

Flagstaff City Council
211 W Aspen Ave
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

On behalf of the Commission for Inclusion and Adaptive Living (CIAL), I am writing to strongly encourage the City of Flagstaff to develop and implement a comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. This critical document will serve as a roadmap to ensure that all public facilities, services, and programs are accessible to everyone in our community.

Title II of the ADA requires local governments to develop a transition plan to identify physical obstacles that limit accessibility, describe methods to make facilities accessible, and establish a timeline for completion. Currently, Flagstaff lacks a comprehensive plan, which puts us at risk of:

1. Failing to meet our legal obligations under federal law
2. Excluding approximately 14% of our population who live with disabilities (Census, 2020)
3. Missing opportunities for economic growth through accessible tourism and business
4. Potential litigation and costly remediation measures

More importantly, creating an ADA Transition Plan demonstrates our commitment to being a truly inclusive community where all residents and visitors can fully participate in civic life regardless of their abilities.

Several cities comparable to Flagstaff have already developed and implemented effective ADA Transition Plans that could serve as models for our own efforts. The City of Boulder, Colorado—which shares with Flagstaff a university culture, similar topography, and outdoor-oriented lifestyle—completed their "Accessible Boulder" plan focused on transportation infrastructure, including sidewalks, curb ramps, multi-use paths, and transit stops. Boulder County conducted an extensive evaluation of 32 buildings and facilities, 32 trailheads/open spaces, and their county fairgrounds. Closer to home, the City of Chandler, Arizona completed an update of their ADA Transition Plan in December 2020, which included a complete self-evaluation of all city parks, facilities, and public rights-of-way.

By developing and implementing a comprehensive ADA Transition Plan, Flagstaff can become a model for accessibility in northern Arizona. This investment will not only ensure legal compliance but will enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

We recommend the following timeline and tasks to develop an effective ADA Transition Plan:

Phase 1: Planning and Organization (approximately 2-3 months)

- In cooperation with the designated ADA Coordinator, establish an advisory committee with disability community representation

- Secure funding for the assessment and planning process
- Develop assessment tools and methodologies
- Conduct public outreach to gather community input

Phase 2: Self-Assessment (approximately 6-9 months)

- Inventory all city-owned facilities, parks, sidewalks, and rights-of-way
- Evaluate city programs, services, and communication methods
- Identify barriers to accessibility in each area
- Document findings in a comprehensive database

Phase 3: Plan Development (approximately 3-4 months)

- Prioritize barrier removal based on public input and usage patterns
- Develop specific remediation strategies for each barrier
- Establish realistic timelines for implementation (typically 3-5 years)
- Create cost estimates and identify potential funding sources
- Draft the transition plan document

Phase 4: Adoption and Implementation (Ongoing)

- Present the plan for public comment
- Revise based on feedback
- Present to City Council for formal adoption
- Begin implementation according to established priorities
- Create annual progress reports and updates

The Commission is prepared to assist in this process by providing recommendations of ADA experts to guide the process, insights from the disability community, suggesting assessment methodologies, and helping to prioritize accessibility improvements.

We respectfully request that the City Council allocate resources in the upcoming budget to begin this essential work. The Commission stands ready to support this effort in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Rachael Simukonda, Chair, Commission for Inclusion and Adaptive Living