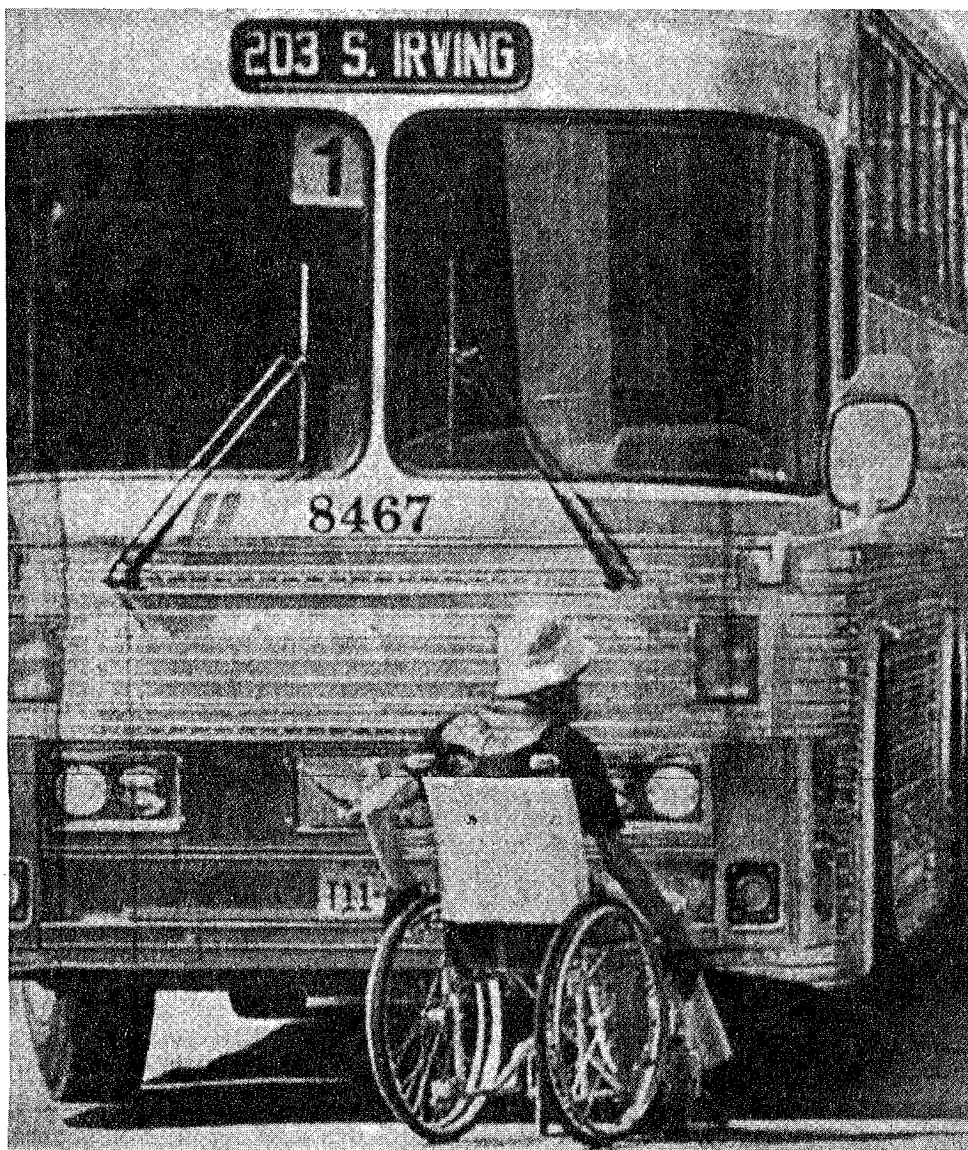


# INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT

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A Publication of American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation (ADAPT)



**WHEELCHAIR BLOCKADE**—A member of American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation blocks the path of a Dallas Area Rapid Transit bus in downtown Dallas.

