

City of Jacksonville ADA Transition Plan

Year 2 Update (FY 2021)

August 2021

Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) self-evaluation, transition planning 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.

City Council adopted the City's ADA Transition Plan on March 19, 2019 with Addendum #1 presented to the City Manager in July 2020. This report provides an update of efforts that have been made over the last fiscal year and serves as the second year update. This report is hereby incorporated into the City's ADA Transition Plan as Addendum #2.

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

Coming off of a successful first year of implementation, even after the initial effects of Hurricane Florence, the ADA Teams were ready to continue that momentum. Unfortunately, late in FY20 the City as well as the entire global community was impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. City facilities closed to the public for a large portion of FY21. At the start of the Pandemic, the unknowns outweighed the knowns and much work ceased on this initiative as physical interactions were discouraged making

coordinating efforts increasingly difficult. As directives were provided from both the Federal Government and the Center for Disease Control, some City operations resumed in a virtual atmosphere. Towards the end of the fiscal year, ADA Teams were able to resume meeting virtually to discuss initiatives and next steps.

Although efforts slowed and this year took on a form that could not have been anticipated, staff continued to work on implementing some of the corrective actions that were identified, even in a largely virtual society.

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, Neighborhood Improvement Services, Finance, and IT.

This team identified four educational awareness areas to initially focus on. In the first year, the training team identified subject matter experts who could provide in-person training. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic City Hall was closed to the public from April 2020 to May 2021. The Training Team regrouped to create virtual training opportunities that were issued via the City ListServ. The Training Team hopes to reengage with subject matter experts in FY22 with the intent to host in person training sessions.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing

During FY20 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. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, Ms. Bauman was not able to offer in-person training during FY21. Staff will continue to coordinate with her regarding possible training in FY22.

FY22 Goal: Schedule training for employees to learn more about the deaf culture.

Autism

Currently, the City of Jacksonville offers the Help Me Home program to help better serve families with family members with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Often these individuals may leave the safety of their homes without the knowledge of their caregiver. Using the Help Me Home Program, families may register their loved ones with Jacksonville Public Safety allowing Law Enforcement to quickly identify and have vital knowledge about their loved ones that will help with communication and to bring them safely home. All registrant information is kept confidential.

The Training Team discussed broadening this program. The program began a couple of years ago and currently there are only three registrants of the program. The Training Team hopes that by broadening the program to include other disabilities, that Citizens will take the time to register their loved ones who may benefit from the program that have a disability outside of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Staff has learned that both the City of Jacksonville Public Safety and the Onslow County Emergency Services utilize a CAD system that allows for the inclusion of vital information for first responders when they are responding to an emergency call. These systems between the two entities does not currently communicate holistically, but both entities are looking at procuring a new system in the next year or so that would allow for cross communication. The Engagement Team began coordinating between the City and County to understand how a more robust CAD system could be utilized to implement the Help Me Home Program county-wide.

Additionally, staff will continue to coordinate with Dr. Becca Tagg, Clinical Director for Del Mar Center for Behavioral Health, in the hopes to host in-person training in FY22. In July 2019 she provided specific training on Autism for all Fire Personnel that was well received and greatly appreciated by the firefighters.

FY22 Goal: Continue monitoring the new CAD system implementation for both the County and the City. Once in place, work with staff to refine the capabilities of the Help Me Home Program.

Mental Health

For the month of October, the Training Team focused on Mental Health in honor of Mental Illness Awareness Week, which occurred in 2020 from October 4-10. The Training Team, working in the confines of a global pandemic, put together a short five minute video which focused on Mental Health at a broad level. The power point utilized a video produced by Maudsley Learning which gives an overview of what Mental Health is. The power point was pushed out via the City ListServ.

FY22 Goal: Expand and modify training for other departments.

Service Animals

September is National Service Animal Awareness month. With that in mind and realizing awareness of the newly adopted Animal Service Policy needed to occur, the Training Team put together a training opportunity on "Service Animals and the ADA." The training focused on what qualifies as a service animal, what questions you can ask, and an overview of the City's new policy.



The training opportunity was offered as in-person training for City employees who interact heavily with the public. Two sessions were offered at City Hall and two sessions were offered at the Commons Recreation Center. In addition to the in-person training, a virtual opportunity was provided as well. The virtual opportunity included a short video as well as a short five question survey following the video.

