ADA TRANSITION PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

March 2020
Ver. 3: May 2022
The Metropolitan Council’s mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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<td>Judy Johnson</td>
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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Metropolitan 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 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 651-291-094
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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:

I. Employment
II. State and local government services
III. Public accommodations
IV. Telecommunications
V. 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 Metropolitan Council has conducted a self-evaluation of its services, programs, activities, and facilities on public property and within public rights-of-way; and the Metropolitan 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 (ABA) 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council has designated the following person to serve as ADA Title II Coordinator to oversee the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council’s progress and manage review and updates of this document:

 **Guthrie Byard**
ADA & 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council plans to address self-evaluation findings and recommendations in 2021.

The Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council has redesigned its process for creating, reviewing, and revising all Metropolitan Council policies and procedures. The new process greatly improves the viability and understanding of Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council is to analyze current policies and procedures for gaps. To accomplish this the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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**

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 Metropolitan Council initiated a multi-year contract with two vendors to improve Metropolitan Council digital accessibility practices. The effort is to conform with Section 508 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This contract is open until June 2022. Since late 2019 the contract has yielded several projects across the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council websites to improve both the accessibility and usability of Metropolitan Council information and services.

**Environmental Services public tours**

The Metropolitan 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.

As of spring 2022, plant tours are not being conducted due to COVID-19.
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services operates the regional wastewater collection and treatment system that serves 111 communities in the Minneapolis-St. 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 – replicating 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 Metropolitan Council regional treatment plants.

**General information**

- Tours are free.
- Tours are available during business hours, Monday to Friday.
- Reservations must be made at least 4-5 weeks in advance, and are on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Tours are about 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. Larger groups will be considered based on staff availability. There should be one teacher/chaperone for 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.
- To request a speaker, contact Britni Kesselring via email at [Britni.Kesselring@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Britni.Kesselring@metc.state.mn.us).

**Self-evaluation findings and planned improvements**

**ADA self-evaluation survey**

The Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council’s ADA & 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, Metropolitan 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:

- 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: people need more and better information about services, employment opportunities, and Metropolitan Council decision-making, and they recommend 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, trails

**Other priorities:**
- Marketing, communications
- Customer service
- Physical access to buildings, facilities, rail platforms
- Employment, internships
- Metropolitan 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.

**Metropolitan Council staff survey results**

A similar survey was also administered to Metropolitan Council staff, assessing how they would rate the Metropolitan 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, Metropolitan Council programs and services are accessible, mostly accessible, or somewhat accessible.

Top ten areas for improvements:
• Metro Transit buses and bus stops
• Public amenities in Metropolitan Council facilities, including doors, restrooms, service counters
• Websites
• Employee meetings and events
• Marketing and communications materials
• Employment/internships
• Emergency procedures and action plans
• Access at regional parks, including play areas, restrooms, trails
• Metropolitan Council-led community meetings and events
• Access to public housing

This plan identifies the ways the Metropolitan Council will respond to these results, both with staff training and resources and with changes and improvements to facilities and services.

Programs and services improvement schedule

2022 Metropolitan Council ADA and accessibility improvements

Internship
• The Metropolitan Council has created a new internship focused on digital accessibility that will start summer 2022.

Staff training
• All applicable new hires will continue to be required to complete the MNIT (the State of Minnesota IT Services) Accessible Word Document Training
• The Metropolitan Council will conduct a Digital Accessibility 101 training co-led by MNIT (the State of Minnesota IT Services) and Accessible360.
• The Metropolitan Council has expanded and will provide training on the resources available on its internal communication site called the Accessibility Hub

Procedures
• Metropolitan 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
• All restrooms will be made accessible.
• Plaza will be renovated to address surface thresholds and slopes leading to the parking lot. The project is in design development phase with final drawings anticipated late summer 2022.
• Blue Lot (west) will be resurfaced and restriped, and signage will be updated to meet compliance requirements.

