

# ADA TRANSITION PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT



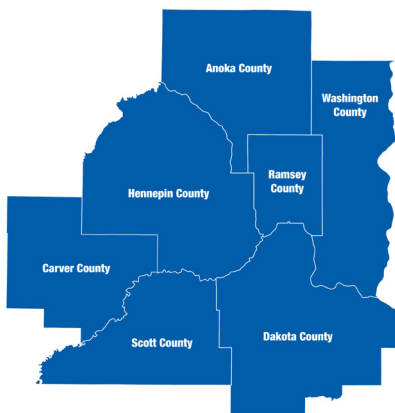
Updated April 2023

The Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council operates the regional bus and rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans and helps fund regional parks, and administers federal funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The 17-member Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

On request, this publication will be made available in alternative formats to people with disabilities. Call Metropolitan Council information at 651-602-1140 or TTY 651-291-0904.

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## Introduction

### Transition plan need and purpose

The [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability. It was enacted on July 26, 1990, and was amended in 2008 with the ADA Amendments Act. The ADA consists of five titles outlining protections in the following areas:

1. Employment
2. State and local government services
3. Public accommodations
4. Telecommunications
5. Miscellaneous provisions

Title II of ADA pertains to the programs, activities, and services provided by public entities. The Metropolitan Council must comply with this section of the act, as it specifically applies to public service agencies. Title II of ADA states that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.” ([42 USC Sec. 12132](#); [28 CFR Sec. 35.130](#))

As required by Title II of ADA ([28 CFR Part 35 Sec. 35.105](#) and [Sec. 35.150](#)), the Met Council has conducted a self-evaluation of its services, programs, activities, and facilities on public property and within public rights-of-way; and the Met Council has developed this transition plan detailing the methods to be used to ensure compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

### ADA and its relationship to other laws

Title II of ADA is companion legislation to two previous federal statutes and regulations: The [Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#) and [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 is a federal law that requires facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funds to be accessible. The Architectural Barriers Act marks one of the first efforts to ensure access to the built environment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department or agency.

Title II of ADA extended this coverage to all state and local government entities, regardless of whether they receive federal funding.

### Agency requirements

Under Title II, the Met Council must meet these general requirements ([28 CFR Sec. 35](#)):

- Must operate their programs so that, when viewed in their entirety, the programs are accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities.
- May not refuse to allow a person with a disability to participate in a service, program, or activity simply because the person has a disability.

- Must make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures that deny equal access to individuals with disabilities unless a fundamental alteration in the program would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.
- May not provide services or benefits to individuals with disabilities through programs that are separate or different unless the separate or different measures are necessary to ensure that benefits and services are equally effective.
- Must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.
- Must designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate ADA compliance. This person is typically referred to as the ADA coordinator. The public entity must provide the ADA coordinator's name, office address, and telephone number to all interested individuals.
- Must provide notice of ADA requirements. All public entities, regardless of size, must provide information about the rights and protections of Title II to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, employees, and other interested persons. The notice must include the identification of the employee serving as the ADA coordinator and must provide this information on an ongoing basis.
- Must establish a grievance procedure. Public entities must adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. This requirement provides for a timely resolution of all problems or conflicts related to ADA compliance before they escalate to litigation and/or the federal complaint process.

## **Minnesota State Building Code, Chapter 1341**

The Minnesota State Building Code regarding accessibility was implemented in November 1975 and updated in January 1996, May 1999, July 2007, and most recently, in January 2015. Any building remodeled, constructed, or having a change of occupancy after that date, must comply with Minnesota State Building Code, Chapter 1341 design guidelines. Currently, the building code is made up of the Chapter 11 of the International Building Code 2012, ICC/ANSI A117.1- 2009 and Minnesota amendments to those documents. The Minnesota State Building Code, Chapter 1341 is enforced by local or state building officials for projects that require a permit.

### **Designation of responsibility**

The Met Council has designated the following person to serve as ADA Title II coordinator to oversee the Met Council's policies and procedures:

#### **Cyrenthia Jordan**

ADA Title II Coordinator, Director, Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity

The ADA Title II coordinator has designated the following person to serve as ADA administrator to monitor the Met Council's progress and manage review and updates of this document:

#### **Guthrie Byard**

ADA and Title VI Administrator, Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity

## Self-evaluation and approach

### Overview

Under Title II of the ADA, public entities are required to perform a self-evaluation of their current services, policies, and practices with regard to accessibility to the public. The goal of the self-evaluation is to verify that, in managing its programs and facilities, the agency is providing accessibility and not adversely affecting the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

The intent of the ADA self-evaluation is to review the agency's public programs and services, including all public and support facilities, in order to identify any obstacles or barriers to accessibility that need to be addressed. The general categories of items to be evaluated include:

### Programs and services

Identify all programs, activities, and services and their locations.

### Building facilities

These include administrative offices, bus garages, project offices, maintenance facilities, wastewater treatment plant public tour routes, and access to, approach, entry, and exiting of facility employee access areas.

### Policies and procedures

An agency's policies and procedures should be reviewed to determine whether they ensure an equal opportunity for people with disabilities to participate and benefit.

### Public input

Public entities are required to provide an opportunity for interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the self-evaluation process by submitting comments. A public entity that employs 50 or more persons is required, for at least three years following the completion of the self-evaluation, to maintain on file and make available for public inspection a list of the interested persons consulted, a description of areas examined and any problems identified, and a description of any modifications made.

## Process

In 2019, the Met Council, along with JQP, Inc., completed a self-evaluation of its services, programs, activities, and public and support facilities. An important component of the self-evaluation process is the identification of obstacles or barriers to accessibility and the corresponding modifications that will be needed to remedy these items. The following sections provide a summary of ADA and accessibility improvements made since the plan was implemented in March 2020, before detailing Met Council plans to address self-evaluation findings and recommendations in 2021.

The Met Council intends for its ADA Transition Plan to be a living document that is updated regularly to reflect progress towards addressing ADA compliance issues. This plan will be updated regularly with realistic and more immediate timelines for addressing barriers programs, services, and facilities.

