

WisDOT 2024 ADA Transition Plan Comments

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging (Commission) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2024 ADA Transition Plan and appreciates the continued efforts WisDOT is taking to enhance the accessibility of state-owned infrastructure, making Milwaukee County and greater Wisconsin a safe, livable and enjoyable location for all residents, including those with mobility limitations.

Upon review of the Plan, the Commission congratulates WisDOT on the 76 improvement projects in 2023 which installed or updated roughly 1,700 curb ramps in the state. While the Commission appreciates WisDOT's response to our previous comment that the timeline for curb ramp improvement is grossly prolonged, with its completion anticipated roughly 50 years after the passing of the ADA, we still hope to see updates to the timeline.

The Commission is glad to hear that WisDOT is conducting accessibility trainings for those involved in the design and maintenance of pedestrian facilities, including state, local, and private sector transportation engineering professionals. The Commission would love to see these trainings broadened to include the agencies that advocate for the aging and disability communities.

The Commission thanks WisDOT for its response to our comment on the previous plan requesting additional guidance on routine installation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS), which improve street crossing safety for residents with visual impairments. The Commission would like to see a stronger commitment to the installation of APS and higher prioritization beyond installation as opportunities arise.

Within the WisDOT Highway Curb Ramps and Sidewalk ADA Inventory Database, there are still many curb ramp locations without Detectable Warning Field's that do not have a 'program year' attributed to them (along Highway 145 in Milwaukee County, for example). The Commission is glad to hear that WisDOT is evaluating the feasibility of adding a note in their attribute table reporting for cases in which curb ramp locations are outside the available 6-year timelines, to clarify that improvements to this highway are not yet planned for.

The Commission remains steadfast in the desire for greater investment in improvements that increase accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities, including investment in sidewalk infrastructure, transit and specialized transportation. We urge the State to expedite the timeline of improvement projects to the greatest extent possible, as well as advocate for increases in budget to support their completion. Pedestrian infrastructure and expanded public transit greatly impact the aging and disability populations' abilities to safely and successfully navigate their communities and maintain travel independence throughout their lifespan.