the Master Plan now includes accessible paths.
- Citizen initiated accessible parking violation notification cards were widely distributed throughout the community.

VII. Future Goals and Recommendations

1. KUDOS AWARD - Recognition of Accessible Businesses, Organizations and Agencies
2. Conduct follow-up Safe at Home Survey
3. Research and write a supplement to the Women's Commission the Status of Women and Girls Report on Women with Disabilities
4. Continue education and outreach through magnets and brochures
5. Explore registration for persons with disabilities who may require help evacuating in a disaster.
6. Public policy and education of the public regarding the needs of persons with disabilities

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Thuerwachter
Commission Coordinator

Approved by the Commission on Disabilities on 2/14/2013