## Policies and procedures

The Met Council has redesigned its process for creating, reviewing, and revising all Met Council policies and procedures. The new process greatly improves the viability and understanding of Met Council efforts using plain language and digital accessibility standards. This revised process also

ensures that proper vetting of new policies and procedures is conducted while not placing undue burden on the minor revisions or removal of outdated or irrelevant policies or procedures.

A current goal for the Met Council is to analyze current policies and procedures for gaps. To accomplish this, the Met Council has created a review team with representatives from each division and functional area. This review team will be charged with two major tasks:

1. Reviewing all policy procedures for consistency, clarity and compliance including ADA compliance and accessibility standards.
2. Help the Met Council prioritize and direct staff to review and update old policy and create new policy.

ADA compliance and accessibility has already been identified as a top area for review. Future updates to this transition plan will include updates on the Met Council's review of policies and procedures.

## **Programs and services**

Title II of ADA includes the following requirements regarding programs and services, and communications:

### **General programs and services**

A public entity shall take appropriate steps to ensure that communications in its programs and services with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

A public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity conducted by a public entity.

In determining what type of auxiliary aid and service is necessary, a public entity shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individual with disabilities.

### **Information and signage**

A public entity shall ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities.

A public entity shall provide signage at all inaccessible entrances to each of its facilities, directing users to an accessible entrance or to a location at which they can obtain information about accessible facilities. The international symbol for accessibility shall be used at each accessible entrance of a facility.

### **Website and digital accessibility initiatives**

The Met Council initiated a multi-year contract with two vendors to improve Met Council digital accessibility practices. The effort was help the agency to conform with [Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act](#) and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 AA](#).

Since late 2019, the contract has yielded several projects across the Met Council. This includes:

- An organizational assessment of digital practices, including staff training, website accessibility, social media practices, procurement initiatives, and meeting platforms.



- A user and accessibility audit of the Metro Transit website.
- A user and accessibility audit of the Metro Mobility online booking service.
- Several consultations across Met Council websites to improve both the accessibility and usability of Met Council information and services.

## Environmental Services public tours

The Met Council conducts several tours each year at six of its nine wastewater treatment plants: Seneca, Metropolitan, Empire, East Bethel, Eagles Point, and Blue Lake. Upon request by local officials or lawmakers, tours are provided at the other three plants. Below is the language shared on the [public tours webpage](#) for registering for a tour.



The Environmental Services division of the Met Council operates the regional wastewater collection and treatment system that serves 111 communities in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area. Every day, the nine regional treatment plants treat approximately 250 million gallons of wastewater to protect the public's health and environment.

Several of our treatment plants offer a limited number of tours each month to show the public how the water they use from nature is cleaned and safely returned to the environment.

Visitors see the various ways pollutants are removed from wastewater, which replicate nature's own processes, but in a much-condensed time frame. They also may see how wastewater solids are processed so that they can be beneficially re-used, and how energy is recovered along the way to power Met Council regional treatment plants.

## General information

- Tours are free.
- Tours are available during business hours, Monday to Friday.
- Reservations must be made at least four to five weeks in advance.
- Tours are approximately 90-120 minutes long, beginning with an orientation video and ending with a question-and-answer session.
- The age minimum for tour participants is seventh grade.
- The minimum group size is 10 people, maximum is 30.
- There should be one teacher/chaperone per every 10 students.
- Tour guides are the employees who operate and manage the plants. They provide a thorough, step-by-step explanation of wastewater treatment.

## Scheduling a tour

Email Britni Kesselring at [Britni.Kesselring@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Britni.Kesselring@metc.state.mn.us) with the following information:

- Contact name and phone number
- Company or organization name and phone number
- Mailing and email addresses
- Requested date, time, and treatment plant
- Number of visitors and teachers/chaperones

If you require accommodations for mobility or other disabilities, please include this in your email.

If we're able to accommodate your tour request, you'll receive a confirmation letter, our Plant Tour Safety and Security Rules, and any additional information.

## Self-evaluation findings and planned improvements

### ADA self-evaluation survey

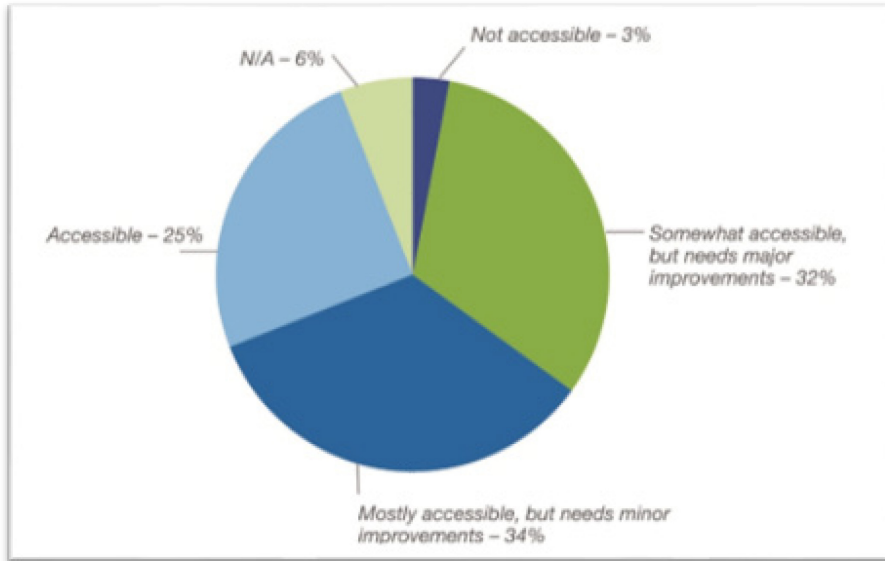
The Met Council created and conducted a detailed evaluation of the accessibility of its programs and services. One survey focused on the broader community, including customers and stakeholders, and the other surveyed Met Council staff. Both surveys were open from July until early September 2019.

Below are summary findings from the community survey. The results will inform improvements made to programs and services in 2020 and beyond. A copy of the questions and additional findings can be provided by contacting the Met Council's ADA and Title VI Administrator.

