

City of Jacksonville ADA Transition Plan

Year 1 Update (FY 2020)

June 2020

Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) self-evaluation, transition planning and implementation is a continuous effort for the City of Jacksonville. The City is committed to updating the ADA Transition Plan annually with oversight by the City Manager and every five years with required action by the City Council. Involvement of other community leaders and support organizations is, and will continue to be, a critical part of the ADA transition process.

The City's ADA Transition Plan was adopted by City Council on March 19, 2019. This report provides an update of efforts that have been made over the last fiscal year and serves as the first year update. This report is hereby incorporated into the City's ADA Transition Plan as Addendum #1.

Background

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulates programs, activities and services provided by state and local governments. As such, the City of Jacksonville must comply with this section, which states: "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).

In accordance with Title II, the City of Jacksonville conducted an ADA compliance self-evaluation of its services, programs, activities, and facilities on public property and in public rights-of-way. With this information, the City's ADA Transition Plan was developed to share findings of the self-evaluation and to establish strategies for improving ADA accessibility within our community.

The Plan focuses on three fundamental areas for ADA compliance: (1) communications, information and facility signage; (2) public buildings and spaces; and (3) pedestrian facilities and public rights-of-way.

FY2021 Goal

The ADA Transition Plan provided results of the City's self-evaluation and provided a framework of items that staff would strive to implement by June 30, 2021. As the initial plan was being finalized, the City was impacted by Hurricane Florence. Staff focused on

rebuilding critical infrastructure and providing assistance to our community. With improvements underway or completed, staff was now able to focus on how to implement the ADA Transition Plan.

Staff organized themselves into three groups: the Training Team, the Engagement Team and the Accessibility Team. These teams were charged with implementing the goals identified in the Plan which require planning, coordination, and construction by either internal staff or through contracts.

Staff spent the first part of the fiscal year getting organized in the Teams and identifying a plan of action on how best to implement the strategies for addressing the goals. As momentum strengthened, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted staff's efforts as work ceased as result of businesses being closed and physical interactions discouraged. Although efforts slowed, staff continued to work on implementing some of the corrective actions that were identified and stands ready to resume training opportunities when COVID restrictions are lifted.

Training Team

The purpose of the Training team is to train existing and new employees about ADA law with the expectation that they might gain a greater understanding of the challenges someone who is disabled faces when accessing a City facility or service. This team is comprised of personnel from Human Resources, Fire, Transportation, Police, Community Engagement, Finance, and IT.

This team identified four educational awareness areas to initially focus on. They have spent the last year identifying subject matter experts who could provide training which they envision would occur quarterly.

Employee Rollout

This team was responsible for rolling out the ADA Transition Plan to all 500+ employees. This campaign began in November 2019 and lasted a few months as the team met with employees in small groups to share the Plan as well as the ADA sensitivity [video](#). The emphasis of this rollout was to convey that the City's ADA Transition Plan is an extension of the ongoing One-City Campaign.

The team received great ideas and feedback on how the ADA Transition Plan can be implemented. The team stressed the importance that if an employee sees a barrier, they should report it. When discussing the correlation between the One-City Campaign and the ADA Transition Plan, some employees had heard the slogan (One Community, One City, My City), but they were unfamiliar with the intent behind it. It was suggested that



adding a brief overview to the employee orientation would allow all employees to better understand the One-City Campaign. This addition was implemented in January 2020.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Staff made contact with Christina Bauman a Community Accessibility Specialist with the NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. They provide training to companies on how to best interact with those who are deaf and hard of hearing as well as provide hands on exercises to reinforce those concepts. Staff is coordinating with her on possible dates and class size for future training opportunities.

FY21 Goal: Schedule training for employees to learn more about the deaf culture.

Autism

Dr. Becca Tagg, Clinical Director for Del Mar Center for Behavioral Health, provided specific training on Autism for all Fire Personnel in July 2019. This training was at a basic level and focused on what Fire may see on a scene with autism patients. Organized by Chief Procopio, this training was well received and greatly appreciated by the firefighters.

Recreation reached out to the NC Autism Society who provided special training for staff to educate them on autism so that they would be better prepared for their special needs Parents' Night Out and general youth programs. The training was well attended by not only Recreation staff, but employees from other departments as well.

FY21 Goal: Expand and modify training for all departments.