Metropolitan Council headquarters in St. Paul
• 6 automatic door paddles will be lowered on the inside on the main entrance at the Metropolitan Council offices in St. Paul on Robert St to meet ADA height requirements.
• Finish renovation on the front desk that includes an accessible counter
• Upgrade all vending machines to be ADA compliant

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

Metro Transit facilities
Transit centers and park-and-rides:
• 63rd Ave & Bottineau Blvd • Brooklyn Center Transit Center • Cedar Grove Transit Station
• 65th Ave & Brooklyn Blvd
- Chicago Lake Transit Center
- Church of Nazarene
- Church of St. William
- Co Rd 73 & I-394 North
- Co Rd 73 & I-394 South
- Como & Eustis
- Cottage Grove
- Excelsior City Hall
- Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church
- Foley Blvd
- Forest Lake Transit Center
- Ft Snelling Station North
- Ft Snelling Station South
- Gateway Transit Center
- General Mills Blvd & I-394
- Grace Church
- Guardian Angels Catholic Church
- Hadley Ave & Upper 17th Street
- Hwy 7 & Texas Ave
- Hwy 36 & Rice St
- Hwy 61 & Lower Afton Rd
- Hwy 100 & Duluth
- Hwy 252 & 66th Ave
- Hwy 610 & Noble

**Rail stations:**
- 28th Avenue Station
- 38th Street Station
- I-35 & Kenrick Ave
- I-35E & County Road 14
- I-35E & County Road E
- I-35W & 95th Ave
- I-35W & Co Rd C
- I-35W & Co Rd H
- Lakeville Cedar Park & Ride
- Leamington Transit Center
- Little Canada Municipal Lot
- Louisiana Ave Transit Center
- Maple Plain
- Maplewood Mall Transit Center
- Minnetonka Blvd & Baker Rd
- Minnetonka Blvd & Steele St
- Mound Transit Center
- Navarre Center
- Newport Transit Station
- Normandale Village
- Northtown Transit Center
- Park Place & I-394
- Paul Parkway
- Plymouth Road Park & 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 & Barry Ave
- West River Rd & 117th Ave
- West St. Paul Sports Complex
- Woodbury Theatre
• 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 & 46th St Station (future METRO Orange Line bus rapid transit)

Support facilities:
• 24th St 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 & Maintenance Facility
• Saint Paul Operations & 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, St. Paul
• Rogers Plant, Rogers
• Seneca Plant, Eagan
• St. Croix Valley Plant, Oak Park Heights

Office building:
• Regional Maintenance Facility, Eagan

**Metropolitan Council staff offices**

• Robert Street offices, St. Paul
• Fred T. Heywood office campus, Minneapolis

**Survey methodology**

JQP, Inc., used a 4-level priority rating system when conducting their work. This helped the Met Council prioritize the findings. Below is 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 at existing facilities

Facility findings

The self-evaluation involved survey site reviews at 144 Metropolitan Council facilities, including more than 200 facility-connected bus stops. Each facility received a report listing all barriers based on a 4-level priority rating scale. More than 3,000 barriers were identified with priority level 3 being the most common. Below are three tables depicting the number of priority issues by level and facility type, as well as a few examples of findings at Metropolitan Council
facilities.

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<table>
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<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>Priority 3</th>
<th>Priority 4</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
The picture to the left shows a cross slope of 8.1% (above the 1:48 threshold required by ANSI 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ES Facilities</th>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>Priority 3</th>
<th>Priority 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Rogers WWTP</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>138</strong></td>
<td><strong>205</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td><strong>483</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The photo to the left 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.

**Facility improvement schedules**

The following tables represent the projects at Metro Transit public and support facilities, including its environmental services facilities.

The Metropolitan Council may choose to modify priorities to allow flexibility in accommodating community requests, petitions for reasonable modifications from persons with disabilities, changes in Metropolitan Council programs, ongoing evaluation, and funding constraints and opportunities. It is not financially feasible to remove all barriers to access immediately. It is the goal of the updated ADA Transition Plan to provide access to the programs, activities, and services provided by the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council has ongoing programs that monitor proposed alteration projects and include the review of the various accessibility concerns identified, in order to bring facilities to current ADA standards when projects take place. The Metropolitan Council plans to remove barriers over time, as indicated by the implementation schedule.

**Transit asset management**

Transit Asset Management is an asset management strategy that is mandated by the Federal Transit Administration. This strategy utilizes systematic means of managing assets throughout the asset’s entire service life. The data for Metro Transit assets from this ADA self-evaluation will be managed through the Metro Transit Asset Management System (MTrAMS) and as findings are remediated, they will be completed in the system. The history of these findings and actions taken will remain associated with these assets until the end of their service life. This will allow for the planning of deficiency remediation and tracking of issues to completion and will also allow for future historical reviews.
Methodology for Metro Transit improvements

Metro Transit will address accessibility barriers through ongoing capital projects. In addition, Metro Transit will dedicate staff for a review of the most severe barriers identified (Levels 1 and 2) to identify future capital project needs or other actions to remove barriers. There are 91 Level 1 priorities and 597 Level 2 priorities.

