

VISIONS 2025

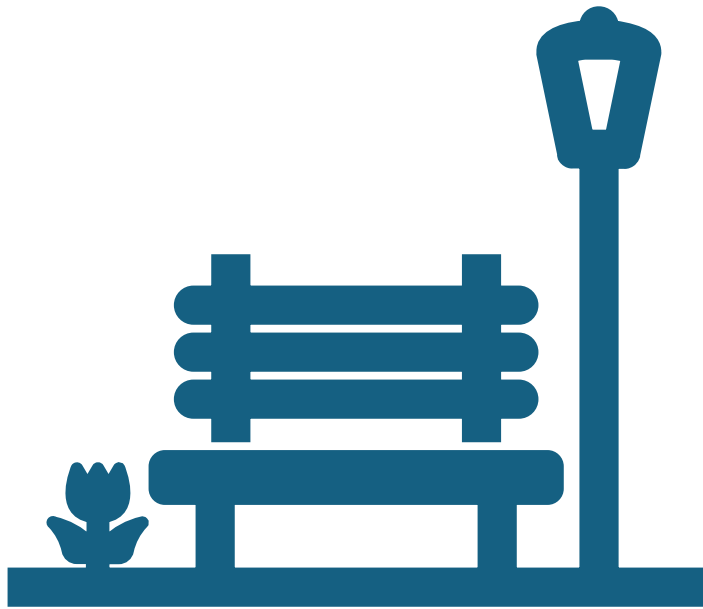
Technology & Services for the Blind, Visually Impaired & Physically Disabled

Access for All: How the ADA Transition Plan is Transforming Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation

Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 2:00 pm



ANN ARBOR PARKS & RECREATION ADA TRANSITION PLAN



We imagine a city where every sidewalk, building, and public space is accessible to everyone—regardless of ability.

That vision is becoming a reality through the ADA Transition Plan.

Today, let's go on Ann Arbor's multi-year journey—from bold planning to real-world implementation—sharing key lessons, strategies, and what the future of accessibility looks like for our community.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Background
- Procurement
- ADA Transition Development
- ADA Transition Plan Implementation
- Questions