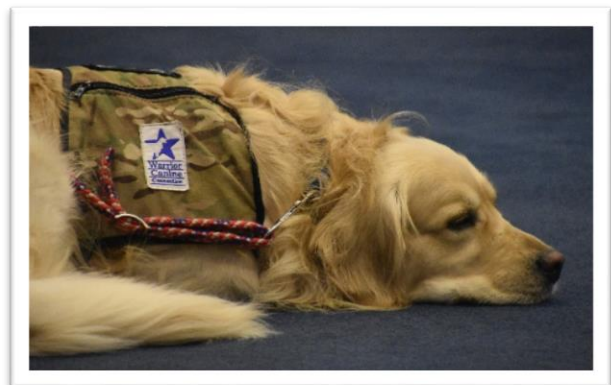
Mental Health

The Police Department spends a considerable amount of time training on mental health awareness when dealing with the public. This year they completed a mandatory in-service training focused on Communication Strategies when Encountering Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

FY21 Goal: Expand and modify training for other departments.

Service Animals

Educating employees on ADA law and bringing awareness of the rights of service animals is an important topic. Staff was able to attend a presentation by Camp Mutt at the Chamber Small Business Seminar. Their organization offers training for business owners on their rights and the law when interacting with service animals and their owner.



Staff also developed a Service Animal Policy which was approved in April 2020. This policy incorporates ADA law and provides guidance to employees on how to interact with someone who may be accompanied by a service animal.

FY21 Goal: Invite Camp Mutt or another source to provide similar training to City employees to raise awareness of service animals and the job they are tasked to do.

American Sign Language (ASL)

As the ADA Transition Plan was being unveiled to City employees, many expressed interest in learning American Sign Language (ASL). Staff partnered with Onslow County Health and Human Services to reach out to Coastal Carolina Community College (CCCC) to identify specific training that would allow someone to learn the basics of ASL for conversational speech. ASL requires commitment and repetition like other languages in order to learn and retain it.

CCCC was going to offer classes held twice weekly over six weeks. Class participants were to be comprised of 10 employees from the City and 10 employees from the County. If staff was pleased with the outcome of this session, other sessions could be offered at a later date to build ASL awareness throughout the organization. The first session was to begin in April, but had to be cancelled because of COVID-19.

FY21 Goal: Reschedule Phase 1 of training at Coastal Carolina Community College.

Engagement Team

The Engagement Team's purpose is to ensure that interactions with the public meets ADA standards by educating City employees and citizens on ADA regulations. This team is comprised of Media, Police, Fire, City Clerk's Office, Community Engagement, Recreation, Community Development, and Transportation.

Promote City's Style Guide to Ensure ADA Compliance

The City's Style Guide provides a template of the approved font style, color and formatting that is the City's brand as well as meets ADA standards. This allows for a unified appearance as various employees communicate with the public. The City is working on transitioning to Microsoft 365, which would allow IT to standardize email signatures and templates to ensure compliance with the Style Guide for all employees.

FY21 Goal: Continue efforts to implement Microsoft 365.

ASL Interpreter

When the City was receiving public comment on the ADA Transition Plan, staff heard from individuals who were deaf or hard of hearing about the inability to receive updates directly from City officials. The City responded to these concerns by identifying a local American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter who could be available to stand beside officials as updates were given during not only state of emergencies but for local events as well.

FY21 Goal: Continue providing ASL interpreters for community events and state of emergencies when appropriate.

Collaboration with Onslow County

There are many aspects of ADA and our teaching should not be limited to just City employees and services. As such, staff reached out to Onslow County Health and Human Services to establish a reoccurring scheduled meeting where we can learn about each other's initiatives, join together for training opportunities and share educational resources.

FY21 Goal: Continue collaborating with Onslow County on ADA training and resources.

Implement Closed Captioning System



The City held a regional meeting of the North Carolina City & County Communicators (NC3C) in November 2018, where Ms. Daisy Rivenbark, a deaf woman who is a specialist with the North Carolina's Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, gave a presentation on deaf culture and best practices for communicating with the deaf community. The second half of that meeting featured Mr. Daniell Krawczyk from

Municipal Captions who discussed implementing closed captioning systems for public access, education and government (PEG) channels.

The ACE-2000 Closed Captioning system was installed shortly before the Hurricane Dorian in an effort to increase the City's communication capabilities prior to the storm arriving. The G10TV video signal with Closed Captioning is available on the Spectrum cable system in Onslow County, and via streaming at G10TV.org, and on Roku and AppleTV devices via the ScreenWeave application.