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

2022 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvement schedule

**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-PROW Accessible Bus Stop Design Guide will be updated with additional accessibility considerations by end of the year

**Better Bus Stops**

The 2022 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 2022 plan is summarized below. Plans may change depending on final design and the construction schedule.

- Place up to 20 new shelters, including accessibility improvements
- Replace up to 25 existing shelters, including accessibility improvements
- Construct up to 40 accessible boarding pads at bus stops without shelters
- Modify benches in 20 shelters to increase clear floor space up to ADA standards

**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 3
- 6 ADA pads will be installed along this line during the spring of 2022

Route 22
- Several bus shelters and ADA pad installation will begin late spring/early summer

Snow removal guidelines
Metro Transit will update data used to deploy staff and resources for snow removal. Snow removal guidelines and procedures are not anticipated to change substantially.

Public facilities

Rosedale Transit Center
- 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' deep alighting area: currently only 53" from the edge of the curb to the railing.
  - Lower automatic entry door push plate to be mounted no higher than 36"
  - Reduce slope within the clear floor space at the pay machines and automated schedule button.
  - Replace curb cuts and accessible routes

Sunray Transit Center
- Repairs will be made to the pedestrian ramps and the accessible routes during the summer

Northtown Transit Center
- Accessible routes and curb cuts will be made accessible by end of June.

35W and County Rd H Park and Ride
- New striping, signage, and ped ramps in parking lots during summer

Fort Snelling Park and Ride
- New striping, signage, and ped ramps in parking lots during summer

Blue Line Lake St./Midtown Station
- Existing conditions report, scoping, concept design, apply for grants, make short-term improvements including accessibility considerations
Support facilities

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
- Kitchen will be made fully accessible

Transit Information

App-based wayfinding pilot project
- Aira wayfinding app pilot extended through 2022. Will evaluate as the year ends to determine possibility for implementation

Bluetooth Beacon Wayfinding pilot
- Transit Information will discuss next steps for phase 2 as vendor is going out of business. Will report and findings from phase 1.

Accessible wayfinding signage pilot
- RFQs will go out Q1, with spring deployment

Accessible map and wayfinding signage guidelines
- Cross-agency group will meet to create a unified agency wayfinding program for future ongoing funding

Implementation coordination

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

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).

2022 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvement schedule

Empire

Administration building
- Relocate accessible stall to address slope issues
- Restripe stall and aisle
- Install new accessible parking sign
- Modify main entrance sidewalk to address threshold issues
- Significant upgrades to the restrooms
  - Door replacements
  - Coat hook installations
  - Grab bar installations
  - Mirror replacements
  - Relocation of objects
  - Pipe insulation

Blue Lake

Administration building
- Restripe parking stalls and aisles
- Relocate and install accessible parking signs

Blower building
- Provide grating cover or use different grating type
- Repair sidewalk

Screening building
- Repair sidewalk near south entrance

Tunnel system
- Relocation of end panel protrusion

Seneca
Administration building

- Locker room bathrooms will be made ADA compliant

Rogers Lab building

- Install compliant accessible parking stalls
- Install restroom sink pipes and insulate

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.

![Stairs leading to a building's entrance on a tour route.](image)

**Engagement**

External
Public participation

The Metropolitan 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 St. 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)

Internal

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) advises the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 (EAC) advises the Metropolitan Council in its work to advance equity in the metropolitan region. In forming the EAC in October 2015, the Metropolitan 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 EAC was surveyed for their understanding of the ADA to direct specific trainings for the committee to improve their ability to advise on future Metropolitan 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 will help inform training in 2020 and beyond will improve the committee’s ability to advise the Metropolitan Council on such efforts. EAC members were also asked to complete the community ADA self-evaluation survey to provide input on Metropolitan Council programs and services.

Public comment period

The ADA Transition Plan was made available for public comment from January 20, 2020, to February 17, 2020. Comments are being solicited via the Metropolitan Council’s Accessibility webpage as well as a dedicated webpage for Metropolitan Council public comments. Comments are accepted by contacting the Metropolitan Council’s Public Info line at 651-602-1500 or public.info@metc.state.mn.us. Comments will be used to inform updates to the plan before it is made final.

Transition plan updates

This transition plan is a living document that will continue to be updated as conditions within the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council’s public engagement efforts.

The Metropolitan 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 & Title VI Administrator will establish an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that facilities continue to comply with ADA requirements. Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council to provide people equal access to its services, technologies, communications, and facilities in accordance with state and federal laws and standards.