Introductions

LJ Orta (They, Him, HIR)
Director of Organizational
Equity

CITY OF ANN ARBOR
Office of Organizational Equity



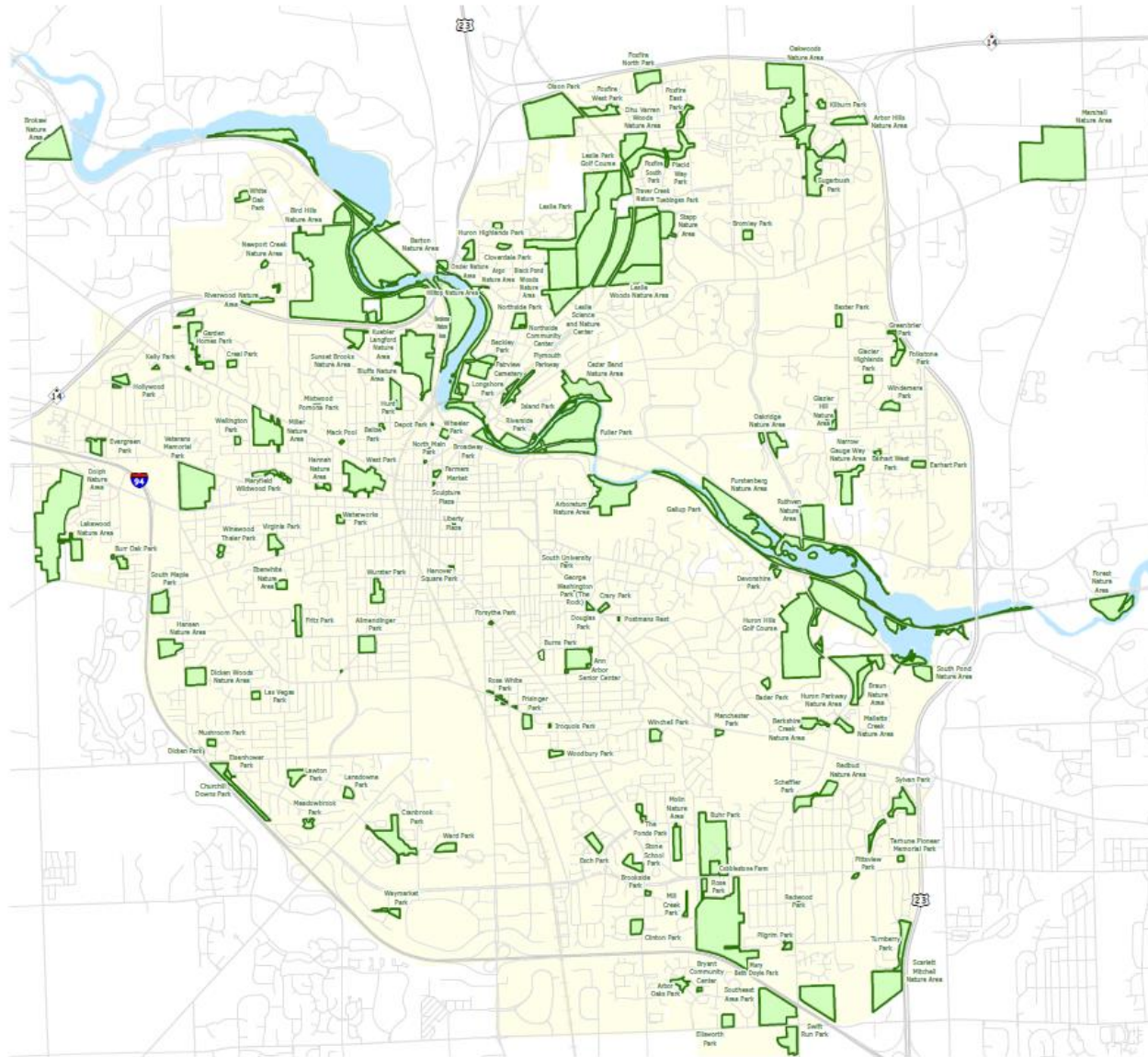
<https://linktr.ee/cityofannarbor>

Adam Fercho (He/Him)
Landscape Architect Capital
Project Manager



More than 160 Parks and Nature Areas

- 81 Playgrounds
- 31 Tennis / Pickleball courts
- 34 ball diamonds
- 87 Basketball courts
- 10 soccer fields
- 52 miles of paved trails
- 50 miles of paths
- 4 Pools
- 3 Dog Parks
- 2 Water Slides
- 2 Canoe Liveries
- 2 Golf Courses
- 2 Ice Arenas
- 1 Senior Center
- 1 Farmers Market
- 1 Nature Center
- 1 Skate Park



- Swimming
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Disc golf
- Dirt bike jumping
- Hiking
- Volunteering
- Tennis
- Ice skating
- Pickleball
- Petanque
- Hockey
- Concerts
- Cultural Arts
- and more...

Compared to U.S. cities of a similar size, Ann Arbor has

4x
MORE
TRAILS

3x
MORE
ACRES OF
PARKLAND

2x
MORE
PARKS

Ann Arbor's Park system includes

163
PARK
PROPERTIES

2210
ACRES OF
PARKLAND

92% 
of residents live within a
10-minute walk to a park

<https://www2.a2gov.org/GIS/MapAnnArbor/ParkFinder/>

What is a Transition Plan?

- A transition plan is a structured document used to communicate:
 - Ongoing Projects
 - Duties and Responsibilities (who is responsible for what)
 - Deadlines
 - Contacts-Key contacts and stakeholders
 - Important resources
- Purpose
 - Provide a framework for transferring knowledge, minimizing disruption in work and clearly outlining tasks
 - Support training
 - Assist in organizational changes such as promotions, departures, relocations, new hires, etc.

What Is An American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan *for Parks & Recreation*?

An ADA transition plan is also a structured document used to communicate the responsibilities, the timelines, and contacts of a transition plan. It has some specific purposes:

1. Community Engagement
2. Identify Barriers
3. Program Accessibility
4. Prioritizing and Scheduling and training
5. Implementation and Monitoring

Laying the Groundwork for Accessibility

🌳 **Our Parks. Our People. Our Commitment.**

We're proud of our dedicated staff who care deeply about our parks, our community, and ensuring everyone feels welcome. Their commitment is the heart of our progress toward accessibility.