FY21 Goal: Further refine the closed captioning system vocabulary which will increase the speech to text accuracy, and to implement greater proper noun identification (Council Member names, local places, etc).

Accessibility Team

The purpose of the Accessibility Team is to implement improvements for parking lots, buildings, parks, sidewalk, and trails to ensure compatibility with ADA. This team is comprised of stakeholders from Streets, Facilities Maintenance, Inspections, Code Enforcement, Parks, Engineering, and Transportation. The team wanted to focus on adding connectivity where none currently exists and to focus on places with the highest citizen engagement first.

This team has met regularly to identify and refine the scope of work for this first year. The scope of work was split between improvements that could be done in-house and those that would have to be contracted out.

Update Parking Areas

Approximately 22% of handicapped parking spaces for City facilities do not meet current ADA standards. The goal was to create handicapped parking where none exists, improve signage, and refresh pavement markings.

Staff was able to either replace or add over 30 handicap parking and van accessible parking placards at the Commons Picnic Shelter #1, Northwoods Recreation Center, Brook Valley Park, Phillips Picnic Shelter, Sturgeon City Park Picnic Shelter #1 and #2, Commons Skateboard Parking Lot, Fire Station #4 and Sherwood Forest Park.

Additionally staff refreshed pavement markings at Brook Valley Park, Sherwood Forest Park, Kerr Street Recreation Center, Wooten Park, Jack Amyette, Woodlands Park, Sturgeon City Park, Wilson Bay Park, and Richard Ray Park.

FY21 Goal: Identify additional locations that are missing handicap parking and van accessible parking placards and install them. To continue refreshing pavement markings as needed and identify locations where handicap parking does not exist.

Sidewalks and Multi-Use Paths

Staff identified several areas where installation of sidewalk and/or multi-use paths are needed to provide ADA accessibility and connectivity to a public building, shelter, bench, or playground. This year the City constructed approximately 25 feet of sidewalk at Brook Valley Park. This section connects to the existing trail and allows access to the picnic shelter at the park.

FY21 Goal: Complete sidewalk connections at Kerr Street Recreation Center and Fire



Station 4, as well as, design the sidewalk connection that needs to be removed and replaced at Wilson Bay Park.

Vegetation Cleanup Along Sidewalks

The ADA Transition Plan identified several areas where vegetation had overgrown onto the sidewalk preventing a clear path of travel as required. The City worked with the property owners to remove the vegetation.

FY21 Goal: Ongoing efforts to keep sidewalks free from overgrown vegetation.

Installation of Truncated Domes

Truncated domes assist those who are visually impaired to cross at designated intersections. Truncated domes were installed at several key intersections: Western Boulevard at Williamsburg Parkway, Western Boulevard at Northwest Circle, several locations along LP Willingham Parkway, W. Railroad Street at Johnson Boulevard and New Bridge Street at Johnson Boulevard. A total of 8 truncated domes were installed at these locations.

FY21 Goal: Review the updated inventory list to identify other locations that are missing truncated domes and to install them.

Interior Building Signage

Interior wayfinding signage such as room numbers, bathrooms, exits, etc. must comply with ADA standards include braille and appropriate font size. A review of each building is required to ensure that these signs are in place.

FY21 Goal: Conduct an inventory and install interior building signage where needed.



Increase Sidewalk Width to Accommodate Power Poles

Staff identified several areas where power poles had been installed in or near a sidewalk which reduces the width of the sidewalk preventing someone in a wheelchair from using it. Areas identified for implementing corrective actions include: 211 Armstrong Drive, Chaney Avenue and Bordeaux Street, 226 Bell Fork Road, Bell Fork Road and Country Club Road.

FY21 Goal: Investigate and implement corrective actions as stated.

Installation of Curb Ramps at Transit Stops

Initially, staff was looking at the accessibility of each stop related to the lack of curb ramps at various locations near transit bus stops such as College Street at Thompson Early Childhood Center, E. Doris Avenue at Davis Street, Indian Drive at SPEC, E. Doris Avenue at Davis Street, Hargett Street at Onslow Community Outreach, and Village Drive at Corey Circle.

