

Ms. Anna Panossian,  
Chief Financial Officer, Circuit of the Americas  
9201 Circuit of The Americas Boulevard  
Austin, TX 78617

Dear Ms. Panossian:

Last weekend my wife and I with another couple attended the Rolling Stones concert at the Circuit of the Americas. While the concert was one of the best I have ever attended, unfortunately many people with disabilities (including myself) had a very difficult time getting into and out of the event.

After having fractured my ankle, I contacted COTA to determine how I was going to be able to attend. I was told that a golf cart would meet me at my car and bring me to my seat. That didn't happen. I was only transported as far as the gate and was told by the cart driver that I would have to walk on my crutches all the way to Hillside Bleachers Section 1. There was an ADA accessibility tent near the gate, but it was empty and unstaffed. I could only make it on my crutches as far as section 4. One COTA staff member told me to wait for a wheelchair only to be told a few minutes later by another staff member that no wheelchairs were available. Fortunately, other COTA staff intervened to allow me to sit in the ADA section of Section 4 so I wouldn't have to try to walk any further. As for leaving after the concert, I was told that no carts would be available for at least 90 minutes but if I could make it to the gate there would be a designated place to wait for transportation back to my car. I made it back to the gate but there was no signage where people with disabilities should go. It took asking a half dozen COTA staff people to get an answer. At the location there was no organization and no places for people with disabilities to sit until my wife urged staff to get some chairs. We witnessed other people with disabilities who were visibly upset at being told that they would not be transported back to *their* vehicles until the venue was emptied out. Some were asking what value they received for paying extra for disabled parking. COTA staff had no answers for us and one staff person, "Steve" was outright hostile to a disabled elderly woman and her daughter. My wife and I saw a woman with disabilities dropped onto the ground because the COTA employee did not know how to properly load her onto the cart. She was still lying on the ground when a cart finally arrived to take us back to our car.

Because of the uneven level of assistance, I was forced to walk on my crutches far more than allowed by my doctor and both feet became seriously swollen. But I am far more concerned with many other people with disabilities who undoubtedly experienced similar difficulties.

Circuit of the Americas is a world class venue that expects everyone to enjoy outstanding entertainment and have a great experience. I know you and your team will be distressed to receive reports like this and want all attendees including people with disabilities to have a reasonable access to your venue *and* a great experience.

This would be an ideal time for COTA to convene a **Disability Access** task force consisting of your staff and some of our Travis County disability community leadership to help recommend enhancements to your ADA protocols. I would be happy to assist in any way that would be helpful. I believe we (COTA and local governmental officials) have a moral and legal imperative to ensure that everyone has reasonable access to all public businesses and events. I would be happy to visit with you at your convenience.  
Sincerely,

Bruce Elfant  
Travis County Tax Assessor Collector & Voter Registrar