

December 2, 2014

Mayor Garcia and City Council Members
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 14th floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Mayor Garcia and City Council Members:

I address you this evening on behalf of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter

As we get ready to enjoy the holidays with family and friends, let us take a moment to think about the 48 million Americans who live with the daily challenges of hearing loss. Even more troubling is that hearing loss is affecting people all across our society: 1 in 7 adults, 1 in 5 teenagers, and 3 in 5 returning veterans. By 2030, the total number of people living with hearing loss is expected to double. This health condition is truly an unseen epidemic.

The American with Disability Act of 1992 requires that everyone have equal access and opportunity and clearly spells out the accommodation for hearing needs. In 2008, with the enactment of the ADAAA, the nation reaffirmed its commitment to protecting against discrimination and to truly opening the doors of opportunity to all.

Currently, in City facilities, those with hearing loss can request the assistive technology that the City provides. However, this is inadequate.

There are several instances of barriers to communication that need your attention, such as:

The lecture rooms and lunch halls of the library and Senior Center are not properly built for acoustic needs. The beams, the bare floors and walls provide background noise signals. Speakers at times do not use microphones.

The City Hall, and its various offices, the City Council Chambers, our public library, and Dept. 3 of the Superior Court, where I sit as a Pro Tem, all are frequented by the hard of hearing. However, even with earphones provided, they cannot hear.

In May, 2014, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities (CACOD) sent a letter to the then Mayor Foster and City Council Members, recommending ways to eradicate barriers in the hopes of providing full inclusion of all people with disabilities.

A year and one half ago, at the request of the City, Hearing Now USA, made a proposal for a hearing loop. Again, approximately eight months ago, they made a second presentation. They also met with librarian Josephine Caron. This time it went out to formal bid. Several months went by only to find out that funding had been pulled.

What is proposed is a Looping System. This is a state of the art technology, and is one such system installed in public facilities throughout the United States. An example would be the U.S. House of Representatives main chamber which was looped in 2004. Another example, is the City of Cerritos which has looped its Council Chambers and several lecture rooms in its Senior Center.

Looping is a hearing aid technology that transmits amplified sounds wirelessly direct from the sound source to those wearing hearing aids. The looping system helps eliminate the problems with background noise, distance and reverberation. Induction Loop systems use a magnetic field to transmit sound around the room. It is inconspicuous buried under the carpet.

Attached to the material given you is the recommendation of three of your Council members.

HLAA further requests that those companies submitting bids for the new civic center include the cost of looping those areas most frequented by the general public.

If more information is needed, contact Ram G. Kakkar, rkakkar@rocketmail.com, Looping Chairman for California. Also, Warren Willard, Hearing Now USA, (949) 369 9053.

Maxine B. Barton, Esq.
HLAA Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

May 8, 2014

Mayor Foster and City Council Members
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 14th floor
Long Beach CA 90802

Dear Mayor Foster and City Council Members:

On March 13, 2014, on the recommendation of Gail Morrison, member of the Long Beach/Lakewood Hearing Loss Association of America, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities (CACoD) got to experience the induction hearing loop system first hand.

At our March CACoD meeting, Warren Willard and Richard Archbold from Hearing Now USA, providers for better hearing, set up a temporary induction hearing loop system using copper wiring. This enabled us to experience the induction hearing loop system first hand. They explained that this type of system allows people with hearing loss that utilize a telecoil or T-coil hearing aid to hear with clarity without the use of a headset. Several members from the Hearing Loss Association of America were in attendance to show their support for the installation of the induction hearing loop system.

As a Commission of advisors to the Mayor and City Council Members, who serve to recommend ways to eradicate barriers in hopes of providing full inclusion of all people with disabilities, it is our pleasure to recommend the installation of the induction hearing loop system within City facilities. This system will allow people with hearing loss to fully participate in civic activities and to contribute to the productivity of our great City. This is exactly the kind of demonstration of equality we look to as a model of inclusion of the disabled population.

Mayor Foster and City Council Members, thank you for your consideration of our recommendation. The City of Long Beach's commitment to complying with the intent and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and your support of CACoD are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard Hernandez

Richard Hernandez, CACoD Chairperson
Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities (CACoD)

RH:kb



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Memorandum

Date: December 2, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Suzie Price, Councilwoman, Third District ^{SP}
Dee Andrews, Councilmember, Sixth District ^{DA}
Rex Richardson, Councilmember, Ninth District ^{RR}

Subject: AGENDA ITEM: Looping System in Public Facilities

INTRODUCTION:

There are 48 million Americans that are hearing impaired including seniors, veterans, adults, and children. Hearing loss is a barrier to effective communication in daily life. Additionally, it is an invisible and silent disability that has serious impacts on overall health, well-being, and safety of those in our society that are unable to hear. There is a state of the art technology, known as a looping system, which is a wire that circles a room and is connected to a sound system. The loop transmits the sound electromagnetically directly into the hearing aid via the telecoils. The loop signal eliminates the background noise in the environment and allows the hearing impaired person to clearly hear. One of the major advantages of a looping system is that it is a universal technology and does not matter what brand hearing aid a person is wearing because the looping system works with all hearing aids with telecoils.

RECOMMENDATION

I am requesting the City Manager provide a report to the City Council within 60 days identifying the fiscal impact associated with installing a looping system in our public facilities such as the City Council Chambers, police stations, senior centers, and public libraries.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no significant fiscal impact for the delivery of the report. The report from the City Manager is required to determine the fiscal impact associated with installing a looping system in our public facilities.