But like many cities, we started with important questions and gaps:

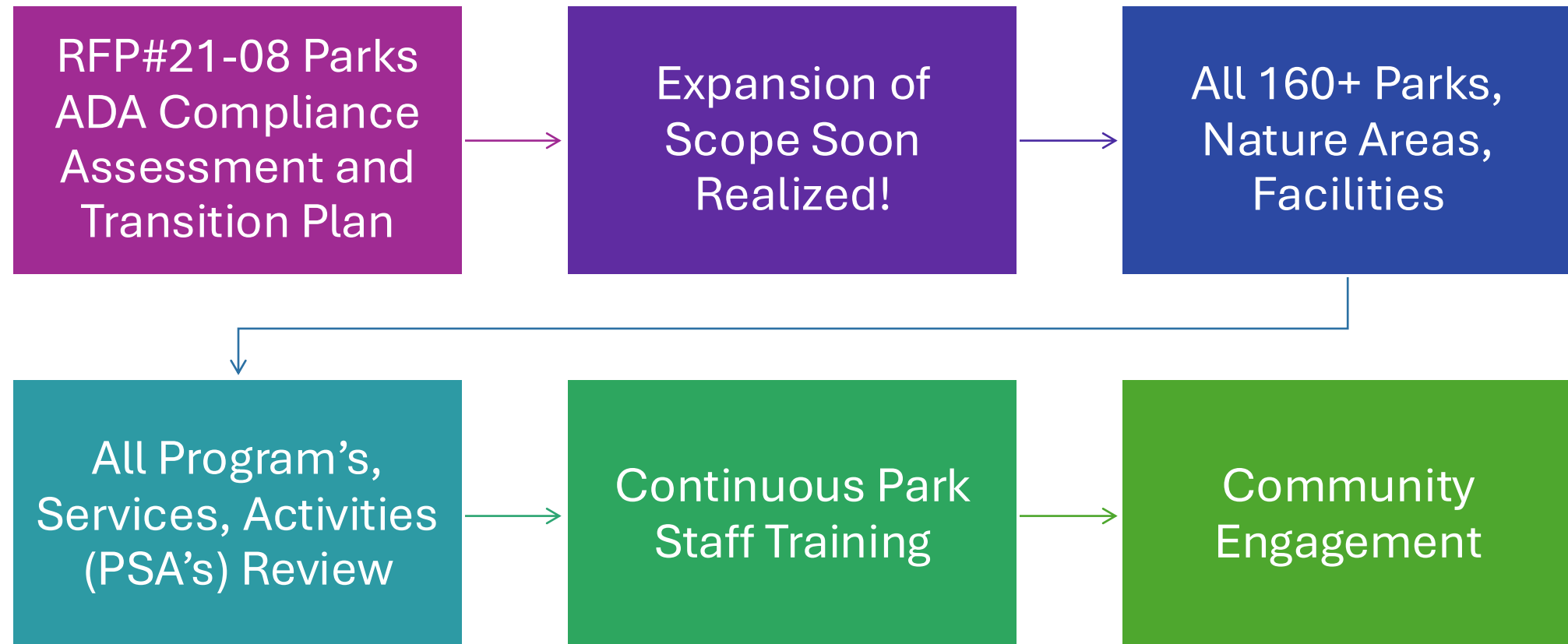
- 🚫 No Established ADA Plan
- 🔧 No Standard Process for Fixing Barriers
- 📋 No Grievance Procedure in Place
- 📍 Unclear Where We Were Out of Compliance
- 📚 Limited Accessibility Knowledge Base
- ✅ No System for Tracking Completed Work

- **This was our starting point**—and the launchpad for a more inclusive future.
- Today, we're excited to share how we've begun to turn these challenges into action.

ADA Transition Plan – Getting Started

- In March of 2021, Parks & Recreation released an RFP for ADA Compliance Assessment and Transition Plan
- Originally intended for the assessment of only **33** Parks, Nature Areas, and Recreation Centers
- Staff were to complete the assessment of the remaining 130 Parks, Nature Areas, and Recreation Centers
- The City would NOT be undertaking electronic/website accessibility or programmatic accessibility evaluations as part of this project.

Parks and Rec. ADA Transition Plan Progression



(Reminder)
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1. Community Engagement

Webinars

In-person Meetings at the Ann Arbor District Library

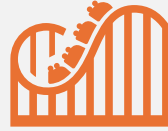
Surveys

Push-Pin Maps

Park Advisory Commission (PAC)

Commission on Disability Issues (CODI)

2. Identify Barriers - Physical Assessments



160+ Parks



Parks and Recreation
Background Information

GIS Data
Addresses
Access



Consultant team spent 3-4 weeks in the City, performing Evaluation – Additional weekly & monthly meetings later as the assessment and plan conceptualization continued

3. Programs, Services, and Activities (PSAs)



City Staff met individually and in groups with the consultants to review all Programs, Services and Activities (PSAs).



Every PSA
was
discussed

What is the PSA?

Where is it held?
Virtual / In-
Person?

What
Forms/Materials
are being used?

How is information
accessed?

