

City of Port Townsend

2023 ADA Transition Plan



**for Pedestrian Facilities
within the Public Right-of-Way**

***Adopted by Port Townsend City Council
March 20, 2023
Resolution 23-022***

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in accessibility for the community of Port Townsend. This document is our city's ADA Transition Plan for Pedestrian Facilities within the Public Right-of-Way (ADA Transition Plan). It captures the current status of accessibility for our pedestrian facilities in the public rights of way. In the future, it will also include information about access for city facilities, parks, trail, and shared use paths. It is a living document and will continue to be updated over time.

Importance of plan

This Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan documents the City of Port Townsend's plans and policies to provide equal access to all using the public right of way and public facilities. It is consistent with the City's Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2016 by Ordinance 3155. This plan reviews key topics that influence the accessibility of our community. It looks at the City's process for adopting this plan and how the plan will be implemented. It also includes a review of federal and state laws that provide guidance for making communities accessible to all, and especially those with disabilities.

This ADA Transition Plan is especially important to our community because of the town's demographics. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the overall rate of people with disabilities in the US population is around 12.6 percent. The data shows that disability increases with age, for people 65 and over 35.4 percent have a disability. In Washington State, the numbers are similar at 12.7 percent. In Port Townsend, the average age is 59.5 years nearing the 65-year mark. Jefferson County, where Port Townsend is located has a disabilities rate of 21%. In short, hundreds of people in our community face disabilities and many of those use Port Townsend's pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way on a regular basis.

Process for plan adoption

Port Townsend City Council initially adopted this ADA Transition Plan through a public hearing process on March 20, 2023 under resolution 23-022. The plan and associated mapping was (and continues to be) available for public review during a two week period leading up to the public hearing. The City also welcomes ongoing feedback about this plan, and will make updates to it from time to time, which will also be approved through the same public hearing process.

Plan implementation

This ADA Transition Plan is being implemented after approval by City Council through the public hearing process. Implementation includes:

1. Update to the ADA Resolution 06-019 - DESIGNATING AN AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COORDINATOR AND ADOPTING AN AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE. The 2006 resolution has been replaced with Resolution 23-023, under the same title.
2. Ensuring that all new construction projects are reviewed through the lens of ADA requirements.
3. Ensuring that developers and contractors comply with ADA requirements.
4. Continued documentation of accessible routes through the GIS layer "ADA Accessible Sidewalk".
5. Continued review of opportunities for closing accessible network gaps.
6. Continued updating of the City's ADA Transition Plan content.
7. Removal of accessibility barriers through improvement projects to streets for the benefit of all users. The City will follow the guidelines provide by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) concerning implementation of ADA upgrades associated with maintenance and improvement projects.

8. After a prioritization of routes is completed through an update of the non-motorized plan, the City will prioritize funding to complete routes and remove barriers along key routes.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance

“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed July 26, 1990 as Public Law 101-336 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 *et seq.*) and became effective on January 26, 1992. The ADA is landmark federal legislation that opens up services and employment opportunities to the 43 million Americans with disabilities. The law was written to strike a balance between the reasonable accommodation of citizens' needs and the capacity of private and public entities to respond. It is not an affirmative action law but is intended to eliminate illegal discrimination and level the playing field for people with disabilities.”

-- Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) website.

The ADA is a civil rights law that requires all state and local governments to provide equal access to programs and services for all community members. The ADA is a landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in access to jobs, public accommodations, government services, and programs, public transportation, and telecommunications. The ADA treats access as a civil right.

As described by the ADA, the City strives to make our City’s public rights of way as accessible as possible. In order to accomplish this, the following guidance is looked to when a project is under design:

Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)

The US Access Board was founded in 1973 to ensure access to federally funded facilities. Over time, they have become a leading source of information on accessible design. In response to ADA laws, the US Access Board developed the PROWAG. PROWAG are guidelines for access to infrastructure located within the public right of way. As described by the Federal Highway Administration, the PROWAG is considered “recommended best practices”. The PROWAG guidelines are federal guidance and can be found here:

<https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/chapter-r3-technical-requirements/>

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Standards

WSDOT has standard specifications and plans, as well as a “Field Guide for Accessible Public Rights of Way” which reflect the PROWAG. The WSDOT Field Guide for Accessible Rights of Way can be found here:

https://wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/fulltext/m0000/ADA_Field_Guide.pdf

City of Port Townsend Standards

The City of Port Townsend Engineering Design Standards also reflect the guidance of the PROWAG. The Engineering Design Standards can be found here:

<https://cityofpt.us/publicworks/page/engineering-design-standards>

ADA Coordinator

The ADA Coordinator is a City employee designated through the Resolution 23-023. At the time of this writing, the ADA Coordinator is the City Clerk.

Roles and responsibilities

The ADA Coordinator is familiar with the ADA Grievance Procedure, which is described in Resolution 23-023 and is summarized below. The ADA Coordinator receives any grievances regarding ADA

concerns, and distributes those concerns to the appropriate City department for investigation. The ADA Coordinator then develops a response to the parties submitting the grievance. The ADA Coordinator also serves as the point of contact for the person submitting the grievance, and for distributing City responses to the complainant. Furthermore, the ADA Coordinator maintains a filing system for documenting and recording any ADA grievances.

