

AGENDA
ADA Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 25, 2024
3:00 PM
Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave,
First Floor Community Room / Zoom

(I) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

(II) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(III) PUBLIC COMMENTS

(IV) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Updates about previous inquiries and grievances

- Prerecorded newsletters for Levy and Parks & Rec
- Accessible entrance signs at Noyes: installation is complete

Review of new inquiries/grievances

- CTA stops are not accessible/Levy senior group advocacy
- Length of stoplights and pedestrian crossing signals
- Parked cars blocking sidewalks
- Sidewalk width along Main
- Mobile DMV sites for 2024

Training/education updates

- ADA/Disability Services: Manager Ruiz has met with Public Works, Community Development, Parking Services, Library departments
- ADA Transition Plan Annual Update feedback
- Disability Awareness Event: Feb. 28

Committee membership

- Application updates
- Current openings available

(V) COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

(VI) ADJOURNMENT



City of
Evanston™
MINUTES

ADA Advisory Committee
Tuesday, November 21, 2023 @ 3:00 PM
Evanston Public Library / Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Members present: Murphy Monroe, Litrea Hunter, Donna Stevens, Adrienne Allen, Jim Johnson, Tom Bobowski

Guests: Kathy Lyons

Staff present: Lauren Ruiz (Disability Rights & Advocacy Manager,) Rachel Stams (Senior Services Advocate)

Presiding member: Murphy Monroe

Murphy Monroe called the meeting to order at 3:10pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The group agreed to approve the October 26 minutes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A member shared their personal experience related to the sensory environment, explaining that sunglasses and ear buds help him with sensitivities to bright light and loud sounds. There are many individuals with sensory sensitivities/sensory processing disorders who may lose basic functions (ability to see, think, speak) without access to the tools and environment unique to their needs in order to regulate. An example was given from Guaranteed Rate Field which has a sensory room available for spectators.
 - It was recommended to share this information with those involved in designing the new Northwestern stadium

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

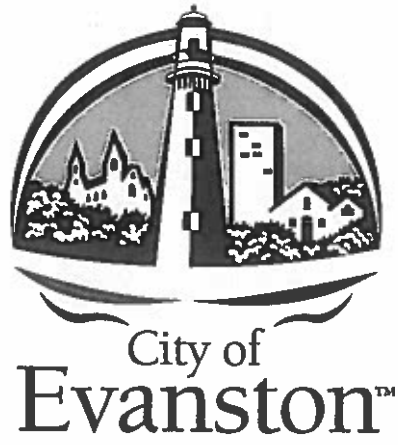
- a. Updates about previous inquiries and grievances
 - Main Library parking garage is open

- Green Bay Road crosswalks/pedestrian signals: Green Bay and Lincoln/Central/Livingston are all intersections included in the Green Bay Corridor Project which will take place in 2024/25
 - Volunteering at cat shelter: With support from Manager Ruiz, the cat shelter has created a volunteer "job description" that lists all tasks included in a volunteer role which will allow individuals to prepare for discussion about reasonable accommodations/discussion prior to orientation
 - Beach accessibility for individuals with visual impairments: The lakefront team is preparing for summer 2024. A meeting took place to discuss new beach entrance signs which will include language related to accessibility and inclusion for all, "no throw" zones at two beaches, and possibly a roped area in the water for individuals with visual impairments
 - Service animal/emotional support animal policies: now available on the City website. Emotional support animals are not permitted in City facilities.
- b. Review of new inquiries/grievances
- Placard missing from Oakton/Gray crosswalk: an LED blinking crosswalk sign will be placed here in 2024. The placard was removed due to construction along Oakton.
 - Request for prerecorded newsletters for Levy and Parks and Rec: at this time, the Committee felt this would be a large commitment due to the frequency of newsletters. It was suggested to have individuals use adapted equipment (screen readers, etc.) and if they have any problems, to contact Manager Ruiz via the accommodation hotline.
 - Accessible entrance signs at Noyes: 3 new directional signs have been installed to lead visitors to the accessible entrance in the back of the building.
- c. Training/education updates
- Manager Ruiz scheduling department meetings re: ADA Transition Plan Annual Update: November, December, January: full group Disability Access Team meetings will be replaced with these smaller department meetings so City staff can fully understand the ADA Coordinator role and the City's new ADA/Disability Services policies/procedures.
 - Committee ADA Plan initial review and specific training requests (see reference guide provided): Manager Ruiz highlighted various areas of the ADA Transition Plan and discussed department-specific data tracking and progress. Committee members requested additional training related to prioritization, transparency of the City budget
 - 2024 ADA Advisory Committee to host disability awareness event?
 - JJ's List/Disability Awareness Players: the Committee watched a YouTube video featuring this group which described their Disability Awareness Training and were in agreement that this would be very beneficial for City staff as well as community members. Manager Ruiz to set a date and provide additional details.
- d. Committee membership application
- New applicant: Tom B: was accepted as a new Committee member
 - Google form version of application
 - Application to be posted on City Committee website by end of November under "ADA Advisory Committee" tab of ADA/Disability Services

5. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

- Several suggestions for promoting Committee membership were provided including contacting Executive Directors of local non-profit organizations, Interfaith Evanston, Progress Center, Facebook/Twitter
- The group discussed the importance of disability awareness education for all communities, public schools

6. ADJOURNMENT



2023 ADA Transition Plan Annual Update

Background

In September of 2022, City staff in collaboration with community stakeholders, consulting firms, and engineering teams, completed an updated ADA Transition Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to guide the City in implementing and advancing the culture of inclusivity and accessibility for all residents which includes increasing access to the City's programs, services, activities, parks, and facilities for individuals with disabilities. Each year, the City will prepare an Annual Report based on the work that various departments have performed to provide information relating to the City's Transition Plan progress.

Key Accomplishments

Included in the 2022 Transition Plan were prioritized recommendations that once achieved, would provide an immediate impact of ADA compliance. These actions included:

- Appointing a full-time ADA Coordinator
- Formalizing an ADA Departmental Liaison system
- Creating an ADA Advisory Group, Task Force, or Commission to meet regularly with the ADA Coordinator
- Having the ADA Advisory Group review the annual City budget to address the recommendations of the Plan
- Creating a system to track ADA requests from residents and tracking the progress of the requests

To date, the City has accomplished four of five of these recommendations, and this progress has driven a noticeable increase in understanding of the importance of accessibility and inclusivity.

In May 2023, a subcommittee of the Commission on Aging and Disabilities was created. This ADA Advisory Committee meets monthly to provide opportunities for focused discussions between residents of Evanston with a special interest in advocating for and promoting inclusion of individuals with disabilities, individuals who have a disability and wish to contribute their experiences and ideas, care partners, professionals working closely with the disability community in Evanston, and representatives of community groups and City Departments that address disability services. An official membership process was established in November 2023 and this group has been vital in establishing and supporting the City's newly established ADA/Disability Services. The Committee's work plan includes goals of increased member involvement in ADA Transition Plan project decisions which will allow for progress toward the Plan's recommendation of review of the City's ADA budget.

In June 2023, a newly created full time position, the Disability Rights & Advocacy Manager, was filled. This role includes designation of ADA Coordinator for the City. In addition to overseeing all aspects of ADA implementation, this individual is responsible for creating and maintaining communication processes for community members and City staff, developing disability

service-related policies and processes, developing and coordinating trainings for departmental staff, and managing the Parks & Recreation Department's Disability and Advocacy Division.