Metropolitan Council definition of Accessibility

An accessible Metropolitan Council is one that is inclusive of and learns from people with all types of abilities. The Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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
- Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- 2015 Minnesota Accessibility Code
- 2010 ADA Design Standards
- State of Minnesota Accessibility and Usability of Information Technology Standard
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4710.1
- ADA Standards for Transportation Facilities
- Minnesota Human Rights Act

Implementation and accountability

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) is responsible for oversight of the Metropolitan Council’s ADA compliance and accessibility efforts. All Metropolitan 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 (SDLC) in the development, testing, and deployment of the Metropolitan Council’s websites and applications.

Related Information Services standards and staff actions:

- The Metropolitan Council’s standard for accessible sites and applications is WCAG 2.0 AA.
- The Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council websites and applications; and making existing Metropolitan Council websites and applications 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, Metropolitan 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 towards 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council’s Office of General Counsel (OGC), 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 OGC, as necessary, for statements of accessibility and other matters with legal implications.
- Managers of developers will promote awareness and understanding of the accessibility standards and provide the relevant training and resources to achieve them.
- Developers will utilize available training and resources and 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 Metropolitan Council information products.
- Communications staff are available for consultation on web design, usability (including accessibility), and testing.
- As indicated in the Public Website Procedure (Metropolitan 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 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 and ADA grievance procedure

Public notice of ADA requirements

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Metropolitan Council has posted the following notice outlining its responsibilities regarding ADA compliance.

ADA public notice

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan 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

Title II ADA grievance procedure

This 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 Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. If the response by the Metropolitan Council does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision. The Metropolitan 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  
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  
560 6th Ave North  
Minneapolis, MN 55411

**Agency contact information**

**ADA Title II Coordinator**

Cyrenthia Jordan  
390 Robert St. N. St. Paul, MN 55101  
Phone: 651-602-1085  
E-mail: Cyrenthia.Jordan@metc.state.mn.us

**ADA & Title VI Administrator**

Guthrie Byard  
560 6th Ave N. Minneapolis, MN 55411  
Phone: 612-349-7762  
E-mail: Guthrie.Byard@metc.state.mn.us
Accountability reports

2020 progress

2020 Metropolitan Council ADA and accessibility improvements

Metropolitan Council

- Updated the Metropolitan Council’s Accessibility Policy to adopt further state and federal standards and guidelines, including the State of Minnesota Accessibility Standard for IT services and products.
- Continued installation of audio induction loops in staff meeting rooms.

Digital accessibility

- Completed an agency assessment of digital accessibility practices.
- Initiated Metropolitan 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 St. 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 bus’s front door 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 an RFP for a wayfinding app pilot project to improve public transit wayfinding for persons who are blind or of low vision. Pilot planned for 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**

- Signage to accessible bathrooms installed
- Staff entrance to building made more accessible
2021 Progress

2021 Metropolitan Council ADA and accessibility improvements

Metropolitan 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 on addressing ADA design standards, Minnesota Accessibility Code, and universal design principles in exterior settings

2021 Metro Transit ADA and accessibility improvements
- Heywood Office building first floor bathroom renovation completed
- Fred. T. Heywood Office 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 and will be Implemented in 2022

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, 323, Orange line

Transit information
- Aira app-based wayfinding pilot-6-month pilot started in June.
### 2021 Environmental Services ADA and accessibility improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Justifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>Administrative Building - Lower-Level Elevator Lobby</td>
<td>Automatic doors and threshold updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>Administrative - Elevator Lobby</td>
<td>Door threshold made to be accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Administrative Building - Main Entrance</td>
<td>Ramp repair for Accessible wheelchair entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Croix</td>
<td>Administrative Building - Main Entrance</td>
<td>Automatic door installation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Croix</td>
<td>Administrative Building - Restroom</td>
<td>Automatic doors flushers</td>
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### 2021 Regional Administration Office ADA and accessibility improvements

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Justifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert St.</td>
<td>Lower-level men’s bathroom</td>
<td>• Staple style pulls on inside of accessible stall added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2\textsuperscript{nd} mirror added to provide reflective surface lower than 35” from floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mounted collection bins added to protect persons with visual impairments from protruding towel dispenser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert St.</td>
<td>Lower-Level meeting room B</td>
<td>New conference room sign with braille. New automatic door opener paddle from inside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert St.</td>
<td>Kiosk Accessibility</td>
<td>Kiosk navigation bars added to all market locations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Facility reports

The Metropolitan 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 & Title VI Administrator, at 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 & Title VI Administrator, at guthrie.byard@metc.state.mn.us or 612-349-7762.