## ADAPT Receives Grant

The Texas Chapter of the American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) has received a grant from the Live Oak Fund for Change to promote action to improve public transit options for disabled persons and to foster grassroots organizing and "new blood" in the disability rights movement. ADAPT will be putting on six (6) workshops around the state focusing on the issue of accessible mainline public transit for disabled Texans.

The first five workshops will provide general training in community organizing techniques, in leadership development, in people power/grassroots actions including civil disobedience and in identifying transportation issues for mobility impaired persons. These workshops will bring together disabled persons who are interested in working to make transit systems accessible for all

people. ADAPT will be stressing networking to increase our power base and will be trying to involve any and all persons and organizations that are interested in access to mainline transportation for disabled persons.

Leadership teams will be picked from these workshops and any groups forming in response to ADAPT. These teams will attend a centralized workshop next spring which will provide more intensive training in organizing strategies and leadership techniques. In this way ADAPT hopes to create long term mechanisms for change in communities across Texas.

The first workshop will be held in Dallas, Texas on Saturday, October 26th at the Bachman Recreation Center. Additional ones will be held in San Antonio, Houston, Amarillo and El Paso. A final workshop will be held in Austin and will bring together leaders from the above mentioned trainings.

## Riding Dallas ADAPT Workshop October 26th, 1985

Dallas is a city with mythic images. The Cowboys and Cowgirls. The TV show *Dallas*. One of the richest, most powerful and fastest growing cities in the United States. Supposedly anyone can make it in this hard, fast city, and many people are looking to Dallas as the model city of the 80s. Transit operators certainly are no exception. But Dallas' transit system, DART, despite numerous broken promises about mainline accessibility and multi-model systems, provides only the most rudimentary transit services to disabled persons. Haughtily thumbing their nose at the disability community DART has basically said you get what we give you; we do not care what promises you have been given.

With this shining armored image, Dallas was chosen as the perfect place for ADAPT of Texas to begin its trainings. Many disability rights activists are coming to the conclusion you must fight fire with fire. The October 26th training, to be held at Bachman Recreation Center, will focus on identifying issues and strategies and will attempt to mobilize some folks to show DART officials we are not a population to be pushed aside.

The first half of the workshop will cover information on transportation issues, what ADAPT is all about and what is meant by community organizing/people power. A brief history of what has been happening on the national, state and local levels will be given as well as the forecast of what the near future may bring (it does not look too bright). Trainers will discuss some of the tactics ADAPT has used, why they were necessary and why they were effective. In the second half of the workshop this general information will be related more and more specifically, a plan of action will be developed and begun to be implemented.

ADAPT urges any and all persons who think they might be interested to attend. If you have never been involved, if you are feeling burnt out, if you cannot contain your outrage at the way disabled people are oppressed, if you are scared, or if you want to see what a bunch of weirdo activists do when they get together this workshop will have something for you.

Together we are strong and **WE WILL RIDE.**

If all goes well we may have an ADAPT office in Dallas next year.





ADAPT in action in San Antonio.

## Why INCITEMENT?

You may ask how we came up with the name of this newsletter. For some, "INCITEMENT" brings to mind the specter of rioting in the streets, to others it sounds needlessly inflammatory; others just don't know what to think.

Well the story is we were sitting around discussing what an appropriate name for a newsletter would be, coming from an organization whose main thrust is affecting change through action. Names such as "The Movement", "Adaptability", "We Will Ride", and "Ride On" were discussed, but didn't seem right. We wanted something that would get the action aspect of ADAPT across, but not in the traditional way. How could we communicate the fact that the disabled people involved in ADAPT of Texas are serious

about the issue of accessible public transportation? We went to our trusty Random House Dictionary and turned to page 672 and lo and behold two-thirds down the page we saw these words: to urge on; stimulate or prompt ACTION. Further down we saw the following: Syn. encourage; instigate; provoke; goad; spur; and arouse. We knew we had found the word that best fit the mood and style of ADAPT. The word was "incite". The newsletter is called "INCITEMENT".