4. Prioritizing and Scheduling



DRAFT REPORT –



Review Findings



Programs, Services, & Activities (PSAs) Checklists



Facility Prioritization



City Commitment



Department Reviews



Commission Presentations



City Council Approval

4. Staff Training



- 10 vendor-led training sessions were recorded and posted on internal SharePoint Site
- Staff Concerns were openly discussed and addressed
- Collaborative departments (Legal, Office of Equity, Administration) participated in training
- Ongoing training through the City's Learning Management System (LMS) regarding ADA guidelines are provided to all employees continuously

5. Implementation & Monitoring – Physical Barriers

Roughly 2000 barriers identified over the Park System

Each Barrier Identified has:

- Geo Coordinates
- Finding ID
- Finding Description
- ADA Citation
- Photo of Condition
- Detailed Drawing / Applicable Tables, Charts, Graphs,
- Estimated Cost of Correction (2022)

5. Implementation & Monitoring – Programs, Services, & Activities (PSAs)

- Every existing PSA was reviewed and evaluated for Barriers and Requirements
 - Ensuring Accessible Locations
 - Alternative format communications
 - How is information about the PSA communicated
 - Service Animal guidelines available
- Develop a Checklist to review when any new PSA has been created.

5. Implementation & Monitoring – Communications



Understand the importance of ensuring that any communications including marketing materials meet Accessibility Guidelines



Social Media Postings



Website Materials



Engagement Materials



Printed Materials – Marketing, Informational, Construction, etc.

5. Implementation & Monitoring– Funding and Timeframe



\$19 Million Dollars

The cost to correct all Barriers found in the 2022 assessments.

This estimate was given based on 2022 costs.

Construction Cost

Design Cost: +12%

Project Management Cost: +18%

Contingency: +5%



30 Years

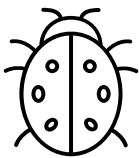
Number is self determined, realistic

Progress is recorded annually

5. Implementation & Monitoring

During Transition Plan Development, the City Administrator hired an Accessibility Coordinator to be housed in the Office of Organizational Equity to lend expertise.

Parks & Recreation also created an ADA Department Liaison to handle inquiries and to ensure the ADA Transition Plan is being followed and updated.



PROJECTS OF THE PLAN

- **2022 – Argo Cascades Universal Access Project (Completed)**

The project was largely successful, but a few elements missed compliance because we began this before the ADA transition plan had really started. Our consultants reviewed it just before completion and identified key barriers, which we were able to address. This really highlights the value of involving ADA specialists as part of your transition planning team.

- **2024 – Barton Nature Area Border-to-Border Trail Segment (Completed)**

A new half-mile paved trail now runs through the heart of Barton Nature Area, allowing an accessible route into the loved nature area. Over the 30-year plan horizon, NAP aims to make 15–20% of the City’s natural areas ADA-compliant—this project is a strong early step.

- **2025 – Bicentennial Park Improvements Project (Under Construction)**

In celebration of the City’s Bicentennial, this major renovation includes Ann Arbor’s first universally accessible splash pad and a fully accessible playground. Restroom, sidewalk, and parking improvements will also address nearly all ADA barriers identified in the Transition Plan.

- **2025 – Allmendinger Playground Accessibility Improvements (Under Construction)**

This project, set to finish this summer, includes a new paved entrance loop with barrier-free parking, accessible pathways around the park features, as well as ADA-compliant picnic tables, grills and bleachers.

- **2026–2027 – Buhr Park Ice Arena & Pool Improvements (Design Phase)**

Funded by a Land and Water Conservation Grant, this project includes upgrades to mechanical systems and accessibility improvements. One notable feature: rink board modifications to allow barrier-free entry onto the ice. This project showcases how we’re integrating ADA improvements into broader infrastructure work.





Key takeaways

- At the outset, the project felt straightforward—but it quickly revealed its complexity and depth.
- Staff were highly engaged, though initially hesitant, concerned they might be “doing something wrong.” The staff training was crucial in building confidence and providing them with a clear guide.
- Community engagement proved incredibly valuable—not only for transparency, but for building public support. Our consultant emphasized the importance of having community members as advocates rather than opponents.
- The ADA Transition Plan provides a roadmap—not an immediate overhaul. It shows accountability and intention, allowing us to make progress over time instead of facing sudden legal mandates. Tracking our progress is a key component of this approach.



- Thank you!

Questions about Parks and Rec's
ADA Transition Plan-

Parks and Recreation:

- Josh Landefeld jlandefeld@a2gov.org
- Adam Fercho Afercho@a2gov.org

Questions about Accessibility &
Equity across the City-

- Office of Organizational Equity
OOE@a2gov.org