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To: The Honorable Mayor Ann Azari and Members of City Council

From: The Commission on Disability

Date: January 28, 1998

Subject: **1997 Commission on Disability Annual Report**

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1997 was a very active year for the Commission on Disability (COD). The following is a summary of the Commission on Disability's accomplishments and activities throughout the year:

- ◆ The COD experienced many changes in membership throughout the year. At one point during the year, the Commission was short four members. By the end of the year, though, the Commission had a complete roster of eleven members, which hasn't been the case in over two years. Appointed: Stacey Abate (July), Nancy Baker (July), Laura Burnett (July), Alan Apt (August), and Donald Fish (August). Resigned: Frank Blakely (April), Craig Wallerstein (March), Jacque Hyatt (February). Long-time members Shirley Reichenbach and Angela Byrne completed their appointments in June and were recognized by the Commission and the Mayor and City Council for their contributions.
- ◆ The Commission on Disability assisted several City Departments and Committees with issues related to individuals with disabilities. The following are some examples:
  - Advised Parking Services staff and recommended locations for handicapped parking spaces in the downtown area. Also discussed with them the issue of snow removal and parking enforcement.
  - Some members of the Commission on Disability participated on the Dial-a-Ride Advisory Committee (DARAC) [formed in December of 1996]. This committee hears, reviews, and addresses citizen complaints concerning Dial-a-Ride, as well as being a resource for Dial-a-Ride personnel for advice on DAR policies and procedures. The DARAC is a subcommittee of the COD. The COD assisted the DARAC on the issue of

affordable fares for low-income customers. Transportation and DAR responded to the COD and DARAC's concerns by implementing a sliding scale for fares based on the national low-income standards.

- During 1997, Dial-a-Ride (DAR) and Transportation Services discussed the idea to make DAR an in-house operation. DAR and Transportation Services sought the advice and support of the COD. After hearing much information and costs analyses from both DAR and Shamrock Taxi personnel, the members of the COD decided that it was in the best interest of the citizens and customers who utilize DAR services to support the move to an in-house operation.
  - The Facility Services Department sought comments and advice from the COD on the issue of a Downtown Multi-modal Transit Center – a hub for Transfort buses. Some Members offered suggestions for possible sites – all agreed that it should be located in the downtown area and accessible to and from the downtown shops.
  - Advance Planning sought out the Commission for advice and support of a plan for repaving access ramps at street corners.
  - Members of the Commission were invited to participate on the City's Building Code Review Committee, headed by the Building & Zoning Department. The COD has especial interest in this review so as to give input in areas relating to accessibility. [Participation on the committee continues into 1998.]
  - The COD was asked to contribute comments for the Human Rights Ordinance. The members offered suggestions for clarifying the term "disabilities" [according to the definition provided by the ADA] as well as clarifying some statements in regard to disabilities.
  - The Commission became involved with the City's Building Review Board on an issue concerning granting a variance to a building developer. The Commission was asked by the City Council to give input to the variance request. The Commission met with both the Building Review Board and the developer. After much discussion, the members voted 6 to 4 to support the variance. This situation opened the door to further discussion and collaboration with the Building Review Board in the future over building issues concerning accessibility.
- ◆ The Commission participated in several programs and activities devoted to educating the community on topics of disability awareness and sensitivity. The following are a couple of examples.

**New West Fest:** The Commission participated in the City's annual New West Fest. Members volunteered their time in managing the booth. As last year, the Commission

solicited volunteers from various local providers and organizations who provide services for people with disabilities to assist in managing the booth. The Commission also collected and provided brochures and informational flyers from various service providers and organizations in the community and made them available to New West Fest visitors. This provided an opportunity for the Commission members to “network” with the various service providers and organizations as well as provide valuable information to all interested persons on issues concerning disabilities.

**Annual Mayor’s Awards:** This year’s Mayor’s Awards saw some wonderful changes. The Commission wanted a ceremony that would allow the time and give the proper recognition due to the individuals and organizations who serve individuals with disabilities. The Commission decided to host a luncheon for the Award nominees and their guests. The luncheon was held on Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at the University Holiday Inn. The Commission also made some minor changes to the categories for nominations. The four categories were: Business of the Year, Service Provider of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and the Dorothy Lasley Memorial Award. There were 16 nominees for these categories. All nominees and their guests were invited to attend the luncheon. The winners of each category were announced at the luncheon and awarded a plaque. All other nominees were given Certificates of Appreciation in recognition of their efforts and contributions towards citizens with disabilities. Mayor Pro Tem Will Smith attended the luncheon in place of the Mayor and addressed the attendees. A presentation was given by the Colorado Easter Seals Society “Kids on the Block.” They performed a unique and delightful puppet show to the enjoyment of all – kids and adults alike. All in all, this year’s Mayor’s Awards ceremony was the best yet!