### Community survey results

Community members filling out the survey are primarily using public transit services, including Metro Mobility service for people who have disabilities. About 35% of respondents use regional parks and trails and 5% live in public housing.

Survey respondents indicated that overall, Met Council programs and services are accessible, mostly accessible, or somewhat accessible.



When asked if they couldn't use services because of accessibility issues, only a handful of respondents noted specific problems, including:

- Lack of good, accessible information about services
- Distance from public transportation (making it infeasible to use)
- Crowded public transportation, with limited access to accessible seats and features
- Some transit facilities feel unsafe and are poorly maintained

The survey also asked a series of questions about where to prioritize accessibility improvements. Responses align with the gaps identified above including the need for better access to information about services,, employment opportunities, and Met Council decision-making, and recommendations for improvements to transit and regional parks.

### Highest priorities

- Metro Transit buses and bus stops
- Metro Mobility
- Websites
- Access at regional parks, including play areas, restrooms, and trails

### Other priorities

- Marketing and communications
- Customer service
- Physical access to buildings, facilities, and rail platforms
- Employment and internships
- Met Council-led community meetings and events
- Emergency procedures and action plans



Survey respondents also noted the need to make improvements in public housing. Metro HRA owns and operates a small percentage of public housing units in the region, and its primary work is providing Section 8 housing vouchers for obtaining affordable housing throughout the region.

### Met Council staff survey results

A similar survey was also administered to Met Council staff, assessing how they would rate the Met Council’s accessibility, as well as whether they understand how to make services accessible and how to help community members if they need accommodations.

As with community survey respondents, a similar proportion of staff indicated that overall, Met Council programs and services are accessible, mostly accessible, or somewhat accessible.

### Top ten areas for improvements

1. Metro Transit buses and bus stops
2. Public amenities in Met Council facilities, including doors, restrooms, and service counters
3. Websites
4. Employee meetings and events
5. Marketing and communications materials
6. Employment/internships
7. Emergency procedures and action plans
8. Access at regional parks, including play areas, restrooms, and trails
9. Met Council-led community meetings and events
10. Access to public housing

This plan identifies the ways the Met Council will respond to these results through staff training and improvements to facilities and services.

## Programs and services improvement schedule

### 2023 Met Council ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Internship

- The Met Council will continue its Ability Internship, which supports interns with disabilities across numerous program and service areas.

#### Staff training

- All applicable new hires are still required to complete the Accessible Word Document Training from the State of Minnesota IT Services.
- The Met Council has expanded and will provide training on the resources available on its internal communication site called the Accessibility Hub.

#### Procedures

- Met Council staff will finalize several accessibility-related procedures, including video accessibility and procurement language.

#### Office buildings

##### *Fred T. Heywood and Metro Transit Police Department facility*

- The plaza will be renovated to address surface thresholds and slopes leading to the parking lot. The bidding for this project is planned for summer/fall 2023, with construction starting in 2024.
- Blue Lot (west) will be resurfaced and restriped, and signage will be updated to meet compliance requirements. Construction for this project is planned for spring/summer 2023

#### Metro Transit facilities

The following facilities were reviewed as part of the ADA self-evaluation.

#### Transit centers and park-and-rides

- 63rd Ave and Bottineau Blvd
- 65th Ave and Brooklyn Blvd
- Brooklyn Center Transit Center
- Cedar Grove Transit Station
- Chicago Lake Transit Center
- Church of Nazarene
- Church of St. William
- County Road 73 and I-394 North
- County Road 73 and I-394 South
- Como and Eustis
- Cottage Grove
- Excelsior City Hall
- Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church
- Foley Boulevard
- Forest Lake Transit Center
- Ft Snelling Station North
- Ft Snelling Station South
- Gateway Transit Center

- General Mills Blvd and I-394
- Grace Church
- Guardian Angels Catholic Church
- Hadley Ave and Upper 17th Street
- Hwy 7 and Texas Ave
- Hwy 36 and Rice Street
- Hwy 61 and Lower Afton Road
- Hwy 100 and Duluth
- Hwy 252 and 66th Ave
- Hwy 610 and Noble
- I-35 and Kenrick Ave
- I-35E and County Road 14
- I-35E and County Road E
- I-35W and 95th Ave
- I-35W and County Road C
- I-35W and County Road H
- Lakeville Cedar Park and Ride
- Leamington Transit Center
- Little Canada Municipal Lot
- Louisiana Ave Transit Center
- Maple Plain
- Maplewood Mall Transit Center
- Minnetonka Blvd and Baker Road
- Minnetonka Blvd and Steele Street
- Mound Transit Center
- Navarre Center
- Newport Transit Station
- Normandale Village
- Northtown Transit Center
- Park Place and I-394
- Paul Parkway
- Plymouth Road Park and Ride
- Ramp A/7th Street Transit Center
- Ramp B/5th Street Transit Center
- Robbinsdale Transit Center
- Rosedale Transit Center
- Roseville Skating Center
- Richardson Park
- Running Aces
- Salem Covenant Church
- Shoreview Community Center
- Smith Ave Transit Center
- South Bloomington Transit Center
- Southdale Transit Center
- St. Croix Valley Recreation Center
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church
- Starlite Transit Center
- Sun Ray Transit Center

- Union Depot Transit Center
- Uptown Transit Center
- Wayzata Blvd and Barry Ave
- West River Rd and 117th Ave
- West St. Paul Sports Complex
- Woodbury Theater

### **Rail stations**

- 28th Avenue Station
- 38th Street Station (Hiawatha Ave)
- 46th Street Station (Hiawatha Ave)
- 50th Street Minnehaha Park Station
- Airport Terminal 1 Lindbergh Station
- Airport Terminal 2 Humphrey Station
- American Blvd 34th Ave Station
- Anoka Station
- Big Lake Station
- Bloomington Central Station
- Cedar - Riverside Station
- Coon Rapids - Riverdale Station
- Elk River Station
- Fort Snelling Station
- Franklin Avenue Station
- Fridley Station
- Government Plaza Station
- Lake Street Midtown Station
- Mall of America Station
- Nicollet Mall Station
- Ramsey Station
- Target Field Station
- US Bank Stadium Station
- VA Medical Center Station
- Warehouse District/Hennepin Avenue Station