"INCITEMENT" will be published six times a year by ADAPT of Texas. It will focus on the issue of accessible mainline public transportation and the progress that is being made toward the integration of disabled people into the transit systems of Texas.

## Getting Involved with ADAPT

ADAPT is like no other organization of which you may be a member. There are no dues, no membership card and there are no elected officers to run the organization.

How does ADAPT operate if it doesn't have the traditional organizational structure we have all become used to, but tired of?

First, to become involved with ADAPT you must have an active interest in the issue of accessible public transportation for disabled persons. The key word here is "active". ADAPT is an activist organization. This means you are willing to take your time to bring about a change in the way public transit operators provided accessibility to their transit systems.

ADAPT adopts strategies that are decided by the people who attend the planning sessions. This



means everyone has a chance to give their input in an informal setting and gets to decide what the strategy will be, who will do it and how it is to be implemented. These sessions are lively with many different points of view voiced. The cooperative method encourages participation by people who have previously not chosen to be active.

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## ADAPT: A Short History

Access is our civil right. Across the United States this statement is being echoed louder and louder as more and more disabled people join forces with ADAPT, American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit. Tired of being treated as second class citizens, these people are taking to the streets to claim their place as equal citizens, as part of the public.

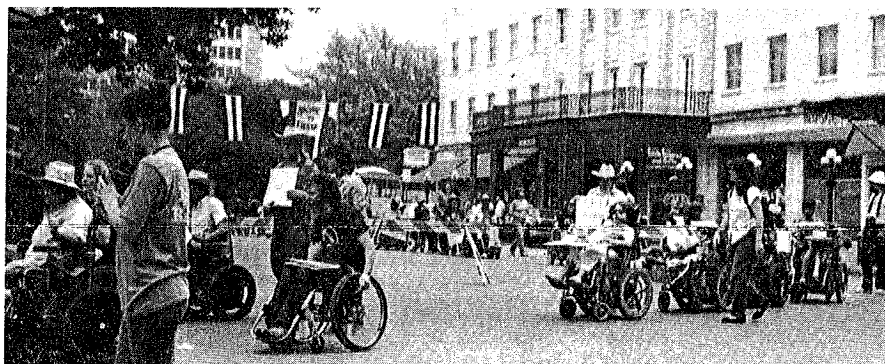
ADAPT began in Denver in 1982. Disabled citizens fed up with the double talk, the long range studies and the supposed support for specialized dial a ride services began demonstrating to call attention to their issue. Their demonstrations culminated in a several day long take over of the downtown buses. Wheelchairs were ridden out in front and behind the downtown commuter buses. Traffic stopped and stayed stopped over the course of the next few days as ADAPT negotiated their demands. Today Denver has a commitment to 100% mainline accessibility of their buses.

ADAPT has grown and the focus of its efforts is APTA, the American Public Transit Association, the national association of public transit administrators. ADAPT pro-

tested at the 1983 meeting in Denver. In 1984, 150 disabled people from across the country descended on the APTA convention in Washington, D.C. Buses were stopped, the convention center was surrounded and many disabled people were arrested, as this civil rights struggle again came to a head.

San Antonio was the site of a regional APTA convention last spring and again ADAPT was there in force. The lobby of the Hyatt Regency was taken over and a meeting with APTA Executive Director Jack Gillstrap was forced. San Antonio Transit/VIA offices were taken over to protest the inaccessibility of the VIA system. Finally ADAPT took to the streets ferreting out the buses that city officials attempted to hide by rerouting them. ADAPT met with Mayor Cisneros and he made a number of promises, none of which have been kept as of this writing.

ADAPT is now targeting the 1985 APTA convention in L.A. for a national policy of accessible, mainline transit. We must organize locally to show our local transit authorities our taxes pay for this service and "WE WILL RIDE".