FY22 Goal: Invite Camp Mutt or another source to provide training to City employees to raise awareness of service animals and the job they are tasked to do.

American Sign Language (ASL)

As previously noted in the Year 1 Update, one of the most highly sought after trainings was that of ASL. Staff had partnered with Onslow County Health and Human Services to and Coastal Carolina Community College (CCCC) offer a class that would be held twice weekly for six weeks. Initially slated to start in April 2020, the ASL classes were cancelled due to COVID-19.

The Training Team continues to pursue this opportunity provided by CCCC. COVID-19 played an integral role in delaying the start of these classes as well as the continued delay of these classes. In August 2020, due to obligations presented by COVID-19, the City nor the County could provide employees to take part in the classes. The County was utilizing their staff for COVID testing and contact tracing and subsequently for vaccinations once they became available.

The Training Team hopes that in the near future this opportunity will be able to be pursued as COVID-19 restrictions decrease and staff is available to partake in the classes.

FY22 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 began transitioning to Microsoft 365 during the latter part of the fiscal year and will continue to make advancements utilizing Microsoft 365.

FY22 Goal: Standardize email signatures and templates now that Microsoft 365 has been rolled out.

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.

FY22 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. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, staff from both the City and County were focused on vaccinations and contract tracing. Meetings will resume in FY22.

FY22 Goal: Continue collaborating with Onslow County on ADA training and resources.

Closed Captioning System

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.



The City continues to utilize the closed captioning system and further refines its vocabulary and speech to text accuracy.

FY22 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).

Sidewalk Accessibility Video

One of the outcomes of the Accessibility survey was the identification of vegetation impacting sidewalk through-out the City. To

educate Citizens on what impacts sidewalk accessibility and how they might assist with the improvement of this accessibility the Engagement Team collaborated with Media to develop a Sidewalk Accessibility Video that is to be included in a campaign to promote sidewalk accessibility throughout the City. This video was shared on all the City's social media platforms.

FY22 Goal: To republish this campaign in the spring of 2022

Google Maps – Accessibility

Google Maps offers a function that allows municipalities, businesses, and other entities to note if ADA access is available at their facilities. This is an important feature as it allows those with disabilities to plan ahead and know what is provided when they are visiting a facility.

The Engagement Team began working this initiative with a goal to have accessibility information noted at all City facilities but also at businesses throughout the City. Currently, accessibility information for City Hall as well as recreation facilities is included in Google Maps. Staff also intends to coordinate this effort with Onslow County to ensure the entire county has accessibility information available through Google Maps.

FY22 Goal: Continue updating accessibility information for City facilities, coordinate with Onslow County and roll-out a campaign City wide to ensure other businesses are updating their accessibility information as well.

Interior Building Signage

Interior wayfinding signage such as room numbers, bathrooms, exits, etc. must comply with ADA standards to include braille and appropriate font size. A review of each building was conducted and City Hall was scheduled to receive new signage with the inclusion of braille. The signs were ordered; however, unfortunately, material for the signs was significantly delayed due to COVID-19.



Attachment #1 at the end of this Plan update includes the recommendations prepared by Media Services for interior signage.

FY22 Goal: Receive and install signs for City Hall. Continue to order and replace signs for all City facilities.

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.

Update Parking Areas

Prior to improvements in FY20 approximately 22% of handicapped parking spaces for City facilities did not meet current ADA standards. The goal was to create handicapped parking where none exists, improve signage, and refresh pavement markings.

Staff replaced and added over 30 of the needed handicap parking and van accessible parking placards during FY20. Staff intends to replace/add additional placards on an as needed basis.

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. The refreshing of pavement markings is an annual task completed by the Parks Maintenance Division.

FY22 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 170 feet of sidewalk at Kerr Street Rec Center. This section connects to the existing picnic shelter as well as parking lots on Kerr Street and behind the facility.



FY22 Goal: Complete sidewalk connections at 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.

FY22 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 this year in Northwoods at Iverleigh Lane and Belle Chasse Way. A total of 3 truncated domes were installed at these locations.

FY22 Goal: Continue to inventory and install truncated domes where appropriate.