### **Bus rapid transit**

- 140th Street Station
- 147th Street Station
- Apple Valley Transit Station
- I-35W and 46th St Station (future METRO Orange Line bus rapid transit)

### **Support facilities**

- 24th Street Warehouse – MOW Building/Storage
- Blue Line Extension Project Office
- East Metro Garage
- Heywood Garage
- Heywood Lower Parking Lot
- Heywood Office

- Maintenance Way
- Martin J Ruter Garage
- Minneapolis Transit Store
- Nicollet Garage
- NorthStar Big Lake
- Operations Support Center
- Overhaul Base
- Rail Operations and Maintenance Facility
- Saint Paul Operations and Maintenance Facility
- Saint Paul Transit Store
- South Garage
- Southwest Project Office
- Transfer Road Facility
- Transit Control Center

## **Environmental Services facilities**

### **Wastewater treatment plants**

- Blue Lake Plant, Shakopee
- Eagles Point Plant, Cottage Grove
- East Bethel Plant, East Bethel
- Empire Plant, Farmington
- Hastings Plant, Hastings
- Metropolitan Plant, Saint Paul
- Rogers Plant, Rogers
- Seneca Plant, Eagan
- St. Croix Valley Plant, Oak Park Heights

### **Office building**

- Regional Maintenance Facility, Eagan

### **Met Council staff offices**

- Robert Street offices, Saint Paul
- Fred T. Heywood office campus, Minneapolis

## **Survey methodology**

JQP, Inc., used a four-level priority rating system when conducting their work. This helped the Met Council prioritize the findings. Below are the criteria for each priority level.

### **Priority 1: Recommendations are issues for upgrade of the highest priority.**

- A barrier to participate in a program, activity, or service
- An element or location that receives high public use
- An area that needs to be accessible without the luxury of time to prepare to accommodate an individual request
- Safety concerns
- A programmatic (non-architectural) fix
- Easy to modify



- Inexpensive

**Priority 2: Recommendations continue to provide greater levels of accessibility.**

- A barrier to a significant number of individuals with disabilities
- A location that receives high public use
- A unique area or element, not typically duplicated
- An area where there is a short period of time to plan for accommodating the request of an individual
- Easy to modify
- Inexpensive

**Priority 3: Issues are recommendations to provide convenience of accessibility, such as additional locations of drinking fountains, toilet rooms, entrances, etc.**

- A duplicated element or program
- A barrier to fewer individuals with disabilities
- A barrier that does not allow for full or independent participation in a program by an individual with a disability
- An area where there is a greater amount of time to prepare for the arrival of an individual with a disability
- Substantial deviation from the standard (e.g., 21-inch centerline for a toilet versus 16 inches to 18 inches)

**Priority 4: Recommendations are design elements that would be required for new construction but in existing buildings do not critically affect the impact on program accessibility. These are recommended to be improved when the space undergoes repair, replacement, or remodeling.**

- A duplicated element or program
- An area used primarily by employees (e.g., circulation corridors, employee-only toilet rooms)
- Employee-only work areas
- Maintenance or replacement
- Not technically feasible to modify existing facilities

**Facility findings**

The self-evaluation involved survey site reviews at 144 Met Council facilities, as well as more than 200 facility-connected bus stops. Each facility received a report listing all barriers based on a four-level priority rating scale. More than 3,000 barriers were identified with priority level three being the most common, and 2,644 being within Metro Transit facilities.

Below are three tables depicting the number of priority issues by level and facility type, as well as a few examples of findings at Met Council facilities.

Facilities	Priority 0	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Total
Bus rapid transit Stations	0	5	33	31	8	77
Park-and-ride	0	28	206	409	162	805

Transit centers	0	5	57	133	74	269
Rail stations	0	5	137	292	136	570
Support facilities	44	9	134	434	302	923
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>2,644</b>

<b>Regional Administration facilities</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Priority 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Robert Street offices	0	24	62	67	153
Jackson Street offices	3	6	23	4	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>189</b>

<b>Environmental Services facilities</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Priority 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Metro 94 offices	0	15	28	10	53
Regional Maintenance Facility	0	9	13	34	56
Blue Lake WWTP	2	6	15	5	28
Metro WWTP	2	39	30	23	94
Eagles Point WWTP	1	8	16	5	30
East Bethel WWTP	1	0	13	10	24
Hastings WWTP	0	6	11	5	22
Empire WWTP	2	24	45	6	77
St. Croix Valley WWTP	0	10	4	16	30
Seneca WWTP	2	20	20	12	54
Rogers WWTP	0	1	10	4	15

<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>483</b>
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The top photo shows a cross slope of 8.1% (above the 1:48 threshold required by American National Standards Institute 403.3). This is an example of a complicated fix since the bus shelter is connected to heat and light and cannot be easily relocated.



The top photo is an example of a simple fix that requires Metro Transit public facilities staff to relocate the receptacle to make the power-assisted door functional.

## Metro Transit

### 2023 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvement schedule

#### Methodology for Metro Transit improvements

Metro Transit will address accessibility barriers through ongoing capital projects. In addition, Metro Transit will dedicate staff to a review of the most severe barriers identified (levels one and two) to identify future capital project needs or other actions to remove barriers.

Of the original 2,644 barriers identified, as of spring 2023, there are 45 level one priorities, 543 level two priorities, 1,262 level three priorities, and 669 level four priorities remaining.

Planned approach:

- A planned upcoming capital project
- A new project that needs to be scoped
- A determination that the correction has been resolved
- A recommendation to defer the correction until a future capital project or some other opportunity occurs

#### ADA bus-stop data project

- Design and implement a unified shelter database highlighting bus stop accessibility issues across the service area.
- Create a short video highlighting agency bus stop accessibility checklist.
- Non Public Rights-of-Way Accessible Bus Stop Design Guide will be updated with additional accessibility considerations by end of the year.

#### Better Bus Stops

The 2023 planned capital improvements include shelters, shelter lighting or heat, boarding areas, and pedestrian access at bus stops. When adding or replacing a shelter, Metro Transit evaluates the site and makes any necessary updates for accessibility, such as removing obstacles, creating clear spaces, replacing concrete, or constructing boarding areas.