A Disability Access Liaison Team was formed in September of 2023. This group includes staff representatives from various City departments and is dedicated to improving accessibility and inclusivity in all City programs, services, and activities. Liaisons provide expert knowledge related to the function and responsibilities of their departments and together with the Disability Rights & Advocacy Manager, work to address accommodation requests, inquiries, and grievances from the community. Additionally, the Team prioritizes projects aimed at fulfilling the recommendations included in the ADA Transition Plan.

The City's ADA/Disability Services, including new accommodation request and inquiry/grievance procedures, were established in September 2023 and are included on the City website. This information was presented to the community during September's City Council meeting and via press release in October. Additionally, all City staff have adopted the City's new accessibility statement in their email signatures to allow for easier access to accommodation requests.

Construction Projects

The Capital Planning and Engineering Bureau completed updates on several intersections and driveways in fall 2023.

Location:	Work completed to meet ADA standards:
Northwest corner Brown Ave/Lee St	Lowered the keystone and added transition to existing sidewalk for west bound pedestrians
Oakton Street and Wesley Avenue	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps at all corners and reconstructed the pedestrian crosswalks
Oakton Street and Florence Avenue	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps and added pedestrian crosswalk at the west leg including bus stop pads
Oakton Street and Dodge Avenue	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps at all corners and upgraded the traffic signals
Oakton Street and Grey Avenue	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps and relocated the pedestrian crossing to the west leg
Oakton Street and Hartrey Avenue	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps and added pedestrian crosswalk at the west leg including bus stop pads
Oakton Street and Animal Shelter/Home Depot Driveway	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps at all corners and upgrading the traffic signals

Oakton Street and Shell Station/Quad Driveway	Reconstructed the sidewalk/ramps on the north, south and west legs and upgraded the traffic signals
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Public Right-Of-Way Access

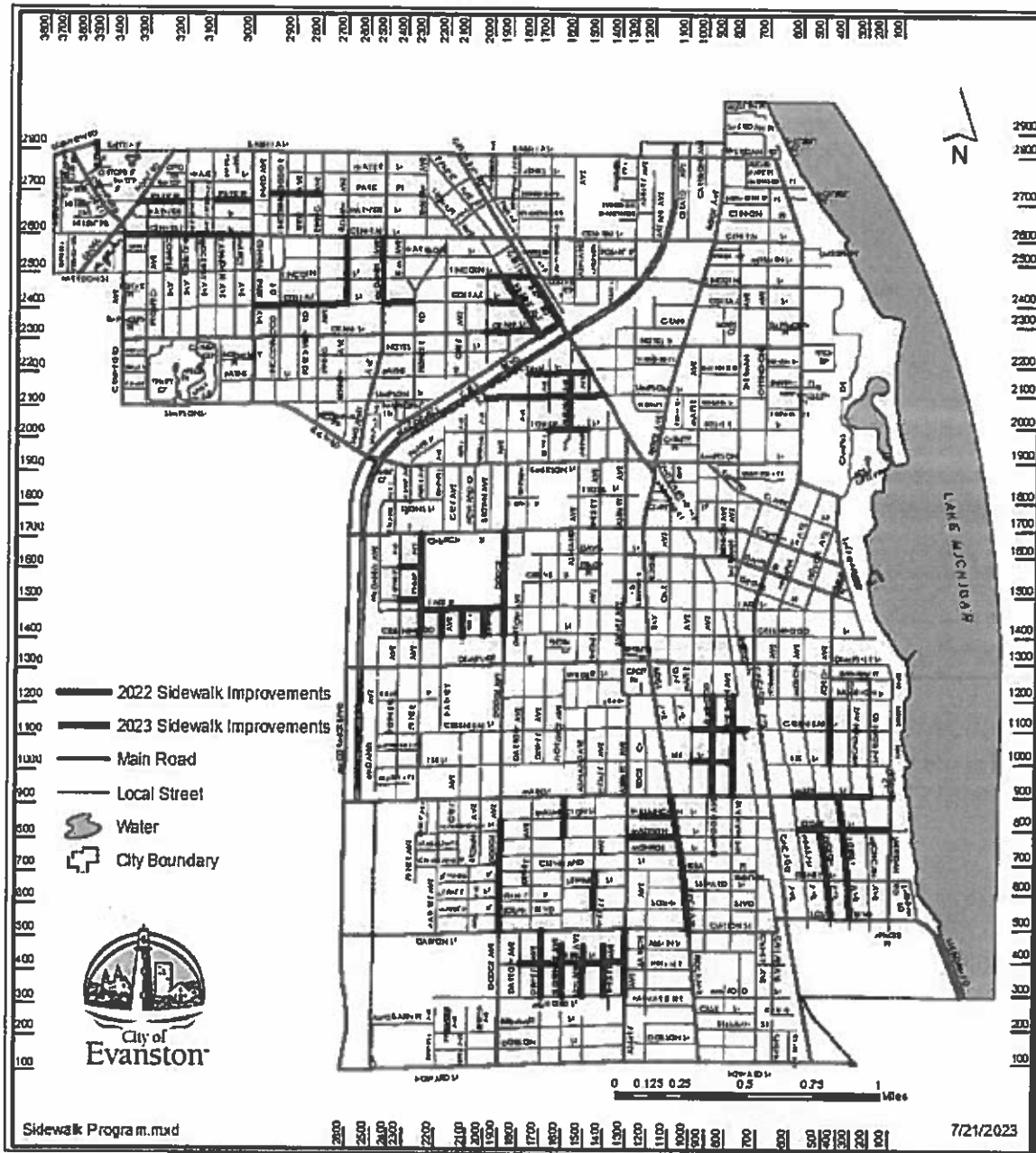
Included in the City's 2022 ADA Transition Plan is input from online surveys provided to community members. Nearly 50% of respondents listed the rights-of-way needing the most attention. Accessible parking was noted as an additional priority for the community with 43% of survey respondents listing this as an element that is most important to update. The City places feedback from the community in highest regard, and new accessibility standards presented by the U.S. Access Board in August 2023 will have a great impact on rights-of-way planning in 2024 and beyond.