Rallying at the Alamo in San Antonio.

### Position of ADAPT of Texas

1. Public tax dollars are used for the purchase and operation of all public transportation systems in Texas.
2. That disabled persons, old and young, have a right to participate in the community in an equal fashion as all Texans.
3. That the technology is available to put lifts on buses.
4. That many cities in the United States have voluntarily made their transit systems accessible by committing to the purchase of only lift equipped buses.
5. That there is a need for a complimentary para-transit system, but only to meet the needs of those who could not use the mainline system.
6. That there is no para-transit system in Texas that is adequately meeting the needs of the disabled community.
7. That disabled people will ride the mainline buses when they are put into service as long as there is an education and outreach program put in place.

### BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

ALL TRANSIT OPERATORS IN TEXAS MAKE A COMMITMENT IN WRITING FOR 100% FIXED ROUTE ACCESSIBILITY FOR DISABLED PERSONS, OLD AND YOUNG, THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF ONLY 100% ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES.

AND THAT ANY PARA-TRANSIT SYSTEM BE DESIGNED TO OPERATE IN THE SAME MANNER (COMPARABILITY) AS THE MAINLINE SYSTEM.



# We Will Ride

In the past 10 years we've seen a great movement of people from the 'locked back rooms' to the steps of the Capitol; from the wards of the 'State homes' to homes in every neighborhood. **The disabled are rising!** The disabled are your friends and relatives; the disabled will not go away. We've been shunned and shut away; forcibly sterilized; exploited in workshops (carefully exempted from minimum wage laws). We now, for the first time in history, are organizing to gain political power and our long-denied civil and human rights. The power we struggle for is to win simple justice—the right to work; to travel freely; to keep custody of our children; to risk, to fail, to succeed. The struggle is truly a human one: from returning war veterans, through parents' desire for their disabled children to have dreams of the future and the education to attain those dreams, for all people with disabilities to have access to the ordinary components of life. We are 14% of all Americans (1980 U.S. Census). Any person at any time can join the ranks of the disabled through disease, birth defect, accident, or age. Any one of any race, sex, age, or income level has the daily opportunity to become disabled. This civil rights movement affects all ALL of us.

This paper addresses one aspect of this struggle for human rights—access to public mass transportation for persons with disabilities, especially for wheelchair users. It is estimated that of Austin's 40,000 disabled that 4,000+ use wheelchairs; Denver estimates that there are 16,000 wheelchair users; Chicago 52,000. Every one of these citizens, every time she/he buys gasoline, or any item on which there is a sales tax or pays Federal income tax, is paying for public

mass transit systems. If the transit system is not equipped with wheelchair lifts, the disabled person is effectively denied the right to transportation which is offered to all other people within and out of the city.

Prior to 1980, disabled Americans were making progress toward gaining recognition of some civil rights. In 1977 Congress passed a law guaranteeing that any facility or program funded with a contribution of Federal dollars be accessible to persons with disabilities. For the first time a national acknowledgement of the disabled as citizens with rights was made. Most transit systems, colleges, employment programs, school buildings, street and highway projects, recreational programs, etc., receiving Federal dollars, are covered under this law—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

After the 1980 elections, '504' came under scrutiny as a burdensome 'attempt to meddle in local affairs'. Local option, not Federal law mandate, became the order of the day. The first to fall was the wheelchair-access requirement for the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and for transit system buses bought with Federal dollars. Now localities may decide how to serve the transit needs of disabled people. Most cities have opted for a separate paratransit system, instead of lift-equipped regular transit. Paratransit is an extremely inefficient 'door to door' system. Paratransit systems must prioritize usage; usually employment (60% of the disabled population is unemployed) or medical reasons. Rides many times must be scheduled days and/or weeks in advance and potential users may be on waiting lists literally for years. There is little or no evening or weekend service; little or no re-



Meeting in Austin with Capital Metro.

creational, shopping, social, or church trips. Paratransit patrons are PRISONERS of the transit system's priorities.

