

# **Village of Oswego**

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) SELF-ASSESSMENT AND  
TRANSITION PLAN  
FOR  
THE VILLAGE OF OSWEGO, ILLINOIS  
KENDALL COUNTY

April, 2021

## **BACKGROUND**

There have been a series of federal acts over the last half century which have strived to equalize opportunities for all Americans. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or ADA, is a federal civil liberties law that prohibits discrimination of people based on abilities. Title II of the ADA specifically addresses access to state and local government public facilities and Right of Ways (ROWs), requiring that public entities make every reasonable attempt to remove physical barriers within these spaces. Examples of modifications include adding braille below lettering on public signs, widening sidewalks and doorways to accommodate wheelchairs, constructing sidewalk ramps and detectable warning strips at traffic intersections, adding push openers for doors, and adding push buttons with audible instructions at crosswalks.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Section 35 of the ADA addresses requirements related to public entities. Public entities are required to

- adopt a grievance policy.
- designate an employee responsible for investigating any grievances.
- conduct a Self-Evaluation that evaluates current services, policies, and practices, and identifies areas of deficiencies.
- make the Self-Evaluation available for public comment.
- as a public entity that employs fifty (50) or more persons, create a Transition Plan that details methods and time frames to obtain compliance.
- make the Transition Plan available for public inspection and comment.
- Periodically update the Transition Plan

## **ADA PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION**

The Village of Oswego was incorporated in 1833 and, until 1990, had a population of less than 4000. Between 1990 and current, the population of the Village of Oswego grew ten-fold. Though accessibility design standards have been modified since 1990, the vast majority of the Village was built with a basic level of accessibility. Per GIS we can estimate 91% (by area) of residential and commercial areas in the Village was developed after ADA was in place.



OSWEGO IN 1939



OSWEGO TODAY

## **TRANSITION PLAN**

### Program Responsibility

The Village of Oswego's ADA Coordinator is designated as the person responsible to coordinate the Village's efforts to comply with and carry out the responsibilities under the ADA. The current ADA Coordinator is also the Building and Permits Manager and evaluates all new developments for ADA compliance.

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The Village website has a page dedicated to the Americans with Disabilities Act and publishes the ADA coordinator contact information and its grievance policy on that page.

### Inventory

The Village typically budgets \$2,000,000 per year towards its resurfacing program (as of 2021). As streets are resurfaced, all ramps adjacent to the roadway project are replaced and brought up to current ADA standards, as are broken or severely displaced sections of sidewalk. As of 2021, there is no comprehensive sidewalk inventory of, or proactive program in place to address, smaller displacements (<1") or to measure slopes at cross walks. The Village has not historically put much emphasis on sidewalk replacement due to the relatively young age of the overall town, but it is anticipated that sidewalk replacements will become a higher priority in future years.

As funds become available, the Village intends to gather a more comprehensive ADA inventory for pedestrian signals and ADA ramps by utilizing a pavement analysis system used for street evaluation.

### Self-Evaluation

The Village of Oswego is working towards conducting a self-evaluation of Its public ROWs to

- ensure accessibility;
- Identify issues of accessibility that need to be addressed;
- Develop a schedule for the improvement of these facilities; and
- Comply with ADA mandated standards for all new construction projects.

All municipal buildings that are open to the public are ADA compliant.

- Public Works Facility – 2002
- Village Hall – 2007
- Public Safety Building – 2019
- Oswego Entertainment Venue - 2021

Of the pre-1990 subdivisions outside of the original town, one has no sidewalks, one has a discontinuous sidewalk and no ramps, and the majority of the remaining have either been addressed previously or will be addressed in the future through the annual resurfacing project. For this reason, the focus of this report is primarily on the downtown.

Traffic signals under the jurisdiction of the Village will be inventoried to identify whether there are appropriate push buttons installed and all crosswalks, detectable warnings are in place, and ramps and sidewalks have correct slopes.

There are more significant barriers within downtown Oswego that will be addressed as funds are made available. Some of the challenges are illustrated below.



The topography in parts of the downtown have grades as high as 10% with few landing areas.

The older store fronts along one block of Main St are significantly elevated from the street, with stairs as their primary access. The width between the back of curb and the elevated doors do not allow for easy addition of mid-block ramps. There are currently ramps at each end of each block and are in compliance with ADA but awkward for shoppers.



Oversized tree grates protrude into the sidewalk area throughout the downtown, as shown here. As funds become available, these will be systematically replaced with smaller grates to meet the minimum sidewalk width requirements at a point.



The use of concrete detectable warnings and bricks in the crosswalks and sidewalks provide irregular surfaces that are potential tripping hazards.



There is a railroad line that runs just west of Main St and is situated at the lowest point in the area, making significant modification of the grade cost prohibitive. In the picture below, the base of a crossing gate was placed in the middle of the sidewalk, creating a challenge to providing minimum sidewalk width.



#### Barrier Removal Projects:

The Village will identify pedestrian barriers in the downtown, prioritizing Main Street. Addressing the barriers will require a comprehensive evaluation of the purpose of the sidewalks, access to businesses, and configuration of the parking. Identified improvements will be constructed based upon overall village priorities consistent with available funding.

#### Overall strategy:

The Village will conduct field investigations and update its inventory of sidewalks in public ROWs. AS our GIS system evolves, this information can be added and used to update this ADA Transition Plan. In the meantime, there are three main strategies being incorporated into Village operations.

1. *Handicap Ramps*: The Village will continue to address replacement of ramps through its annual road programs, and address other ramps, as necessary, if complaints are received.
2. *Private Development*: When private construction or alteration affects the public right-of-way, the Village will evaluate if ADA standards are being met and if modifications are needed.
3. *Right-of-Way projects*: all ROW projects involving street and pedestrian ways will incorporate current ADA standards.

#### Public Involvement:

As a public entity, the Village of Oswego will make available to the public information regarding the provisions of this plan and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the public entity. This plan was presented at the April 5, 2021 public meeting of the Village Board, is published on the Village website, and is available for public comment.

Comments received prior to April 15, 2021 have been evaluated, and where appropriate, incorporated into this document.

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