The U.S. Access Board's final rule of PROWAG (Pedestrian Right Of Way Accessibility Guidelines) provides new scoping and technical requirements to ensure that sidewalks, curb ramps, on-street parking, driveways, intersection crossings, and pedestrian push buttons, in addition to other rights-of-way elements, are readily accessible and usable by pedestrians with disabilities. Steps have already been taken by various City departments to determine how these standards will affect our current plans.

The parking division of the City's Administrative Services department completed an audit of accessible parking throughout the City in December 2023. This assessment divided the City's on-street parking into North, Lakefront, South, and Downtown regions and also gathered information about City's public parking lots to determine, based on PROWAG standards, where additional spots need to be placed. The next step in this process will include our Parking Services, Public Works, and Engineering teams creating a timeline to begin adding these accessible parking spots beginning in spring of 2024.

The City's Sidewalk Improvement Program organizes project locations following an equitable priority system for rating sidewalk construction and replacement. It includes phases focused on meeting the community's needs and reaching ADA program access. In 2023, the City removed and replaced 26,000 square feet of sidewalk. A map of the 2023 progress is included below.

Sidewalk Improvement Program



This map is provided "as is" without warranties of any kind. See www.cityofevanston.org/mapdisclaimers.html for more information.

Changes to City Programs, Services, and Activities

In an effort to make our Civic Center more accessible for visitors who may need mobility assistance, the facility began providing a transport wheelchair, located at the main entrance

security desk, for rental. This equipment can be reserved ahead of time or requested upon arrival.

Information and Signage

A City-wide Service Animal/Emotional Support Animal Policy was established in November of 2023. This policy sets clear guidelines based on the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) as well as Illinois law to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal. It defines a service animal and distinguishes between service animals and emotional support animals.

