



Americans with Disabilities Act

Title II

Standards for State and Local Governments

City of Georgetown, Texas

**ADA Transition Plan**

## **PART I - INTRODUCTION TO THE ADA**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted on July 26, 1990 and provides comprehensive rights and protections for individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The ADA covers individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit a major life activity, persons with a record of such impairment, and persons regarded or perceived as having such impairment. The law was designed to ensure that persons of all abilities have equality of opportunity, economic self-sufficiency, full participation in American life, and independent living.

To ensure that the fundamental goal of the American with Disabilities Act is met, Title II of the ADA requires state and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities. This requirement extends not only to physical access at government facilities, programs, and events, but also to policy changes that governmental entities must make to ensure that all people with disabilities can take part in, and benefit from, the programs and services of the state and local governments. In addition, governmental entities must ensure effective communication, including the provision of necessary auxiliary aids and services so that individuals with disabilities can participate in civic life.

The Title II regulations cover "public entities." Public entities include any state or local government and any of its departments and agencies. All activities, services, and programs of public entities are covered, including activities of state legislatures and courts, town meetings, police and fire departments, motor vehicle licensing, and employment.

## **PART II - CITY COMPLIANCE WITH THE ADA**

Title II requires city governments to ensure that each of its programs, services and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are accessible to people with disabilities. This emphasis on access to programs, as opposed to access to buildings or facilities, distinguishes the requirements for public entities from those for private places of public accommodation. In providing access, city governments are not required to take any action that would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of any program, service or activity or that would result in undue financial and administrative burdens. If an action would result in such an alteration or such burdens, the City must take any other action it can to ensure that people with disabilities receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.

Program Access covers the entire range of city services and programs, including as an example appropriate access along sidewalks and at intersections in the public right of way, access to a city building or facility such as City Council Chambers, the ability to pay a utility bill, or to access a Parks and Recreation Facility. Program Access may be achieved in a variety of ways: city governments may choose to make structural changes to existing facilities to achieve access; or it can pursue a variety of non-structural alternatives to achieve program accessibility. For

example, city governments may choose to renovate a non-accessible building, relocate services to an accessible level of a building or to another building that is fully accessible, or to deliver services in an alternate accessible manner. When choosing among possible methods of achieving program access, however, city governments must give priority to the choices that offer programs, services and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate.

The City of Georgetown is committed to ensuring that its programs, services and activities are accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with Title II. The City of Georgetown will not discriminate on the basis of disability regarding employment and services or programs provided by the municipality. Additionally, the City of Georgetown will inform individuals that reasonable accommodation will be provided and that protections against discrimination are provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **PART III - TRANSITION PLAN ELEMENTS**

New construction in the City shall be constructed in accordance with the applicable ADA Standards for Accessible Design. This Transition Plan addresses renovations or modifications required to achieve Program Accessibility. The Transition Plan is required to identify physical obstacles in the City that limit accessibility to its programs or activities to individuals with disabilities; describe in detail the methods that will be used to make all public facilities accessible; specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance in making the facilities accessible; and indicate the official responsible for implementation of the plan.

#### **SIDEWALKS, CURB RAMPS, INTERSECTIONS AND STREETS**

The City of Georgetown recognizes that pedestrian walkways or sidewalks often play a key role in providing access to government programs and services and to the goods and services offered to the public by private businesses. When walkways cross a curb at intersections, a ramp or sloped surface is needed. Curb ramps allow people with mobility impairments to gain access to the sidewalks and to pass through center islands in streets.

All newly constructed or repaired curb ramps are designed and constructed in compliance with the applicable ADA Standards for Accessible Design. When the City constructs new roads or alters existing roads, it is committed to installing curb ramps where public walkways cross curbs at intersections. Without the required curb ramps, sidewalk travel in Georgetown may be dangerous, difficult, and in some cases impossible for people who use wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility aids to navigate. Likewise, when new sidewalks or walkways are built or altered, the City is committed to ensuring that curb ramps or sloped areas are provided wherever they intersect with streets or roads.

At existing roads and sidewalks that are not being altered, the City may choose in some cases to construct curb ramps at every point where a pedestrian walkway intersects a curb, or it may chose to provide curb ramps at only select corners or at other locations if equal access to the

programs served by these walkways can be ensured. Alternative routes to buildings that make use of existing curb ramps may be acceptable when people with disabilities must only travel a marginally longer route.