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.

FY22 Goal: Investigate and implement corrective actions as stated.

ADA Improvements at Transit Stops

Continuing the efforts staff began in FY20, a scope of work was established 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.

Staff was delayed in bidding the project out for construction due to needing to complete Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and related laws. Staff has contracted with NV5 to assist with the Section 106 Process. This study will look at 30+ locations for ADA improvements associated with transit bus stops.

FY22 Goal: Complete Section 106 and 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. Unfortunately, this project has been placed on hold at this time. 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 improvements that exceed 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.

FY22 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 FY22. Intersection improvements by NCDOT at Western Boulevard at Gum Branch began construction in FY19 and will be completed in FY21. 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

In the fall of 2019 inventory of the Northwoods Area was completed and input into Mobile 311. 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

The inventory completed for Northwoods was used to identify a scope of work for some of the work completed in FY20 and additional locations in that inventory will be used for the FY21 projects.

Staff will then move over the Brynn Marr area for inventory. This area was identified by the Accessibility Team as the next highest priority location.

FY22 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 had hoped to once again partner with NCDOT in FY21 but due to financial constraints NCDOT did not solicit for TAP projects. Staff has however, engaged with NCDOT for a project in FY22 and has provided NCDOT with 80+ locations for curb ramp replacement/installation.

FY22 Goal: Continue working with NCDOT to retrofit or add curb ramps utilizing NCDOT TAP funds.

Streets

The City’s Streets Division is a vital contributor to ADA improvements that occur throughout the year. This past year the Streets Division repaired/installed 710 LF of sidewalk. Additionally, they completed improvements at Kerr Street Recreation Center and installed the truncated domes at Belle Chasse Way and Iverleigh Lane.

The Streets Division will play a key role in the multi-year contract that is anticipated to be solicited for tripping hazards later in FY22.

FY22 Goal: Replace sidewalk where needed.



FY20 ADA Sidewalks and Curb Ramps

Bids were solicited in June 2020 for the installation of 354 LF of sidewalk and the replacement and/or addition of 6 curb ramps. Construction of the project took place from July 2020 to October 2020. Ultimately, 546 LF of sidewalk was repaired/installed at locations on Clifton, Doris, Barn St, Sioux Dr, Johnson Blvd and Warn St.

FY22 Goal: Review the inventory list to identify areas to install sidewalk and curb ramps.

Tripping Hazards

During the latter part of FY20 and carrying over into FY21, the City contracted with Precision Safe Sidewalk to address tripping hazards on sidewalk along streets in Northwoods as well as Marine Blvd and Western Blvd. In total, between the Streets Division and the Transportation Department a total of 1,123 tripping hazards were addressed (363 in FY20 and 760 in FY21).



Utilizing a maintenance tactic rather than removing and replacing sidewalk allows for a tremendous cost savings. In FY21 Precision repaired 760 Tripping Hazards that were ¼” or more offset at a total of \$35,238. The total estimated cost for Demo/Repair of these locations was \$156,250. Precision estimates \$10.00/sqft when calculating Demo/Repair costs. Ultimately, by using Precision the City saved at least \$121,012.

The City’s Streets Division also corrected several tripping hazards along Johnson Blvd utilizing in house equipment.

FY22 Goal: Solicit a multi-year contract for tripping hazard identification and repair.

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 look at innovative design options to utilize the existing sidewalk while also making each driveway accessible.

FY22 Goal: Finalize design and solicit bids for the Henderson Drive ADA Improvements.

Improvements to Existing Facilities

Originally noted in the First Year Plan Update, the New Bridge Street Infrastructure and Streetscape project was to include improvements to the existing infrastructure and streetscape on New Bridge Street. As part of this project, the existing sidewalk would be removed to allow for an ADA accessible path to be installed.

Unfortunately, due to increased costs of construction materials and the availability of pipe due to COVID-19, the New Bridge Street Infrastructure and Streetscape project has been placed on hold at this time.

A portion of this project has already been completed with improvements in front of Boomtown between Bayshore Boulevard and Huerth Street as well as the outfall portion of the project.

Staff hopes to resume the project in the near future.

