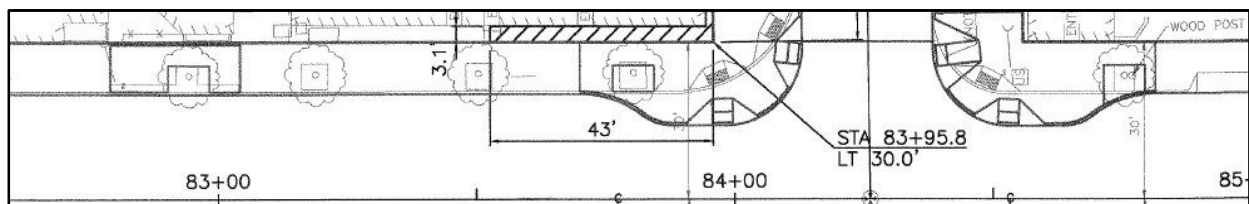




Seattle Department of Transportation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for the Seattle Public Right-of-Way

Appendix 3.4a: SDOT Community Engagement Plan





Introduction

The City of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is currently working on an ADA Transition Plan. This plan includes information on existing, known barriers to access for those living with disabilities in the Seattle public right-of-way as well as plans to remove those barriers over time.

Public input and participation are basic requirements in developing effective self-evaluation and transition plans.

Purpose

The purpose of this Community Engagement Plan is to identify methods and to plan efforts to provide people with disabilities and others in the community and opportunity to guide the SDOT ADA Transition Plan process through public input and participation. With this participation, SDOT can more effectively prioritize barrier removal and improve access in the Seattle public right-of-way. Improved access in the right-of-way can effectively increase access to important destinations, such as transit, healthcare, and government facilities.

Objectives

The primary objective of SDOT ADA public outreach efforts is to determine specific needs of those living with disabilities when using the public right-of-way. Outreach may reveal general areas within the City that could be prioritized for improvements, or it may be found that specific facilities may need curb ramp and sidewalk improvements to help reach those identified destinations. SDOT relies on feedback from the public to help understand where areas or specific facilities may need to be improved to better serve people with disabilities.

In addition to identifying areas of need, another objective through outreach is to determine specifically what improvements in the public right-of-way are the most important. It is important to balance the needs of pedestrians of differing abilities. For this reason, curb ramps may be important to those with mobility impairments, while Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) may be more important to those living with visual disabilities. SDOT will be able to better understand how to disperse improvements by type and will be able to adjust the design of accessible pedestrian features based on input from the public.

Methods

Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee

The Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee (PAAC) is the primary mechanism for obtaining public feedback for the SDOT ADA Transition Plan. This committee was established to discuss access needs in the public right-of-way for those living with disabilities and to discuss and help prioritize improvements in the SDOT ADA Transition Plan. At each Committee meeting, SDOT will review priorities for access improvements as well as report those that have been completed. This reporting

will focus on curb ramp and APS installations but will also include information on sidewalk improvement projects as prioritized under the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP).

PAAC meetings include participation from people living with different types of disabilities, disability advocates, residents of the City of Seattle, regional transportation professionals and engineers, and others. The Committee meets at least four times per year (once each quarter) at the Seattle Municipal Tower.

Community Meetings and Other Efforts

Because it is understood that not all community members and residents of Seattle are able to attend the PAAC meetings, SDOT recognizes the need to engage with the public in additional efforts. Each year, supplemental meetings will be planned and organized to accommodate engagement with people living with disabilities in all areas of the City. SDOT will continue to strive to obtain public feedback in an equitable way.

Each year, to compliment the PAAC meetings, SDOT will aim to participate in a minimum of four additional community meetings or outreach efforts to obtain important feedback from those that are unable to attend those meetings. These additional efforts may include coordination with planned Citywide public outreach engagements. At times, to assist with receiving and organizing community needs, SDOT may generate surveys to identify specific improvements that are desired.

Coordination with City of Seattle Title II ADA Program Efforts

SDOT has and will continue to work with the City of Seattle ADA Program to participate in community engagement and public outreach efforts that include multiple City of Seattle Departments. Meetings that incorporate multiple considerations (i.e. access to all City services, programs, and activities) can be more useful for some audiences. For example, assembling a meeting to discuss the needs of a certain type of disability may be more useful to all parties by gathering a larger understanding of needs, not only concerns in the public right-of-way.

SDOT and the City of Seattle Title II ADA Program will actively engage with groups including, but not limited to:

- Disability focus groups (mobility device users, blind/deaf-blind, cognitive disabilities)
- Advocacy organizations
- Varying demographics
- Varying geographical areas of the City
- Individuals who may not be associated with a disability organization or network

Opportunities to engage the public will also be sought at:

- Major community events/festivals
- Regional conferences focused on access for people with disabilities

SDOT will also work with the City of Seattle ADA Program and other city departments to better understand city facilities that have been prioritized for accessibility improvements. For example, if the public determines that a particular city facility of importance (e.g. downtown library), SDOT will review public right-of-way access to those identified facilities and prioritize improvements, if necessary.