Clarification: most disabled persons are low-income; unemployed; exist on county or Federal subsidy, such as Social Security; can't afford cars or vans; electric wheelchairs, used by many severely disabled people, are heavy, non-collapsible and do not fit into cars or taxis. A lift-equipped van or bus is the only option. Paratransit equals limitation and dependency. . . Regular transit equals freedom of movement.

Leaving accommodation and accessibility in the hands of the locality is comparable to leaving the voting rights for Blacks and other minorities in the hands of State legislatures. History has proven that local option did not provide access. Neither has local option or choice provided disabled access, as there was almost total inaccessibility prior to Federal requirements. As damaging as RACISM is the attitude of PATERNALISM toward disabled people.

Expense is involved. An inaccessible society has literally millions of curbs, stairs in public buildings, buses without lifts, etc. This mandate for change must

come from the disabled community in every city. Example: Denver's transit system ordered 89 new lift-equipped buses in 1980, but when the lift requirements were rescinded the transit system cancelled the lift order (and paid a contract penalty fee for the change). Denver's disabled swore that the non lift-equipped buses would never roll and engaged in an organized campaign to change the transit system's policy, including civil disobedience. Public and political pressure forced the transit system to re-order buses WITH lifts and to issue a policy statement that all future bus purchases would provide wheelchair access, leading eventually to a total system of access. Currently, Chicago transit authority has ordered \$50 million (tax dollars) worth of new buses, all 363 inaccessible, Chicago's 52,000 wheelchair users who are unable to ride at present time will be unable to do so in the future, unless the Federal mandate is re-instated.

This is our position—that ALL new Federally funded purchases be accessible to disabled people, whether Post Offices, food programs, or vehicles for public transit systems. Over time, through attrition of old equipment, our society will become accessible to ALL Americans.



## San Antonio Rally

WITH SUPPORT from national, state and regional disabled, ADAPT gathered in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency, the streets of San Antonio and finally met with VIA officials. Although many promises have been made, all of the changes have not taken place. There are signs of improvement, but there is still a long way to go. Members of ADAPT have made their commitment of time and energy, when are you going to join them?

## ADAPT Goes to L.A.

Three hundred disabled people from throughout the United States converged on Los Angeles October 6-11 to protest the discriminating position the American Public Transit Association (APTA) has taken on accessible mainline public transportation.

This protest was organized by the American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT). ADAPT has been present at APTA's national meetings in Denver (1983), Washington, D.C. (1984) and now in Los Angeles (1985). The week long protest started with a "Civil Rights" march and rally on Sunday, October 6 at MacArthur Park.

This rally brought together ADAPT supporters from major cities in the United States. The urgency and emotionalism that surrounds the issue of accessible mainline transportation was

evident in the chants of the crowd. Signs expressing the philosophy of ADAPT were "Access is a Civil Right" - "WE WILL RIDE" - "Equality NOW."

Texans were well represented in L.A. with ADAPT of Texas supporters from Austin, Dallas and El Paso. A large banner was held identifying ADAPT of TEXAS and our resolve "WE WILL RIDE".

Hundreds of ADAPT supporters were outside the APTA meeting hotel throughout the week. APTA has resisted allowing an ADAPT resolution calling for mainline accessibility to be voted on by the APTA membership. The intent is for all transit operators to go on record "for or against" mainline accessibility. Once they go on record, local commuters can take "whatever action necessary" to bring about equal transportation options for disabled people.



# Around The State

## Austin

**VICTORY!** The next 100 buses rolling into our state capitol will be lift equipped thanks to the diligent work of our Austin ADAPT members. Prepared for the worst, 30 ADAPT members crowded into the Capital Metro Board Room and were ready "to take" the building, if the decision on the lifts was negative. Instead ADAPT members presented bottles of champagne to the Capital Metro Board to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In" (with kazoo accompaniment) when they voted to purchase 100 buses with EEC lifts on them.