The 2023 plan is summarized below. Plans may change depending on final design and the construction schedule.

- Install up to 20 new shelters, including accessibility improvements.
- Replace up to 20 existing shelters, including accessibility improvements.
- Construct up to 30 accessible boarding pads at bus stops without shelters.

#### Better Bus Routes

Metro Transit's Service Development department is investigating spacing between stops, shelter upgrades, bus stop accessibility, and potential alignment and schedule changes to simplify the route. A simplified route not only improves speed and reliability, but also makes navigation easier for customers. [Better Bus Routes proposed improvements.](#)

**Route 22:** Started in 2022, completed spring 2023

**Route 17:** Start fall 2023

## **Route 4: Start fall 2023**

### **Public facilities**

#### **Rosedale Transit Center**

(60% design stage done as of spring 2023)

- All items identified in the ADA self-evaluation, except replacement of ticket vending machine
- Accessible route – bevel small changes in level
- Ensure bus alighting area is to the north of the railings leading to the bus shelter to meet 8-foot-deep alighting area; they're currently only 53 inches from the edge of the curb to the railing.
- Lower automatic entry door push plate to be mounted no higher than 36 inches
- Reduce slope within the clear floor space at the pay machines and automated schedule button.
- Replace curb cuts and accessible routes.

#### **Blue Line Lake Street/Midtown Station**

- Complete design, construction will take place between 2025 and 2027.

### **Light rail**

- Green Line between car barriers will be installed by the fall.

### **Support facilities**

#### **Operations Support Center**

- Bathrooms, lobby, and main entry will be renovated to be accessible.

#### **Nicollet Garage bus maintenance area**

- All aspects of the bus maintenance area, including restrooms, locker rooms, and kitchenette, will be renovated to match Minnesota accessibility code standards.

#### **Transit Control Center**

- The kitchen will be made fully accessible. Construction will begin in early 2023.

### **Transit information**

#### **App-based wayfinding pilot project**

- Aira, a wayfinding app, has been contracted through 2023. At year end, the app will be evaluated to determine if ongoing improvements are needed.

#### **Accessible wayfinding signage pilot**

- The next phase of the signage pilot will be at the UMN West Bank Station along the Green Line with design and fabrication beginning in the spring. Signage installation will take place in May.
- Evaluation and customer engagement will occur during the summer, with the project ending in the fall.
- Results will determine a possible third pilot at the Snelling/University stations.

### **Accessible map and wayfinding signage guidelines**

- A cross-agency group will meet to create a unified agency wayfinding program for future ongoing funding.

### **Bus stop data and design**

- Transit stop facilities application user testing is underway. Phase two includes bus stop accessibility information (one of five modules).
- Accessible bus stop design guidelines will be drafted.
- There may be availability to bring in temporary, full-time staff to review remaining bus stops for accessibility in summer 2023.

### **Implementation coordination**

Many other agencies control the right-of-way where Metro Transit bus stops are located. The Met Council has coordinated with those agencies to assist with identifying and facilitating elimination of accessibility barriers along their routes.

Examples of how the Met Council is coordinating efforts to improve accessibility of its services and programs include:

- Participating in site plan reviews for developments adjacent to bus stops and transit facilities with the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul
- Coordinating with MnDOT and other roadway authorities in the design of bus stops associated with roadway reconstruction projects
- Coordinating with the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul to improve snow removal at high-density downtown bus stops

## Environmental Services

### 2023 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvement schedule

#### Methodology for Environmental Services improvements

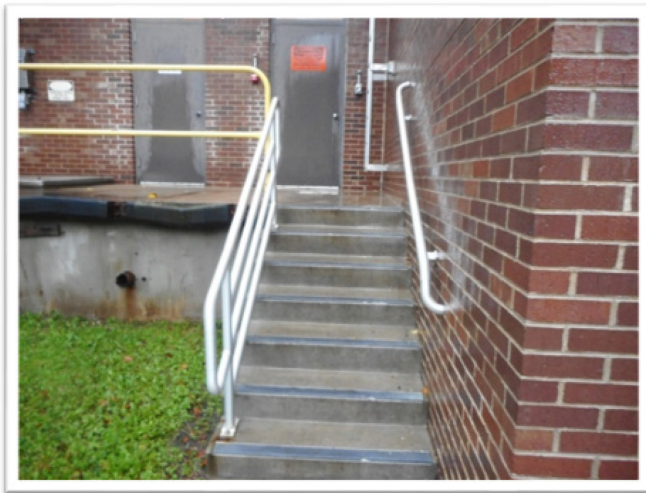
While most of the Environmental Services facilities are not public, tours are recognized as an important public outreach tool. Environmental Services has prioritized tour routes for accessibility improvements. These improvements will be made through procedural changes, maintenance work orders, and planned capital projects (through its approved capital program).

#### Environmental Services tour route findings

The self-evaluation identified several barriers along each tour route. The photo below shows stairs leading to a building's entrance on a tour route. Below is an example of how the findings were shared in each facility report:

**Finding:** MN 1341 1104.4. Multiple locations along the tour route include interior and/or exterior stairs; at some locations an alternate route is available that does not include steps (such as using the freight elevator in the blower building or entering via an overhead garage door).

**Solution:** Reroute the tour as needed to accommodate participants. Locations not currently on an accessible route include headworks building.



## Empire

### *Administration building*

- Convert bathroom to single use

### *Operations building*

- Restroom renovations

## Blue Lake

### *Compressor building*

- Restripe sidewalk, floor grating

### *Digester pump room*

- Fix floor grating

### *Tunnel system*

- Relocation of end panel protrusion



## Community and staff engagement

### Public participation

The Met Council recognizes that public participation is an important component in the development of this transition plan. Input from the community has been gathered and used to help define priority areas for improvements.