Transportation Services is committed to evaluating on-street parking for ADA compliance and to investigate and act on opportunities to improve access to public walkways and facilities on all Capital Improvement projects. A City Sidewalk Study was conducted in 2001. Since that time, significant improvements have been made to miles of sidewalks, countless curb ramps, street parking and intersections throughout the City to facilitate accessibility and access to persons with disabilities. Current and planned improvement projects include:

- Austin Avenue Sidewalk from Georgetown High School and the Recreation Center
- CDBG Annual Parking Program
- Street Maintenance Ramp Upgrade/Installation
- Street Parking Around the Courthouse after Resurfacing
- 6<sup>th</sup> Street Sidewalk Improvements
- 9<sup>th</sup> Street Sidewalk Improvements
- Tin Barn Alley Sidewalk Improvements

The City also currently accommodates requests for unplanned curb ramps and sidewalks and for emergency repairs. A dedicated budget should be developed and funded for such unplanned contingencies.

The City is currently planning a 2014 Sidewalk Study. The Sidewalk Study will include identification of sidewalk conditions that are not in compliance with Title II.

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PARKING LOTS**

Georgetown Support Services ensures application of ADA Standards for Accessible Designs to all new construction, remodels, renovations and alterations of public buildings and public parking areas. In addition, public buildings and public parking areas are maintained for ADA compliance. Examples include:

- An ADA ramp on the sidewalk at the City Council Chambers was installed 8 years ago.
- An accessible door was installed in the GMC Building lobby last year.
- The Tennis Center locker room area is being remodeled this year. The sidewalks going down to the court have been identified as a future project for compliance.
- Buildings that do not have automatic door openers meet the ADA pull requirements.

- Public and facility parking lots are maintained to ensure that stripping and signage is visible for accessibility.

Georgetown Support Services is committed to maintaining public buildings and public parking for ADA compliance and to investigate and act on opportunities to improve access to public facilities on all Capital Improvement Projects. The Feasibility Study will identify any public facility and public parking deficiencies.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Georgetown Parks and Recreation is committed to providing access to recreational areas and programs for persons with disabilities. The Parks and Recreation Department's Capital Improvement Plan identifies park renovation projects to provide ADA compliance. Additionally, the City will ensure facilities are in compliance as they are altered or replaced.

#### **Current Projects (2013/2014)**

- Creative Playscape Replacement
- River Ridge Pool Renovations
- San Gabriel Trail Additions
- Chautauqua Park Renovations
- San Jose Park Renovations
- Rowan Park Development
- Madrone Park Development
- Old Town Park Renovations (Completed)

#### **Future Projects (Proposed 2014/2015)**

- VFW Renovations
- Williams Drive Park Renovations
- Emerald Springs Park Renovations
- San Gabriel Park Renovations

### **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

The City is committed to maintaining an effective means of communication with the public through public media, public meetings and project notification. Twenty years ago, interactions with the City often required a physical trip to a City facility to make a payment, request information, or attend a meeting. The City now uses its website, social media, and other communication tools to increase outreach and reduce barriers to access City services and information. Below are some of the ways that online services are providing access to City information and services for those with mobility limitations.

**City Council Meetings:** The City began broadcasting meetings on tape delay in 1996 on local access cable channel 10. In 2009, the City began streaming City Council meetings live on

Georgetown.org and GTV channel 10. City Council meetings are also replayed on GTV and are available at any at any time for replay on Georgetown.org using a computer or mobile device.

**Online Payments:** City utility bills, municipal court tickets, some permits, and some kinds of event tickets can be paid online via Georgetown.org. The Public Communications Department continues to seek ways to improve and expand online payments in order to reduce the need to visit City offices.

**City Records:** Agendas and minutes for City Council meetings and board and commission meetings are available at Georgetown.org. Many other records such as current and past city ordinances and the local unified development code are available on the City website.

**City News and Information:** City news releases and City project information is posted to Georgetown.org and to City Facebook sites such as [www.facebook.com/CityofGeorgetown](http://www.facebook.com/CityofGeorgetown) and [www.facebook.com/LivePlayGeorgetown](http://www.facebook.com/LivePlayGeorgetown). These social media sites allow anyone with a computer or mobile device to stay informed about City events and projects or ask questions of City staff.

**Video:** The City provides some messages and information via the City YouTube channel and on GTV channel 10 and on Georgetown.org. The Public Communications Department seeks to expand video programming in order to increase outreach of City information and programs to people of all abilities in the community.

