



CCD 2023 Transportation Task Force Annual Report

1. Brief Task Force Description or Mission Statement

The Transportation Task Force advocates for fully accessible transportation across all modes. Transportation should be affordable, equitable, sustainable, and reliable. People with disabilities should have the opportunity to travel independently and with needed accommodations. They should also be able to choose where and how they live in the community. The Task Force follows our Anti-Racism Principles agreed to in July 2021. (URL: <https://www.c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-Transpo-TF-Racial-Equity-One-Pager.pdf>)

2. Three Issues the Task Force Worked on in 2023

- a. Rail – The Transportation Task Force advocated for full implementation of current federal disability access laws and disability and equity-related sections of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, including the All Stations Accessibility Program. The Task Force members continued to meet with Amtrak and its leadership regarding a range of issues, including Amtrak’s plan to install wider seats that will reduce aisles to 24-inches, creating a physical barrier for many mobility device users. In 2023, Amtrak opened public discussions on the design of their new long-distance trainset designs. Despite Amtrak’s alleged efforts to make the discussion widely available, the Task Force found significant issues with the meeting and material’s accessibility and transparency and recognized the failure to notify Amtrak passengers with disabilities. In response, the Task Force co-chairs drafted two letters to Amtrak raising these issues about the public hearing and materials and requested a new hearing. Both letters can be found on the CCD website. The conversations with Amtrak are ongoing at this time.
- b. Air Travel – The Transportation Task Force continued to support and advocate for provisions in the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act, and disability and accessibility provisions for the FAA Reauthorization. The Task Force members continued to report back on regular meetings with U.S. Department of Transportation on air travel and submitted necessary comments. The 2018 FAA Reauthorization expired in late September. At that time, Congress approved an extension until the end of December 2023. However, ongoing congressional disagreements have indefinitely extended this process. At this time, Congress will likely extend the current Reauthorization to 2024. The Task Force and disability rights community continues to monitor the House and Senate versions carefully and advocate for numerous provisions to improve the air travel experience and safety for persons with disabilities.

- c. Accessible, Equitable On-Demand Travel – The Task Force submitted a letter for the record to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce on accessibility and equity needs for people with disabilities in autonomous vehicle (AV) legislation and discussed issues with committee staff. The Task Force began conversations with NHTSA to understand their future rulemakings and the inclusion of accessibility and safety for people with disabilities. The Task Force also raised accessibility issues with Cruise, an AV rideshare company, which spoke at a Task Force meeting. We continue to raise discrimination against service dog users and the failure to accommodate mobility device users in existing rideshare services and emerging AV rideshare services.
3. Three Issues the Task Force Anticipates Working on in 2024
- a. Rail – The Task Force co-chairs are continuing discussions with Amtrak regarding its long-distance fleet design and acquisition. In 2023, Amtrak began public discussions on the design of their new long-distance trainsets. Despite Amtrak’s alleged efforts to make the discussion widely available, the Task Force found significant issues with the meeting’s accessibility and transparency and recognized the failure to notify Amtrak passengers with disabilities. In response, the Task Force co-chairs drafted two letters to Amtrak raising these issues about the public hearing and materials and requested a new hearing. The co-chairs are in the process of obtaining all materials related to Amtrak’s application and approval of its Federal Railroad Administration Equivalent Facilitation application. Once all information is received, the Task Force will determine next steps to ensure the new trainsets are accessible.
 - b. Road Safety for Pedestrians with Disabilities – The Task Force will continue to earnestly advocate to reduce safety risks and fatalities of pedestrians with disabilities. The community experiences increased risks caused by the inaccessibility and infrastructure of public rights of way and other pedestrian routes; inaccessible and incomplete sidewalks and curb ramps; the lack of accessible pedestrian signals; and the failure to test vehicle pedestrian protection systems to detect pedestrians with disabilities. With the recently published rulemaking on the accessibility of the public rights of way, the Task Force will advocate for federal agencies to promulgate enforceable standards and enforce existing accessibility requirements under federal laws.
 - c. Accessible, Equitable On-Demand Travel – The Task Force continues to address ongoing access and equity issues in on-demand travel, e.g., autonomous vehicles, taxis, and transportation network companies. Issues include but are not limited to discrimination against service dog users and the failure to accommodate mobility device users. The Task Force will raise these issues with federal agencies and transportation providers; brainstorm further steps to highlight ongoing access and equity issues; and work closely with the entities to increase accessible, reliable, safe, and affordable transportation options.

4. 2023 Task Force Co-Chairs

Claire Stanley, National Disability Rights Network
Danica Gonzalves, Paralyzed Veterans of America
Sarah Malaier, American Foundation for the Blind
Swatha Nandhakumar, American Council of the Blind

5. Task Force Meeting Day of the Month and Meeting Time (Eastern)
First Wednesday of each month, 12:30pm