Public outreach for preparation of this document consisted of the following activities:

- Community listening session at ThinkSelf, a school for the Deaf in Saint Paul, MN (July 18, 2019)
- Community listening session at Vision Loss Resources, a sight loss advocacy agency serving the metropolitan area, located in Minneapolis, MN (July 30, 2019)

### Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) advises the Met Council on management policies for public transportation services in the region from the perspective of riders with disabilities. Created by the Minnesota Legislature, the TAAC includes riders and advocates for older people and the disability community, as well as representatives of service providers and other appropriate agencies.

The TAAC was asked to complete the community ADA self-evaluation survey to provide input on Met Council programs and services, including public transportation. Their results are being used to inform ADA compliance and accessibility projects.

### Equity Advisory Committee

The Equity Advisory Committee advises the Met Council in its work to advance equity in the metropolitan region. In forming the Equity Advisory Committee in October 2015, the Met Council affirmed its commitment in [Thrive MSP 2040](#) to ensure that residents and communities are full partners in making the decisions that affect them.

The goal of this work is to create more equitable outcomes for the people who live and work in the region. For the purpose of this committee, equity is defined by Thrive MSP 2040 as:

Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is strong when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life.

In July 2019, the Equity Advisory Committee was surveyed for their understanding of the ADA to direct specific trainings for the committee to improve their ability to advise on future Met Council accessibility and ADA compliance efforts. While four of the seven respondents stated that they either were extremely or very familiar with the ADA and its requirements, there were several requests for training on the ADA and transportation, housing, communications, employment, and parks. The responses have helped inform training since 2020 and will improve the committee's ability to advise the Met Council on such efforts. Committee members were also asked to complete the community ADA self-evaluation survey to provide input on Met Council programs and services.

## **Public comment period**

The ADA Transition Plan was made available for public comment from Jan. 20, 2020, to Feb. 17, 2020. Comments are being solicited via the Met Council's Accessibility webpage as well as a dedicated webpage for Met Council public comments. Comments are accepted by contacting the Met Council's Public Info line at 651-602-1500 or [public.info@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:public.info@metc.state.mn.us).

## **Transition plan updates**

This transition plan is a living document that will continue to be updated as conditions within the Met Council evolve. The initial schedule is to formally review the complete document (main body and appendices) at least once per year, to identify any need for updates. Updates to the appendices or attachments may be made more frequently as needed.

Any substantive updates to the main body of this document will include a public comment period to continue the Met Council's public engagement efforts.

The Met Council recognizes that ADA compliance is an ongoing responsibility that will require monitoring to identify future accessibility issues that may be encountered. For example, facilities that currently meet ADA requirements could fall out of compliance in the future due to factors such as damage, disrepair, or changes within public rights-of-way that could create new accessibility obstacles.

Therefore, the ADA Title II coordinator and ADA and Title VI administrator will establish an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that facilities continue to comply with ADA requirements. Met Council employees will also be encouraged to report any accessibility concerns or deficiencies that are identified. Accessibility policy and accessible website and applications procedure

## **Accessibility policy**

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the Met Council to provide people equal access to its services, technologies, communications, and facilities in accordance with state and federal laws and standards.

### **Met Council definition of accessibility**

An accessible Met Council is one that is inclusive of and learns from people with all types of abilities. The Met Council is committed to creating accessible environments throughout its buildings, services, communications, policies, procedures, and practices.

### **Purpose and scope**

The purpose of this policy and its supporting procedures is to ensure that Met Council staff, vendors, and contractors are aware of both their legal responsibilities under federal and state laws and standards to develop and maintain accessible services, technologies, communications, and facilities for employees and the public. The Met Council acknowledges its obligation to comply with several federal and state laws and standards governing accessibility, including:

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) of 1990 and ADA Amendments Act of 2008 \(PDF\)](#)

[Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

[Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#)

[2020 Minnesota Accessibility Code \(PDF\)](#)

[2010 ADA Design Standards](#)

[State of Minnesota Accessibility and Usability of Information Technology Standard \(PDF\)](#)

[Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\) Circular 4710.1 \(PDF\)](#)

[ADA Standards for Transportation Vehicles and Facilities](#)

[Minnesota Human Rights Act](#)

## **Implementation and accountability**

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) is responsible for oversight of the Met Council's ADA compliance and accessibility efforts. All Met Council divisions, and the departments within, are responsible for complying with this policy and supporting procedures with technical assistance of OEEO, as necessary. Contact OEEO with any questions or concerns about the implementation or accountabilities required by this policy.

This policy will guide the creation and implementation of division-specific ADA and accessibility procedures related to division and department's work accountabilities.

## Development of accessible website and applications procedure

This procedure is designed to clarify the use of industry guidelines for web accessibility development (also known as WCAG, or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) and software development using the software development life cycle in the development, testing, and deployment of the Met Council's websites and applications.

Related Information Services standards and staff actions:

- The Met Council's standard for accessible sites and applications is WCAG 2.0 AA. The Met Council's Information Services staff will work to achieve WCAG 2.0 AA compliance by:

Focusing initial efforts on meeting compliance in new development of Met Council websites and applications, while ensuring existing Met Council websites and applications are accessible as they are modified or replaced over time.

- Information Services hiring managers and supervisors will address the need for accessibility in the recruiting process for developers, with desirable qualifications for knowledge and skill of accessible web development.
- Newly hired Information Services developers will receive accessibility policies and procedures as part of the onboarding process.
- For all developers, Met Council management will promote the need for accessibility in development by providing training and other needed resources to support this policy and procedure.
- Managers and supervisors will continue to support all developers in working toward compliance.
- Links to information related to the development standards and life cycle are located at the end of the procedure.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO)

- OEEO is responsible for the Accessibility Policy and is the Met Council's authority to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.
- OEEO is responsible for coordinating organization-wide accessibility compliance.
- OEEO is responsible for identifying and engaging resources to do hands-on testing to evaluate compliance with the WCAG 2.0 AA standards.
- In the absence of a project manager, OEEO will consult the Met Council's Office of General Counsel as necessary for statements of accessibility and other matters with legal implications.

### Information Services

- The project manager is responsible for consulting with OEEO and the Office of General Counsel as necessary for statements of accessibility and other matters with legal implications.
- Managers of developers will promote awareness and understanding of accessibility standards and provide the relevant training and resources to achieve them.
- Developers will utilize available training and resources to develop sites and applications to achieve compliance with accessibility standards.
- Developers will apply appropriate testing methods during development and unit testing.
- Developers must document deviations from the accessibility standards that cannot be corrected and receive the approval of OEEO for those deviations.