FY22 Goal: Continue to monitor construction costs in hopes of bidding out this project in the near future

Addition of New Facilities

Jacksonville Station

Jacksonville Station is currently under construction and is set to be complete in January of 2022. Jacksonville Station will serve as the central transfer hub for all modes of transportation. It will not only become the pulse point for the Jacksonville Transit buses, but it will also serve as a trail head, offer kiss and ride transportation and connection points for Amtrak and Greyhound.

Jack Amyette

Jack Amyette Recreation Center, commissioned in 1959 as the City's first public recreation facility, is located near downtown and hosts numerous events and leagues throughout the year. Additionally, it is one of two locations in Jacksonville with a splash pad that enables Citizens to utilize the waterproof wheelchairs. Unfortunately, as a result of Hurricane Florence in September of 2018, the Jack Amyette Recreation Center had severe roof damage. This damage ultimately led to further issues with flooding and possible mechanical/electrical issues throughout the recreation center.

Staff completed the design in FY21 for the necessary repairs to bring the recreation center back into usable, good standing. The project has been bid out for construction with the hopes of being fully constructed in FY22.

Downtown Transfer Facility

The Downtown Transfer Facility will establish a transfer point downtown for Jacksonville Transit and support the system as a whole and complement the services, amenities and

administrative purposes that will be provided by Jacksonville Station, currently under construction. The transfer station is anticipated to be comprised of two bus bays, three curbside spaces for drop-offs and ride-share services, ten bike parking spaces, ADA compliant walkways and circulation for pedestrians, covered waiting areas, a community information board, public restrooms and vending machines.

Staff began working on a feasibility study at the beginning of the fiscal year and are currently working with a consultant on 25% design plans.

FY22 Goal: Complete the design and advertise for the construction of the Downtown Transfer Facility and award and construct Jack Amyette Recreation Center.

Annual Street Rehabilitation

As identified in the FY21 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.

The FY19 Street Rehabilitation Project included the removal and replacement of 25 curb ramps and resurfacing of the following: Village Dr from Western Blvd to Winchester Rd; Greenbriar Dr from Greenbriar Ct to Pine Valley Rd; Greenbriar Court; Perry Dr from Greenway Dr to Pine Valley Rd; Hyatt Circle from Dixie Trl to Commons Dr S; Dixie Trl from Hyatt Cir to Sunset Rd; Nottingham Road from Marion Ct to Robinhood Dr; Indian Dr from Gary Ct to Brookdale Plaza; Tweed Dr from Northwoods Dr to Ramona Ave; David Place; Grimsby Place; Coventry Court

The FY20 Street Rehabilitation Project included the removal and replacement of 14 curb ramps, the addition of 4 new curb ramps, 7 detectable warning mats and resurfacing of the following: Decatur Rd from Doris to Hendricks; River St from Henderson to Woodview Ct; Maple from River to Decatur; Sioux from Bosco to Barn; Office Park Dr; Liberty from Western to Rainbow; Parkwood from Commerce to University; Creighton, Radcliffe, Harvard, Yale, Campbell; Shadowridge from Pine Valley to Corbin.

The FY21 Street Rehabilitation Project included the removal and replacement of 6 curb ramps, the installation of 2 detectable warning mats and resurfacing of the following: Barn; New River from Hargett to 24; Brynn Marr; Oakwood; Warlick St; Koonce Cir; W Bayshore; Cole.

FY22 Goal: Continue adding curb ramps and pedestrian improvements as part of the annual street rehabilitation project.

Park Improvements

Playground safety servicing occurred this past year at Sherwood Forest Park and Brooke Valley Park. Playground servicing increases the accessibility of the playground. While the end goal is to make the City's playgrounds as inclusive as possible, servicing them to make them more accessible is a vital interim step until inclusive playground equipment can be funded and installed.



Additionally, the City's Neighborhood Initiatives Department funded a new ADA compliant restroom facility at Georgetown Park utilizing Community Development Block Grant funding.

FY22 Goal: Implement upgrades to facilities identified in the FY 22 Capital Improvement Plan such as improvements at Jacksonville Commons as well as Playground Servicing at Georgetown Park.

Conclusion

While staff was faced with ever changing conditions due to a global Pandemic, they were able to continue working on this very important initiative. Staff looks forward to continuing efforts on the ADA Transition Plan into FY22. 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.