Section 810.2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Transportation Facilities states that “Bus stop boarding and alighting areas shall have a firm, stable surface.” Additionally, “Bus stop boarding and alighting areas shall provide a clear length of 96 inches minimum, measured perpendicular to the curb or vehicle roadway edge, and a clear width of 60 inches minimum, measured parallel to the vehicle roadway. Public entities shall ensure that the construction of bus boarding and alighting areas comply with 810.2.2, to the extent the construction specifications are within their control”.

As such, staff is creating a scope of work reflecting types of improvements that may be needed to allow for greater accessibility. Modifications to existing bus stops will include the installation of curb ramps, addition of a concrete pad that connects from the bus stop to the back of curb or moving the transit stop location for better accessibility.

FY21 Goal: Solicit bids for the installation of curb ramps and concrete pads at various bus stops to increase the accessibility at transit bus stops.

Add Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)

Two intersections were specifically identified within the initial inventory area to include accessible pedestrian signals – New Bridge Street at Bayshore Boulevard and Warlick Street. Both of these intersections will be modified with the construction of the New Bridge Street Infrastructure and Streetscape Project which is scheduled to begin construction in 2020. Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are devices that communicate information about the WALK and DON'T WALK intervals at signalized intersections, in non-visual formats, to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision. This is an enhanced pedestrian improvement that exceeds the push button pedestrian buttons that are currently found at intersections around Jacksonville.

The City funded the installation of ADA accessible sidewalk along Georgetown and Broadhurst Road. This project also included the addition of push button pedestrian signals at the intersection of Marine Boulevard and Georgetown Road.

FY21 Goal: The intersection of Carolina Forest Boulevard and Western Boulevard has been identified for pedestrian improvement. It is currently under design and will begin construction in FY 21. Intersection improvements by NCDOT at Western Boulevard at Gum Branch began construction in FY 19 and will be completed in FY 21. In addition to adding lanes, it will also add APS. Ongoing efforts include coordination with NCDOT to accommodate APS within roadway improvement projects where appropriate.

Curb Ramp Modifications and Sidewalk Installation

The initial ADA Transition Plan conducted a street inventory that focused on some of the major street corridors as well as the Downtown area. This inventory identified areas that are ADA barriers such as non-compliant curb ramps, the lack of curb ramps, potential tripping hazards, and/or missing sections of sidewalk.

Inventory

During the past year, staff continued inventorying efforts by focusing on the Northwoods Area given the number of schools, residents and existing sidewalk within this neighborhood. This inventory is then used to identify where corrective improvements are needed.

FY21 Goal: Continue inventorying infrastructure within the rights-of-ways related to streets, sidewalks, curb ramps, and trails.

NCDOT TAP Project



The North Carolina Department of Transportation’s (NCDOT) Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) is specific funding for projects and activities of a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. The

City partnered with NCDOT to use these funds to retrofit, remove and replace, or install new curb ramps. The scope of this project focused on Hargett Street, Marine Boulevard, Bell Fork Road and Downtown. In all, 111 curb ramps were added or corrected in the City’s pedestrian network.

FY21 Goal: Continue working with NCDOT to retrofit or add curb ramps utilizing NCDOT TAP funds.

Streets

The City collaborated with Precision Safe Sidewalks to assist with fixing potential sidewalk tripping hazards. Focusing on areas with the heaviest pedestrian traffic, they focused on improving sidewalks along Western Boulevard from Marine Boulevard to Huff Drive, Marine Boulevard from Western Boulevard to Johnson Boulevard, Decatur Drive, Sioux Drive, Northwoods Drive and Kathryn Avenue. This company was able to repair 363 locations in just six days.

Additionally, the Streets Division was also able to replace over 790 feet of sidewalk during the last fiscal year.

FY21 Goal: Identify and fix potential tripping hazards as well as replace sidewalk where needed.

FY20 ADA Sidewalks and Curb Ramps

The initial inventory of accessibility within the rights-of-ways identified several areas that lack ADA connectivity. Staff will be soliciting bids in June 2020 for the installation of 354 LF of sidewalk and the replacement and/or addition of 6 curb ramps.

FY21 Goal: Review the inventory list to identify areas to install sidewalk and curb ramps.

FY20 ADA Improvements

Some of these areas that were inventoried identified locations of potential tripping hazards due to the sidewalk being offset by more than ¼" in vertical change. Staff will be soliciting proposals in June 2020 to specifically identify locations that need to be addressed along Plantation Boulevard, Doris Avenue, Iverleigh Lane, Sioux Drive, Barn Street, Clifton Road and Western Boulevard (along the North bound side from Huff Drive to NC 24).

