



ADA Compliance Self-Evaluation

Overview

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people who have disabilities. Title II of ADA specifically addresses the subject of making public services and public transportation, such as sidewalks, accessible to those with disabilities. Failure to do so constitutes discrimination.

For State and Local Governments with 50 or more employees, ADA requires an assessment of accessibility. The City of Sumner meets this criteria. The assessment is intended for all services provided by the City including but not limited to sidewalks, buildings, parks, programs, and employment. The City uses the assessment to create a Self-Evaluation report to be reviewed and commented on by the public. Once the comments have been addressed, the City creates an ADA Transition Plan to propose recommendations and a project list. The ADA Transition Plan then goes before City Council for final approval.

Sumner's Public Works Department conducted an inventory of the sidewalk system within the public right of way. The results of the inventory were used to assess if Sumner's sidewalk system posed significant barriers for people with disabilities. The next step was an evaluation of policies and practices to verify whether they facilitated accessibility. The City invited interested individuals to participate in improving accessibility by creating an advisory team.

Inventory of Sidewalk System

The foundation of the Self-Evaluation report was built on the inventory of the existing sidewalk system that the City conducted in 2011. The field survey assessed curb ramps, driveways, crosswalks, and sidewalks with respect to compliance with current ADA standards.

The Field Survey asked

- Does the intersection have a curb ramp?
- If the ramp exists, is it ADA compliant?
- Is there a sidewalk?
- If the sidewalk exists, is it ADA compliant?
- If driveway approaches exist, are they ADA compliant?
- Is there a crosswalk?

- If there is a crosswalk, is it ADA compliant?

FINDINGS

A large amount of Sumner does not have sidewalks. It is not practical to install ramps on streets without relatively complete sidewalks. The Sidewalk ADA Transition Plan should prioritize work related to completing the inventory:

1. What areas of the City should be completed first?
2. What streets within those areas should be completed first?
3. What intersections within those areas should be completed first?

It is important to keep the field inventory up to date so that progress can be monitored and measured. Best practice is to present the data graphically in a map format. Using Geographic Information System (GIS) is the best alternative. A summary of the field survey findings and maps showing barriers to access are available in Exhibit A at the end of this document.

Policy and Practices Review

The City of Sumner reviewed its policies and procedures with respect to compliance with Title II requirements and sidewalk access.

This included review of

- the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Sumner Municipal Code Title 12, Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places
- Standard Plans and Street Standards
- Citizen Comment/Complaint/Grievance Policy

FINDINGS

Sumner's policies and practices should continue to be updated regularly to include specific policies and references to ensure compliance with Title II requirements to provide access to people with disabilities. The above documents already include references to compliance with the ADA act. Engineering street standards include current ADA standards to ensure that future construction of sidewalk ramps meet the current recommended ADA design standards. Title 12 of the Municipal Code assures consistent upgrade in ramps as adjacent land is developed.

As a small-size city, an informal process is common for sidewalk complaints related to ADA compliance. However, as the City moves forward, such a system may result in inconsistent outcomes depending on who takes the request/complaint and who is assigned to follow-through. For that reason, an ADA Coordinator/Transition Plan Manager should be designated.

Public Involvement

Title II of the ADA requires extensive and well documented public processes to prevent discrimination to people with disabilities. This includes the development of the Self-Evaluation and ADA Transition Plan; designating an ADA Transition Plan manager; provide public notice of ADA requirements and establishing a grievance procedure. Public involvement is a critical component since laws only go so far to provide guidance.

ADA MOBILITY ADVISORY TEAM

The City of Sumner posted an invitation on the City website to anyone interested in assisting in Sumner's Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Respondents formed an advisory team, representing the citizens of Sumner especially for/from the disabled community as well as the general public. The goal of this team is to assure that the Self-Evaluation is comprehensive and that the ADA Transition Plan's priorities meet the priorities of people with disabilities.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

In addition to the team, the City encourages further citizen participation. Not only is the City required to provide public notice to view and comment on Sidewalk Evaluation and the Sidewalk ADA Transition Plan but it is also a critical part of a successful plan. . Often, obstacles are obvious only to the users who encounter them. In addition, different disabilities require different responses, which can sometimes conflict. For example, an apron ramp that works well for wheelchair access at crosswalks causes confusion for users with visual impairments, who rely on the direction of curb cuts to line up with crosswalks. Citizens are also good resources for helping to prioritize what areas the city should give the most attention to in the development of the Transition Plan.

Public outreach should

- Provide opportunities for the public to comment on the Self-Evaluation and ADA Transition Plan;
- Keep a record of comments received for 3 years; and
- Keep the Self-Evaluation and ADA Transition Plan available to the public.

Recommendations

To move forward, the City of Sumner next needs to

- Designate an ADA Transition Plan Manager for the Public Works Department.
- Adopt a more formal citizen comment / grievance procedure.
- Have the ADA Mobility Advisory Team review the Self-Evaluation and public comments to assist in preparing the ADA Transition Plan.
- Finalize the field inventory and mapping for high priority locations.
- Prepare a Sidewalk ADA Transition Plan that will
 - Adopt policies and procedures that will facilitate ADA sidewalk compliance;

- Provide a method to eliminate existing sidewalk barriers;
- Prioritize deficient locations for future ADA upgrades ;
- Provide a schedule for elimination of existing sidewalk barriers.

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