

Memorandum



DATE June 7, 2024

CITY OF DALLAS

TO Honorable Chair and Members of the Workforce, Education, and Equity Committee

SUBJECT **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan Update**

Purpose:

This memo provides an update on the City of Dallas' progress in implementing its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. Led by the Office of Equity and Inclusion—Human Rights Division, we work collaboratively, under the leadership of City Council, across City Departments, and with external partners, to ensure the City's programs, services, and activities are accessible to residents with disabilities. Indeed, according to the 2023 U.S. Census, people with a disability under age 65 years make up more than 8% of Dallas' 1.3 million residents. The goal is to ensure alignment with federal requirements, which are continually updated, and ensure the City is creating a more equitable and inclusive city for those whom the City serves.

Context on the ADA:

The landmark legislation known as the ADA mandates people with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, and activities (PSAs), which also includes City facilities. Disabilities are diverse and can encompass physical or mental limitations that substantially impact core life activities, having a history or record of such limitations, or being perceived to have such a limitation. The ADA includes five Titles which prohibit discrimination based on disability in many areas of life, ranging from Employment, State and Local Government Services, Public Transit, Businesses that are Open to the Public, and Telecommunications. The City of Dallas, as a Title II Entity and unit of local government, must ensure people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in as well as benefit from the programs, services, and activities offered. Equal access can be facilitated through reasonable accommodations, for example, by modifying a policy or procedure that would otherwise limit access to PSAs.

City of Dallas' ADA Transition Plan – Development and Launch of Phase I:

Over the last five years, the City has made accessibility a top priority, beginning with hiring a full-time ADA Compliance Manager who coordinates the City's efforts and ensures compliance in collaboration with key departments. With the support of City Council, the City of Dallas invested in the consultant services of Kimley-Horn and Associates to significantly enhance the City's capacity to document the City of Dallas' compliance efforts beginning in Phase I through today, including reviewing buildings, evaluating policies and procedures of City departments, providing specialized training, and offering ongoing support. While initial building assessments identified a significant number of physical barriers in need of remediation, the City completed as part of Phase I assessments at 22 buildings (see Appendix) and developed an associated schedule of base costs to remediate. At the same time, the Human Rights Division engaged

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Information & Technology Services (ITS) to enhance web content accessibility, especially since awareness of programs, services, and activities is often via the internet. Through specialized training, ITS made significant web-based improvements, ranging from ensuring compatibility with screen readers and keyboard-only access, making electronic documents such as PDFs accessible, checking for sufficient color contrast, and proactively fixing broken links. The training audience was broadened to key personnel that included the Office of Emergency Management, Senior Executives, as well as Maintenance. Throughout this process, 311 was leveraged to ensure residents could report any accessibility challenges they encountered with items evaluated by the ADA Compliance Manager to determine how best to resolve.

Phase II:

Led by Public Works with OEI support, the City of Dallas concentrated efforts as part of Phase II to develop the Sidewalk Master Plan. This Plan developed a data-driven methodology to drive decision-making about what sidewalk projects to prioritize given available funding. At the outset, the Human Rights Division engaged Dallas residents in a series of community meetings to inform the process and ensure they had a voice at the table. As a result, the methodology factored in not only considerations of places of public accommodation, street classification, resident requests, pedestrian safety, and activity areas, but also equity through OEI's Equity Impact Assessment Tool to ensure communities with the most need have equal access.

Phase III:

The Human Rights Division continued to revisit earlier efforts to assess City of Dallas buildings as part of Phase III. This included not only assessing 31 facilities (see Appendix), including those used by First Responders, but also taking action to remediate in collaboration with departments including Building Services and Bond & Construction Management. The City was able to bring about accessibility improvements at City Hall, which included Council Chambers, parking on L1 and L2, sidewalk entries, restrooms, and building access points, in addition to facilities like the MLK Community Center, the West Dallas Library, Municipal Court, the Oak Cliff Municipal Center, the Mildred Dunn, as well as others. To better account for accurate remediation costs going forward, the City developed a cost management plan in light of the variance between base and actual costs, especially if design work is involved. The Human Rights Division complemented the work on physical infrastructure by also launching a pilot policy group encompassing six departments that have significant public interaction. Through this pilot group and in collaboration with our contractor, the Human Rights Division identified key programs, reviewed relevant policies and procedures, and proposed improvements at the policy-level to increase access and ensure full participation for people with disabilities.