FY21 Goal: Continue identifying and fixing potential tripping hazards that are found.

Henderson Drive ADA Improvements

Approximately one mile of Henderson Drive from Doris Avenue to the intersection of Henderson and Onslow Drive has existing pedestrian facilities installed on both sides of the road. While pedestrian facilities are available, they are not accessible to someone in a wheelchair as the curb extends into each driveway.

This project was submitted for consideration as part of the NCDOT Prioritization process, but it did not compete well as compared to other pedestrian projects. Staff hired a consultant to assist in identifying the project constraints and to provide typical improvement recommendations along with a cost estimate. The final report resulted in the development of a typical driveway modification that could be installed thereby allowing the existing sidewalk to remain in place.



FY21 Goal: Design and construct pedestrian improvements along Henderson Drive from Onslow Drive to Doris Avenue and pedestrian improvements along Old Bridge Street at Anne Street and Mill Avenue. Council appropriated funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) act will be used for the design and construction of this project.

Improvements to Existing Facilities

The New Bridge Street Infrastructure and Streetscape project includes improvements to the existing infrastructure and streetscape on New Bridge Street. As part of this project, the existing sidewalk will be removed to allow for an ADA accessible path to be installed. Currently, the large majority of this sidewalk does not meet ADA's cross or running slope requirements. Additional pedestrian improvements also include mid-block crossings, pedestrian crosswalks and handicap parking which is currently lacking.

A portion of this project has already been completed with improvements in front of Boomtown between Bayshore Boulevard and Huerth Street. The first phase of construction which consists of the outfall near College Street and some ADA improvements will begin construction in August 2020 and construction is expected to last twelve months.

FY21 Goal: Complete construction of Phase 1 and to begin construction of Phase 2.

Addition of New Facilities

A new restroom facility was added to Georgetown Park. This 495 square foot facility replaces the older facility which was not ADA accessible. As part of the construction project, the older restroom was demolished and a new connecting asphalt trail was added.

FY21 Goal: Construct a new multimodal facility known as Jacksonville Station which will serve as a central transfer hub for all modes of transportation and to complete design on the new Jack Amyette Recreation Center.

Annual Street Rehabilitation

As identified in the FY 21 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the City's annual street rehabilitation program identifies the best method of either rebuilding the road or to mill and overlay the street. As part of this project, all streets that are rehabilitated will also include ADA accommodation upgrades for curb depressions and curb ramps where appropriate.

Staff will be soliciting bids for the resurfacing of a variety of streets to include Carolina Forest Boulevard, E. Windgate Court, W. Fairway Road, Foxhorn Road, Center Street, Village Drive, Greenbriar Drive and Court, Wisteria Road, Nottingham Road and Hyatt Circle.

FY21 Goal: Continue adding curb ramps and pedestrian improvements as part of the annual street rehabilitation project.

Park Improvements

Improvements were completed at Northeast Creek Park (NEC) to install an all-inclusive playground. The highlights of this playground include a bonded rubber surface and a concrete walkway border around the entire playground for ease of accessibility. The main playground is a ramped structure with many transfer platforms with numerous sensory components like interactive play panels and music components that are placed throughout the playground. This inclusive playground compliments the other improvements that have been made to this park such as a splash pad, restroom facility and shelter renovations.



This year, staff purchased three plastic wheelchairs for use at the City’s two splash pads – Jack Amyette Recreation Center and North East Creek Park. These waterproof wheelchairs truly allow the splash pads to be fully inclusive bringing smiles to many faces.

FY21 Goal: Implement upgrades to facilities identified in the FY 21 Capital Improvement Plan such as improvements at Northeast Creek Park Restroom and Shelter – Ballfield Side, NEC Playground Side Phase III, Playground Improvements at Sherwood and Georgetown.



Conclusion

While staff was faced with many obstacles this last fiscal year, they were able to begin working on this very important initiative. This is truly a team effort with representation from all Departments who are fully committed to meeting and exceeding the goals of the ADA Transition Plan as evidenced by staff’s commitment this last year. Staff has developed a strategic path moving forward to continue efforts of evaluating the services and programs that the City offers as well as implementing corrective actions so that we are truly One City.