Grievance procedure

Details of the grievance procedure are provided in Resolution 23-023. In summary the steps are:

1. A written complaint is received by the City about ADA related issue.
2. City and complainant meet and the issue is investigated by ADA Coordinator or designee.
3. A written decision is provided by the ADA Coordinator to complainant about how the City will address the concern.
4. If the City's decision is not satisfactory to complainant, then they may appeal to the City Manager. Th appeal to the City Manager shall be the final administrative appeal process provided by the City.

Accessibility components

In preparation for adopting an ADA Transition Plan, City staff evaluated hardscape pedestrian facilities in the public right of way for accessibility. The primary features that are reviewed when City staff are analyzing a route for accessibility are listed below. This list of features is a summary and not all inclusive. Criteria is referenced from the 2012 WSDOT "Field Guide for Accessible Public Rights of Way":

Width

- Clear width shall be 4 feet minimum, not including curb.
- If the width is less than 5 feet, a passing space of 5 feet by 5 feet minimum shall be provided every 200 feet.

Cross slopes

- Cross slopes shall be 2 percent (1/4 inch of rise for 1 foot of length) maximum on a sidewalk.
- At midblock crosswalks, slopes can match street grades.

Running slopes

- Running slopes shall not exceed the general grade of the adjacent roadway that has a grade greater than 5 percent.
- Where adjacent roadway slopes allow, running slopes on a pedestrian accessible route shall not exceed 5 percent, unless designed to be a ramp or all known, available, and reasonable methods (AKART) are applied for building an ADA compliant running slope.
- The running slope on a curb ramp shall not exceed 8.3 percent (1 inch of rise for 1 foot of length).
- At marked crosswalks, the connection between the curb ramp and the roadway must be contained within the width of the crosswalk markings.
- Landing (at top of perpendicular curb ramps or at bottom of parallel curb ramps) is 4 foot by 4 foot with 2 percent slope maximum in all directions.
- Flare slopes at ramps shall have a 10 percent slope maximum.
- Counter slope at the bottom of a curb ramp shall be 5 percent maximum.

Detectable warning surfaces

- Shall have a truncated dome pattern.
- Shall contrast with background (light-on-dark or dark-on-light).
- Depth shall be 24 inches minimum.
- Shall be the full length of the ramp connection to the street.

Driveways

- If a driveway intersects with a sidewalk, there must be an accessible path of travel provided over the driveway.

Tripping hazards

- Vertical discontinuities shall not exceed ¼ inch maximum.
- No lip on ramps.

Identification of accessible routes

This ADA Transition Plan focuses on documenting where there are already improvements in the public rights of way that are considered accessible by ADA guidelines. The means for documenting accessible routes within the city limits of Port Townsend, is through a layer in the City's GIS system. This layer has been reviewed and supported by local advocacy groups for people with disabilities: Disability Awareness Starts Here (DASH) and Jefferson County's Accessible Communities Advisory Committee (ACAC). This clear documentation of accessible routes will result in a raised awareness of where these routes stop and where there are opportunities to fill gaps in accessible routes in the future. This layer is called "ADA Accessible Sidewalk" and can be found on the City's website here:

<https://cityofpt.us/administration/page/americans-disabilities-act>

Rather than evaluating all of the sidewalks in town for deficiencies, based on experience, the City has made a reasonable assumption that all existing sidewalks and facilities that are not included in the above referenced map contain barriers such as deficient curb ramps, lack of detectable warnings, out of compliance cross slopes, improper landing sizes, visual contrast deficiencies, and vertical deflections outside of tolerances. This assumption has proven to be accurate as rarely does an existing facility meet standards. The approximate cost associated with upgrading all of the existing facilities assumed to be out of compliance is \$20.4 million. This estimate is based on the cost to upgrade curb ramps consistent with WSDOT guidelines and the City grid system with an average block spacing of 260 lineal feet. The cost to upgrade ramps averages \$15,000 per ramp including engineering or equivalent to \$30,000 per block. Thus, the cost to upgrade existing infrastructure to be compliant is estimated at \$115 per lineal foot of sidewalk that is out of compliance.

Transition to an ADA Accessible Port Townsend

The City's goal is to provide an extensive network of accessible routes for all users of the public rights of way. Extending accessible routes, or filling in gaps, can be completed by the City through several strategies:

Capital improvement projects

All capital improvement projects (funded by grants), when in the design phase, are reviewed for accessibility by citizen groups and City staff. Accessible features are incorporated where feasible.

Developer role in building infrastructure

Developer building permits include requirements to install accessible infrastructure, such as sidewalks and curb ramps) in the public right of way adjacent to the project site. Through conditions of the permit, City Standards are enforced. The City Standards reflect the ADA guidance found in the PROWAG and WSDOT “Field Guide for Accessible Public Rights of Way”.