**Website Accessibility:** In designing websites for City departments, the Public Communications Department has avoided using Flash animation and some dynamic features that are not ADA compliant. The webmaster also has implemented responsive design on many of the key website pages which optimizes web content based on the type of device accessing the website. Such technology improves readability of webpages for those with visual acuity limitations. Improvements in screen reader technology will expand the options for web design in the future.

As the City redesigns its websites in 2014, ADA compliance for City webpages as well as webpages from vendors that are providing City services will be a priority. The City will be developing a policy to verify that all digital communications are accessible through assistive technology such as screen readers and audio technology by following the guidelines below:

- Adopt a City policy that requires all webpages, including those purchased from third party services, to meet the following 508c3 standards:

Provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user vision, or support for assistive technology used by people who are blind or visually impaired.

Provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require visual acuity greater than 20/70 in audio and enlarged print output working together or independently, or support for assistive technology used by people who are visually impaired.

Provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user hearing, or support for assistive technology used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Where audio information is important for the use of a product, provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval in an enhanced auditory manner, or support for assistive hearing devices.

Provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user speech, or support for assistive technology used by people with speech disabilities.

Provide at least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user fine motor control or simultaneous actions and that is operable with limited reach and strength.

- Train all webpage content creators so that they understand alternate tags, descriptions, and captions. Minimize the use of portable document format (pdf) or non-text documents for the conveyance of information, and when pdfs are necessary, train content creators how to make such documents accessible.
- Ensure that all pages and documents include an easy to find contact phone number or email address so that users with disabilities have alternate ways to receive information.
- Minimize the use of tables for formatting, ensure all form elements are tagged, do not rely on graphics for the conveyance of information, and explain the content of maps in an alternate way when that map is being used to convey critical content.
- Routinely run digital services through online ADA check tools to ensure compliance.

The City uses other communication tools such as the monthly *City Reporter* newsletter in the utility bill as well as monthly ads in the *Williamson County Sun* to provide information on City news and initiatives. Postcards mailed to customers are used for certain messages such as water restrictions or information about City elections. Through all these means, the City provides outreach to the community in a variety of ways for those who may have mobility impairments or difficulty in using certain kinds of electronic or print media.

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL**

The official responsible for implementation of the City's ADA Transition Plan is the Building Official with Inspection Services in Georgetown Utility Systems, 300-1 Industrial Avenue Georgetown, Texas, 78626.

The City will adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging violations of Title II. Complaints of alleged noncompliance and grievances concerning violations of Title II and Program Access in the City of Georgetown should be directed to:

Dave Hall, Building Official  
300-1 Industrial Ave  
Georgetown, Texas 78626  
Telephone: (512) 930-2547  
Email: [dave.hall@georgetown.org](mailto:dave.hall@georgetown.org)

### **BUDGET**

The financial cost to fully implement the ADA Transition Plan in compliance with Title II should be included in the City's annual budget each year. Each affected City Department, including Transportation (street parking and sidewalks), Facilities (public buildings and public parking lots), Parks and Recreation and Public or Effective Communications (to include the City's web page) should allocate funds in the respective budgets for inclusion in the City Budget.

## **PART IV – RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY.** The City should conduct a feasibility study to obtain an analysis and evaluation for proposed projects to determine if the projects are technically feasible and to provide an estimated cost for project prioritization and budgeting. The Feasibility Study will provide recommendations for implementation of the ADA Transition Plan, including prioritization of projects, scheduling and integration of those projects into the City CIP and City Budget. The Feasibility Study has been included in the scope of services for the 2014 Sidewalk Study proposal. Once the Feasibility Study is complete it will be presented to the ADA Advisory Committee for review and recommendation to the City Council.

**ADA ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** The City should establish an ADA Advisory Committee. Membership on the Committee should include City Staff (including transportation, street parking and sidewalks), parks and recreation, facilities (public buildings and public parking lots), public or effective communication (to include the city's web page) and legal and citizen representatives with ADA mobility limitations, as well as the sight and hearing impaired. The ADA Advisory Committee would inform the City Council concerning Title II issues applicable



to the City and provide ongoing recommendations concerning implementation and amendment of the ADA Transition Plan as necessary for compliance with the ADA. The ADA Advisory Committee would also allow for regular public participation from citizens and other interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities.

**DATA ORGANIZATION.** Data should be collected and organized in a form to be included in the City's Asset Management System or other database to organize project data, including inspections and construction.

**WEB PAGE.** The City has created an ADA page on the City's website located at [ada.georgetown.org](http://ada.georgetown.org). City Staff will work with the ADA Advisory Committee to develop the ADA page as an effective and meaningful resource for City residents with disabilities.