## **Communications**

- The Communications department maintains style guides and design standards for Met Council information products.
- Communications staff are available for consultation on web design, usability (including accessibility), and testing.
- As indicated in the Public Website Procedure (Met Council Procedure 2-4g), in certain cases related to public-facing websites, excluding MetroTransit.org, Communications has approval authority that includes, “creation and enforcement of accessibility, usability, and ‘findability’ standards.”

## **Metro Transit Creative Services**

- Creative Services is responsible for Metro Transit brand identity standards, web style guides, and design guidelines for transit information products.
- Creative Services staff are available for consultation on web design, usability (including accessibility), and testing.

## **Public notice of ADA requirements**

As required by the ADA, the Met Council has posted the following notice outlining its responsibilities regarding ADA compliance:

### **ADA public notice**

In accordance with the ADA, the Met Council does not discriminate based on disability in its programs, services, activities, and employment practices.

### **Effective communication**

Upon request, auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (such as a sign language interpreter, an assistive listening device, or print material in digital format) or modifications in programs, services, or activities, will generally be made. Please contact the coordinator of the event, program, or service.

### **Modifications to policies and procedures**

The Met Council will make reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all its programs, services, and activities.

The ADA does not require the Met Council to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.



## ADA grievance procedure

The Title II ADA grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the ADA. The ADA provides comprehensive civil rights protections to persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government services, access to public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. Title II covers state and local government and any of its departments, agencies, or other instrumentalities.

The ADA mandates that individuals with disabilities shall not be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

This Title II ADA grievance procedure can be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination based on disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Met Council.

The relevant departments will be notified of the grievance and will work with the complainant to resolve the issue. A response will be shared with the complainant and will explain the position of the Met Council and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. If the response by the Met Council does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision. The Met Council will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions before responding with a final resolution.

If you have questions about the grievance procedure, please contact:

**Guthrie Byard**

ADA and Title VI Administrator

Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity

Email: [Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us)

### Process for filing a Title II ADA grievance

Please submit your grievance by filling out the grievance form online or in writing. If in writing, please provide your name and contact information as well as the description of the issue, remedy you're seeking, and whether you have filed a complaint with another agency. If so, please list that agency.

All written grievances should be mailed to:

**Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity**

Metropolitan Council

560 6th Ave. North

Minneapolis, MN 55411

## Accountability reports: 2020

### 2020 Met Council ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Met Council

- Updated the Met Council's Accessibility Policy to adopt further state and federal standards and guidelines, including the [State of Minnesota accessibility standard \(PDF\)](#) for information technology services and products
- Continued installation of audio induction loops in staff meeting rooms

#### Digital accessibility

- Completed an agency assessment of digital accessibility practices
- Initiated Met Council document template reviews to ensure accessibility
- Established accessible documents training for new staff

#### Staff training

Metro Transit and Environmental Services staff were trained on addressing ADA design standards, Minnesota Accessibility Code, and universal design principles in new construction and renovation efforts.

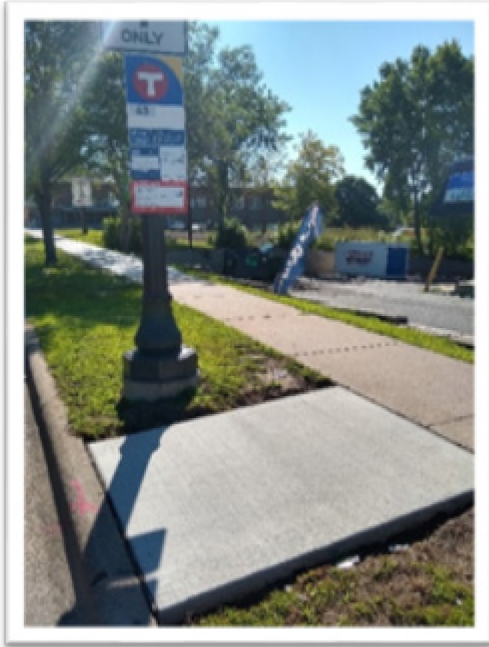
### 2020 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Better Bus Stops program

- Installed 15 new shelters with accessible boarding pads
- Replaced approximately 20 aged shelters
- Installed ADA pads at 20 bus stops without shelters

#### Better Bus Routes – Route 63

In September, Route 63, which is an urban local bus route providing crosstown service in Saint Paul, was updated to provide better services to riders. These improvements included the installation of ADA pads, adding shelters, removing obstacles that impeded mobility near the bus stop, and lengthening bus stops so that the front door of the bus can properly align with the curb.



### **Robbinsdale Transit Center paver project**

Pavers and curb cuts were replaced throughout the Robbinsdale Transit Center to improve accessibility.



### **Green Lot accessible route installation**

An ADA-compliant accessible route was installed that connects the employee parking lot by the Transit Control Center to the Heywood administration facility.

## **Bus shelter ADA inventory**

The bus shelter ADA inventory assessed the condition of 900 sheltered bus stops in the Twin Cities metropolitan area against ADA requirements. The bus shelters are largely compliant with ADA requirements, though some areas of concern have been found, mostly missing or crumbling ADA landing pads. The findings will support future real-time asset condition monitoring and management and with repairs to be prioritized by Metro Transit's engineering and facilities department.

## **Transit information**

- Piloted and set recommendations for future onboard bus detour communication
- Released a request for proposal for a wayfinding app pilot project to improve public transit wayfinding for persons who are blind or of low vision. The pilot occurred spring/summer 2021.
- Developed accessible map and wayfinding signage guidelines at multimodal transfer points
- Reinforced bus stop snow removal guidelines that support multi-agency efforts to address impact on mobility for people with disabilities

## **2020 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvements**

### **Metro Plant**

- Installed power-assisted doors at the guard building, main entrance, and breakroom
- Installed ramp to the breakroom door
- Repaired existing ramp

### **Wastewater plant tours**

- Staff identified plant tour routes that allow us to maintain physical accessibility throughout the tour by noting things like stairs and narrow hallways.
- Efforts started to improve accessibility of tour maps and location of accessible features at each facility offering a tour route.