This is the first major purchase since Austin went to a Metro System. They still do not have any on accessible mainline routes. Austin ADAPT will be there to remind the Capital Metro Board that "We Will Ride."

## El Paso

Accessible mainline transit may be a reality in El Paso if the policy of purchasing only buses with lifts, included in the proposal regional transit authority (XEP), passes when up for vote on November 5. The Interim Board of XEP came up with a Five Year Service Plan which includes mainline accessibility with expanded demand responsive service as

one of their goals. ADAPT members, Jim Parker, Tom Pugh, Micky Rodriguez and many more will be there voicing their views on mainline accessibility to the XEP Board. This board currently has a representative of the disability community sitting on it.

One mainline route (Rt. 53) will become fully accessible on October 7th and another shorter route may soon follow.

## San Antonio

San Antonio is coming alive! The call for accessible multi-modal transportation services are echoing from the Independent Living Center to the Steps of City Hall (oops, Ramps of City Hall). The Elderly and Handicapped Task Force, Health and Human Services Council, Target '90 - Goals for San Antonio has unanimously decided to support a resolution encouraging VIA Metropolitan Transit make a written long range policy commitment to provide 100% accessibility for disabled persons through a multi-modal approach; combining 100% fixed route access and continued operations of limited para-transit.

This is a big improvement since ADAPT visited San Antonio in May. Mayor Cisneros made many commitments, but to date none have

been kept. Keep his feet to the fire, amigos.

## Fort Worth

The West Texas Legal Services is on the verge of filing a law suit against the City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Transportation Authority, Department of Transportation and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

This is a civil action that states Fort Worth has discriminated against disabled persons by acts and omissions constituting a pattern of failure to carry out special efforts to provide or maintain the lift-equipped buses and para-transit services for the handicapped persons comparable or reasonable in comparison to transportation provided to the general public.

This stems from a complaint made 3 years ago by ADAPT member George Cooper. "WE WILL RIDE in FORT WORTH".

## Dallas

Dallas Area Rapid Transit has continuously lied to the disabled, but when they lied to all the voters who authorized DART to operate in Dallas and all the suburban cities, then the Handicapped were able to file a Federal Court injunction against DART's purchase of buses without lifts. DART promised, in writing, that 50% of off peak hour buses would have lifts on them.

Despite our cries of "SEGREGATION", we were told by DART business people and their investor politicians that vans providing the handicapped and elderly with curb to curb service would be best for us. There are plenty of empty, newly purchased inaccessible fixed route buses running around

Dallas and nearby suburban cities, but still there are no vans for the disabled in the suburbs. THIS is better for us???

CITRAN in Fort Worth had 29 lift equipped buses in operation—but arbitrarily decided that vans would be better for the handicapped and elderly and bolted down the lifts on the regular fixed route buses and are no longer serving disabled people. A class action suit has been filed in Federal Court by West Texas Legal Services.

The city of Arlington prioritizes the use of vans (as does Dallas and Fort Worth). In Arlington, a priority ranking system, with 30 grades, is used to determine whether your trip request will be honored or not. At present, if you don't rate 1 through 6 forget it! Arlington is not unusual; in most cities that rely solely on para-transit vans, there is a 1 to 2 week waiting period.

DART has decided that segregated vans are better for people like us. Most people think of discrimination and civil rights in terms of race. We are a neglected minority that transcends race, sex, age, mental and physical limitations. We are systematically being deprived of our civil rights of access to mainline public transportation by a group of paternalistic, greedy investors who control the transit systems and who care far more about their personal ego and money than they do about our civil rights. In unity, we can actively end this segregation and make Public Transportation truly Public!!!

**SEE YOU AT  
BACHMAN RECREATION CENTER  
Saturday, October 26  
in the auditorium  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**ADAPT  
2810 Pearl  
Austin, Texas 78705**