Permanent sign holders were placed at all of the City's community centers in November 2023 which include various forms of contact information for individuals to make accommodation requests for City programs, services, and activities. Large print flyers are also included in these sign holders.

New signs were posted at Noyes Cultural Arts Center to communicate the route and location of the accessible entrance in December 2023.

Parks & Recreation Department

Increasing accessibility and inclusivity has been a top priority in the City's Parks & Recreation Department in 2023. With the formal addition of a Disability & Advocacy Division in May of 2023, expansion of programming and services for individuals with disabilities has been at the forefront of planning. Included in the Disability & Advocacy Division are Special Recreation programming and Inclusion Services.

Special Recreation programming has expanded to include opportunities for additional populations within the disability community. Activities specifically designed for adults with physical disabilities as well as early childhood program options were offered beginning in the summer season and expansion will continue in the future.

New Inclusion Policies were created in January 2023 with goals of:

- Providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate safely and successfully alongside peers in the City of Evanston's Parks & Recreation programming
- Providing access to the goals, benefits, and overall experience that all participants in the program receive through reasonable, least restrictive accommodations
- Facilitating understanding, collaboration, and connections within all Parks & Recreation programming and within the community

Inclusion procedures promote increased family and team engagement and Inclusion Plans specifically designed around the unique abilities, goals, and needs of each participant.

The summer of 2023 brought an increase in beach accessibility for Evanston. Mobi-mats, or firm rollout access mats, were put in place at Lighthouse, Clark Street, Greenwood, Lee Street, South Boulevard, and Dempster Street beaches. Additionally, the City purchased beach wheelchairs which were available to borrow at several beaches.

Department-wide information was added to the Parks & Recreation website in December 2023 to clearly communicate the Department's goals related to accessibility and inclusivity.

ADA/Disability Services Trainings

With the formation of the City's Disability Access Liaison Team, departments have been able to develop a further understanding of the ADA Transition Plan. In November and December, the ADA Coordinator met individually with several City departments with goals of providing an increased awareness of the role of the ADA Coordinator, increasing about the City's newly established ADA/Disability Services policies and procedures, identifying how each department fits in with the ADA Transition Plan, and to begin developing processes to include Transition Plan progress in staffs' regular workflow.

	City Department:	Attendance:
ADA/Disability Services and Transition Plan Meetings	Public Works	7
	Community Development	5
	Parking Services	4

In October of 2023, an Emergency Preparedness Fair was held at Evanston Township High School. Aiming to bring awareness to man-made hazards and climate-related weather events, the event provided residents with tools they need to minimize risks, stay safe during emergencies, and improve community resilience. A Disability Access Tour was among the activities offered at this event and provided the opportunity for community members to join the Disability Rights & Advocacy Manager as well as the City's Chair of the ADA Advisory Committee for unique perspectives on accessibility in Evanston. The Tour provided information about local organizations, groups, and locations that support the disability community, took an honest look at the work that still needs to be done for Evanston to achieve true accessibility and inclusivity, and identified current steps that are being taken to progress.

With the addition of the transport wheelchair rental at the Civic Center, nine of the City's Facilities and Maintenance staff participated in an informational training about the equipment as well as the policies set to provide safe use for community members.

ADA Inquiries, Grievances, and Resolutions

Along with updates to policies, a new option was added to the City's ADA Grievance Procedures to encourage community feedback and suggestions related to accessibility. Community members are now able to communicate via email, phone, or electronic form and choose to make an inquiry (to share feedback/suggestions and requests for ADA alterations) or file a grievance (to share a situation in which an individual feels that discrimination has occurred.) The steps in place once receiving this communication are the same, with the Disability Rights & Advocacy Manager connecting with applicable City staff to come to a resolution. Below are the total number of inquiries, grievances, and resolutions communicated since the ADA Coordinator role was filled in June 2023.

Inquiries	20
Grievances	3
Grievance Resolutions	2
Resolutions Still in Progress	1