## **2020 Regional Administration office ADA and accessibility improvements**

### **Robert Street**

- Plaza renovated to address rough and crumbling pavement
- Protruding objects relocated throughout the office
- Bathroom stall auto door openers and self-closures installed
- Signage updated throughout, including raised and braille signage

### **Jackson Street**

- Installed signage to accessible bathrooms
- Made the staff entrance to building more accessible

## Accountability reports: 2021

### 2021 Met Council ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Met Council

- Drafted language to improve accessible procurement language and video accessibility

#### Digital accessibility

- Updated document templates to be in compliance with WCAG 2.0 AA
- Conducted a user and accessibility audit of the Metro Transit website
- Provided documentation and staff training on accessible remote meetings and events
- Expanded staff resources on web accessibility and video accessibility, including incorporation of accessible media players and audio description

#### Staff training

Environmental Services staff were trained in addressing ADA design standards, Minnesota Accessibility Code, and universal design principles in exterior settings.

### 2021 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Fred T. Heywood office building

- First-floor bathroom renovation completed
- Improvements made to employee and public automatic door entrances

#### Mall of America Transit Center

- Placement of concrete grinding measures to allow for safer crossings at the pedestrian walkways completed

#### ADA bus stop data

- [Fixed-Route Bus Stop Design Guide](#) updated with ADA guidance on stops when no sidewalk exists
- ADA Bus Stop Checklist completed.

#### Better Bus Routes

- 11 new shelters placed with accessibility improvements
- 48 existing shelter replacements, with 10 increasing accessibility by reducing bench length or size or shelter
- 22 new boarding pads installed along Route 3, Route 323, and METRO Orange Line

#### Transit information

- Six-month Aira app-based wayfinding pilot started in June

## 2021 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvements

Location	Area	Justifications
<b>Seneca</b>	Administrative building, lower-level elevator lobby	Automatic doors and threshold updated
<b>Seneca</b>	Administrative building, elevator lobby	Door threshold made to be accessible
<b>Metro</b>	Administrative building, main entrance	Ramp repair for accessible wheelchair entrance
<b>St. Croix</b>	Administrative building, main entrance	Automatic door installation
<b>St. Croix</b>	Administrative building, restroom	Automatic door flushers

## 2021 Regional Administration office ADA and accessibility improvements

Location	Area	Justifications
<b>Robert Street</b>	Lower-level men's bathroom	<p>Staple style pulls on inside of accessible stall added</p> <p>Second mirror added to provide reflective surface lower than 35 inches from floor</p> <p>Mounted collection bins added to protect persons with visual impairments from protruding towel dispenser</p>
<b>Robert Street</b>	Lower-level meeting room B	<p>New conference room sign with braille</p> <p>New automatic door opener paddle from inside</p>
<b>Robert Street</b>	Kiosk accessibility	Kiosk navigation bars added to all market locations

## Accountability reports: 2022

### 2022 Met Council ADA and accessibility improvements

#### Met Council

- Update PowerPoint and Word document templates to comply with WCAG 2.0 AA

#### Digital accessibility

- Conducted a digital static and interactive maps accessibility workshop with State employees
- Expanded staff resources on web, map, video, and social media accessibility, including incorporation of accessible media players and audio description

### 2022 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvements

Facility type	Location	Project
Office	Heywood offices	Building renovation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design 30% complete</li> <li>• Construction planned for 2024</li> <li>• Will include updated accessible bathrooms, accessible doors, signage</li> </ul>
Bus stops	Service-wide	Better Bus Stops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installed 25 new shelters</li> <li>• Replaced 33 old shelters</li> <li>• Modified 20 shelter benches to allow for more clear floor space</li> <li>• Installed 18 concrete ADA pads of 5 feet by 8 feet; designed 30</li> </ul>
Public facilities	Sunray Transit Center	Construction completed at Gate G, including adding a new accessible midblock crossing of Pedersen Street, an ADA boarding pad, and a shelter with light and heat
	Northtown Transit Center	Entire transit center renovated, including accessible pedestrian ramps and routes
	Rosedale Transit Center	Renovation designs 60% complete and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible route – bevel small changes in level</li> <li>• Ensure bus alighting area is to the north of the railings leading to the bus shelter to meet 8-foot-deep alighting area; they're currently</li> </ul>



		<p>only 53 inches from the edge of the curb to the railing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower the automatic entry door push plate to be mounted no higher than 36 inches</li> <li>• Reduce slope within the clear floor space at the pay machines and automated schedule button</li> <li>• Replace curb cuts and accessible routes</li> </ul>
	Lake Street/Midtown Transit Station	Renovation design is underway. Concept designs were created and involve continued development of the stair, ramp, and elevator designs. Design is to be completed in 2023.
	County Road H Park & Ride	Restriped and resurfaced, including new accessible parking signs
<b>Support facilities</b>	Transit Control Center	Kitchen renovated to be fully accessible (nearing completion)
	Nicollet Garage	Phase 1 is nearly completed of the multi-phase project to renovate the entire garage and includes new accessible bathrooms and doors.

### 2022 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvements

Location	Area	Project
<b>Empire</b>	Administrative building, main entrance	Automatic doors installed and vestibule updated
<b>Empire</b>	Operations building, entrance	Automatic doors installed

### 2022 Regional Administration office ADA and accessibility improvements

Location	Area	Project
<b>Robert Street</b>	Front lobby	Installed accessible counter space
<b>Robert Street</b>	Office spaces	Height of six ADA push buttons lowered to be in compliance

## Appendix

### Facility reports

The Met Council conducted a detailed ADA evaluation of its public, support, environmental services, and administrative facilities, and the bus stops connected to those facilities. Due to the size and number of reports, they can be requested by contacting Guthrie Byard, ADA and Title VI administrator, at [Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us) or 612-349-7762.

### Community survey

For a full list of questions and responses to the community survey, please contact Guthrie Byard, ADA and Title VI administrator, at [Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us) or 612-349-7762.



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