

ADA Transition Plan City of Birmingham

Background

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people who have disabilities.
- Title II of the Act establishes that designing and constructing facilities for public use that are not accessible constitutes discrimination.
- The Act applies to all facilities, including both facilities built before and after 1990.
- Birmingham is required to assess current facilities relative to the accessibility requirements of the ADA.
- The ADA Transition Plan is meant to identify physical obstacles that limit the accessibility of facilities to individuals with disabilities; describe the methods to be used to make the facilities accessible; provide a schedule for making the access modifications; and identify the public officials responsible for implementation.
- Steps to compliance include designating an ADA Coordinator; providing notice to the public about ADA requirements; establishing a grievance procedure; developing internal design standards and specifications; assigning personnel for the development of a Transition Plan; approving a schedule and budget and; monitoring progress on implementation of the Transition Plan

Source: ADA Transition Plans: A Guide to Best Management Practices, NCHRP Project number 20-7 (232), May 2009.

Existing Conditions



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Sidewalks

- There is a relatively comprehensive and connected sidewalk network throughout Birmingham.
- Many of the sidewalks have buffers and there are curb ramps and striped crosswalks throughout town.
- Many of the existing sidewalks in the city are four feet wide, which is narrow from an accessibility standpoint.
- Obstructions and other pinch points may block the pedestrian travelway, especially at corners.
- In certain locations, there is competition for sidewalk space.
- There are challenging slope issues in some locations.
- Heaving brick sidewalks can present a tripping hazard.

Roads and Intersections

- There are intersections lacking curb ramps and some existing curb ramps may not be ADA compliant.
- Pedestrian crossing times may need to be extended in some locations.
- Angled crosswalks are at times not aligned with existing curb ramps, creating a potential tripping hazard.
- Older curb ramp designs have a “lip” between the ramp and the road, which could be difficult to navigate in a wheelchair or present a tripping hazard.

Policy

- As signal timings get changed, it is the City’s policy to use the standards for feet per second included in the latest Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The timings are currently only being modified as part of other projects.
- Generally sidewalks are required to be a minimum of five feet wide, although they are required to be wider in the Triangle District and along Woodward Avenue.
- Whenever a curb ramp is replaced, a fully ADA compliant ramp is installed.
- All future projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will include fully ADA compliant designs and features.
- Private developers generally pay for curb ramps on their property, and the City helps with connecting curb ramps and other off-site infrastructure.
- Other physical design features in the right-of-way are addressed through streetscape agreements as part of the site development and building permit process.
- In order to obtain a sidewalk permit, developers must demonstrate that they are meeting the City and State’s design standards.

Existing Programs and Investments to Implement Physical Improvements

- The City’s ongoing sidewalk program covers 1/7 of the city and ½ of the downtown area every year. During this time, trip hazards are identified and addressed.
- The police department is adding pedestrian countdown signals on an ongoing basis. They are also responsible for traffic signal maintenance, timing, and general painting projects. The police coordinate with the Engineering Department on these improvements.
- Curb ramps are addressed as part of ongoing road projects; however, there is not a standalone curb ramp retrofit program.

Staffing, Oversight, Training and Outreach

- There are currently no standing ADA access and/or pedestrian and bike committees at the City.
- At the staff level, no one is specifically tasked with being responsible for ADA design and compliance.
- A Citizen Request Line is available and listed on the City’s website. Most citizen complaints are received through calls to this phone number.
- The bulk of complaints received have to do with trip hazards. Around ten complaints are received each year and are generally addressed on a rolling basis. The hazard is either fixed permanently, or a temporary fix is installed and the full repair is included on the project list the following year.
- City staff attends trainings as needed. All of the field inspectors were trained in 2011 and all new inspectors receive training.

Data Collection Currently Underway

- Ramp Type (Per MDOT Detail R-28-G)
- Ramp Direction
- Ramp Slope
- Ramp Length
- Ramp Material
- Detectable Warning (Yes or No)
- Detectable Warning Type (Cast Iron Plates, Ceramic Tiles, etc.)
- Cross Slope
- Landing Pad Max Slope
- Curb Drop

Next Steps

- Collect key ADA-related data.
- Develop a proactive implementation and prioritization program to address needs identified through the data collection process.
- Continue to incorporate ADA improvements as part of ongoing and upcoming projects.
- Implement ADA-related programmatic, staffing, training, and outreach improvements.
- Identify future data collection needs and implement an ongoing data collection program.

Sample Self-Evaluation Checklist

SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST	
ISSUE	POSSIBLE BARRIERS
Sidewalk and Pathway Clear Width	Narrow, Below Guidelines
Sidewalk and Pathway Cross Slope	Sleepness, Irregularity, Variability, Warping
Landings Along Sidewalks and Pathways	Less Than 4 feet by 4 feet
Sidewalk and Pathway Grade	Sleepness, Angle Points
Materials and Finishes	Deterioration of Surfaces, Deterioration of Markings, Appropriateness of material (ex. Cobblestones)
Gratings	Grating Type, Grate Opening Orientation
Discontinuities	Missing Sections, Gaps, Drops, Steps
Detectable Warning System	Missing, Inappropriate Materials, Inadequate Size, Wrong Location
Obstructions	Signs, Mail Boxes, Fire Hydrants, Benches, Telephones, Traffic Signal Poles, Traffic Signal Controller Boxes, Newspaper Boxes, Drainage Structures, Tree Grates, Pole Mounted Objects, Standing Water, Snow or Ice
Traffic Signal Systems	Lack of Provision for the Visually Impaired such as APS, Inadequate Time Allowed, Inoperable Buttons, Inaccessible Buttons
Curb Ramp	Missing, Doesn't Fall within Marked Crosswalk, Doesn't Conform to Guidelines
Curb Ramp Flares	Missing Where Required, Too Steep

Source: ADA Transition Plans: A Guide to Best Management Practices, NCHRP Project number 20-7 (232), May 2009.