Phase IV (Current Phase with Continual Self-Evaluation of Previous Phases):

The Human Rights Division recently launched Phase IV in December 2023. As Phases across the ADA Transition are interlocking and having to be continually revisited, efforts were focused on continued building assessments and on removal of barriers. Because of the potential of policies to significantly increase access, the Human Rights Division is engaging seven departments for the second round of policy reviews, which includes

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additionally engaging key departments from the first round to support actual implementation of policy improvements. While plans are in place to address barriers at the infrastructure- and policy-level, a pivot was made during Phase IV as the federal government issued a new Web Content Accessibility Rule. The rule, effective June 24, 2024, updates regulations found in Title II of the ADA and is an important step in formalizing clear and across-the-board website and video content accessibility standards to ensure equitable access. While there are many specialized factors included with the new rule, one example to note is the requirement that visual information be described in videos, otherwise known as audio or video description. Because of the City of Dallas' long-standing and collaborative work to implement the ADA Transition Plan, the City is well-positioned to ensure the rule is operationalized by April 24, 2026, and the Human Rights Division is currently working with departments like ITS and Communications to develop a compliance plan.

Opportunities to Increase Efficiency and Scale ADA Tracking:

The Human Rights Division anticipates receiving approval from Procurement by the end of FY24 to implement ADA software to significantly scale our ability to track our impact in making ADA improvements. For each physical barrier identified and that we work on remediating, the City will be able to geo-locate the barrier using GIS coordinates so that we can know the location with precision and be able to effectively track when the barrier is removed. Through effective tracking, the software will also play a vital outward-facing role because the Human Rights Division will be able to efficiently make updates to our ADA Action Log available to the public on our website so they can see OEI's progress in creating a more accessible city for all residents.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion – Human Rights Division is always available to assist with any additional questions and to provide more information on our collaborative efforts. Please contact Dr. Lindsey Wilson, Director, at lindsey.wilson@dallas.gov, Chris Graves, Human Rights Officer, at christopher.graves@dallas.gov, or Gary Copeland, ADA Compliance Manager, at gary.copeland@dallas.gov.



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Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Elizabeth Saab, Chief of Strategy, Engagement and Alignment (I)
Directors and Assistant Directors

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Appendix – City of Dallas Buildings Reviewed for ADA Barriers

Buildings Reviewed - 2020	
Building	Zipcodes
Arcadia Park Library	75211
Campbell Green Rec Center	75248
City Hall	75201
Municipal Court	75201
Jonsson Library	75201
KBH Convention Center	75202
Kleberg Rylie Rec Center	75253
Majestic Theater	75201
MLK Center	75215
MLK Admin	75215
MLK Child Care	75215
MLK Clinic	75215
MLK Library	75215
MLK Parking	75215
Moody Performance Hall	75201
NE Patrol	75238
Polk Wisdom Library	75232
SVW Patrol	75211
Union Station	75202
Fretz Tennis Center	75254
Mildred Dunn Recreation Center	75215
South Dallas Cultural Center	75210
North Central Patrol	75252

Buildings Reviewed - 2021	
Building	Zipcodes
Oak Cliff Municipal Ctr	75203
Cotton Bowl	75215
Fire Station 2	74229
Fire Station 4	75215
Fire Station 5	75217
Fire Station 11	75204
Fire Station 12	75249
Fire Station 18	75146
Fire Station 20	75240
Fire Station 23	75203
Fire Station 25	75241
Fire Station 26	75211
Fire Station 29	75243
Fire Station 47	75247
Fire Station 51	75227
Fire Station 55	75214
Fire Station 57	75238

Buildings Reviewed - 2022	
Building	Zipcodes
Fire Station No. 45	75208
Fire Station No. 53	75228
Fire Station No. 54	75241
Fire Station No. 56	75254
Mountain Creek Library	75249
Lakewood Branch Library	75214
Oak Lawn Branch Library	75219
Lancaster-Kiest Dunbar Branch Library	75216
Kleberg-Rylie Branch Library	75253
Preston Royal Branch Library	75229
Skillman Southwestern Branch Library	75206
Renner Frankford Branch Library	75252
Skyline Branch Library	75227
City Marshall / Detox	75226
Latino Cultural Center	75204