Prioritize barrier removal projects

From time to time, City funding sources, like Banked Capacity, become available and will be used to install smaller scale projects that ensure accessibility along preferred pedestrian routes.

Other sources of funding

The Comprehensive Street Program under development (as of writing in 2023) seeks to provide options for decisions makers to fund infrastructure deficiencies associated with the City’s transportation network. Possible funding options being considered include the following:

- Transportation Benefit District
- Property tax levy lid lift
- Increase in grants by increasing investments in the application process
- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Funds for tourism related improvements
- Allocation of Real Estate Excise Tax to streets
- Developer impact fees for sidewalks
- Transportation Impact Fees

The community has expressed a desire to upgrade the city’s aging and decayed street conditions. Funding for these upgrades to the streets also comes with the necessity to upgrade pedestrian facilities to become ADA compliant. Additionally, there is specific set aside funding for trip hazard removal and sidewalk gap infill projects.

Community Involvement - Local organizations

The community of Port Townsend is fortunate to have a citizen group called Disability Awareness Starts Here (DASH). DASH does reviews of project plans for the City, highlighting areas of concern regarding accessibility. DASH members also serve on stakeholder groups to advise on the design of capital improvement projects.

Schedules

The intent is for the City of Port Townsend’s ADA Transition Plan to be a living document. The initial Plan was adopted by City Council on March 20, 2023. Future components of the plan regarding public facilities and parks will be added to the plan during the years 2024-2026.

Budget

The City is committed to allotting match funding for grants equal to 15% of the project costs based on historical grant history. The total resulting investment in ADA upgrades averages at least \$200,000 per year subject to grant funding and budgets. Typically, the City has received \$1 million of grant funding per year on average over the last 20 years. As outlined above, the City is seeking additional funding for transportation in which additional investments in barrier removal may be made.

Monitoring Progress

Engineering staff will meet annually to review the “ADA Accessible Sidewalk” layer, and consider which projects to prioritize as a barrier removal project. A meeting between the engineering staff and DASH will also occur annually to review the “ADA Accessible Sidewalk” layer and discuss prioritization of projects.

Next Steps

The City of Port Townsend ADA Transition Plan is a living document. While this initial iteration of the plan focuses on hardscape pedestrian facilities in the public right of way, there are other areas that will also be reviewed for accessibility in the future.

Parks and Facilities

In particular, the next areas to be looked at are City facilities and City parks, including the City’s trail and shared use path system. The City of Port Townsend desires to create accessibility in all parks, recreational areas, and facilities so everyone has the opportunity to live, work and play in Port Townsend. This next iteration of the ADA Transition Plan will occur in 2024-2026.

In order to review accessibility of parks and facilities, a self-evaluation will be completed by City staff in collaboration with DASH and ACAC. With ongoing self-evaluation, improved accessibility can follow. Examples of City actions for improving accessibility of City facilities, parks and trails include:

- Implement modifications according to a phased approach to accommodate all users.
- Develop maintenance staff training and checklists to improve accessibility during routine maintenance. Items such as accessible routes, gaps, changes in level, door closing force and common obstructions can be part of ongoing routine maintenance work.
- Create an inter-departmental staff team, with representatives from each department to meet annually and coordinate on ADA and accessibility issues.
- Update website with more details regarding ADA access at each park. This would include parking and restroom accessibility along with what is accessible and lengths of accessible trails, so park patrons can make informed decisions before traveling to the park.
- Continue to improve accessibility at special events by creating maps with ADA features (parking, accessible routes) and ensuring access to various programs that occur during the event.
- Work towards creating one overall transition plan for the City with parks and trails and city facilities prioritized in an overall list.
- Ensure all contracts have language regarding modifications that contractors will make to provide equal access to services, programs and activities.
- Improve wayfinding signage so people with disabilities can more easily and conveniently navigate the park system.
- If portable toilets are provided at a park site, make sure at least one is accessible.

Update the Non-Motorized Plan

The City of Port Townsend has a Non-Motorized Plan which was first published in 1999, one of the first of its kind. This document has subsequently gone through several iterations where parts of been updated. Almost twenty-five years later, the plan is ready for a complete overhaul. The intent is that the new Non-Motorized Plan will support and compliment the work associated with the ADA Transition Plan. This update will include prioritization of key routes to focus ADA investments creating connections to locations such as services, shopping areas, public buildings, parks, and other points of

interest in Port Townsend. This process will rely on the help of the community to identify these key connector routes.

Conclusion

Improving accessibility of our community will be a continued effort in the years ahead. The intent is to ensure all citizens, including those with disabilities, have equal access via our public rights of way to the services offered at City facilities and as well as opportunities to enjoy city parks. This plan builds upon a history of the City and its citizens valuing non-motorized transportation. Applying the best science and technology looking forward and investing in routes that serve the most people are fundamental values of the community. City staff would like to express appreciation for the years of work performed by DASH and community members in promoting accessibility in Port Townsend.