

City of Dahlonega, Georgia
Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA)
Transition Plan
December 2024



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Introduction

City Background

The City of Dahlonega, the county seat of Lumpkin County, is in the foothills of the North Georgia mountains, approximately 70 miles north of Atlanta. The year-round population of Dahlonega is estimated to be 7,500 with seasonal increases that go along with being home to a major state university. Incorporated on December 21, 1833, Dahlonega was the site of the first significant gold rush in the United States. Between 1838 and 1861, a U.S. Branch Mint produced the Half Eagle, Quarter Eagle, Gold Dollar, and the Three Dollar Gold coins locally. Today, tourists come to shop and dine in the historic town square, learn about the city's colorful history, try their hand at gold panning, and visit the area's local wineries.

The City's government is comprised of an elected Mayor and City Council. The City Manager is appointed by the City Council. The City Manager handles the day-to-day operations of the City and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor and City Council.

Transition Plan Need and Purpose

The [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability. It was enacted on July 26, 1990, and was amended in 2008 with the ADA Amendments Act. The ADA consists of five titles outlining protections in the following areas:

- I. Employment
- II. State and local government services
- III. Public accommodations
- IV. Telecommunications
- V. Miscellaneous Provisions

Title II of ADA pertains to the programs, activities and services provided by public entities. The City of Dahlonega must comply with this section of the Act, as it specifically applies to public service agencies. Title II of ADA states that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.” ([42 USC Sec. 12132](#); [28 CFR Sec. 35.130](#))

As required by Title II of ADA ([28 CFR Part 35 Sec. 35.105 and Sec. 35.150](#)), the City of Dahlonega has conducted a self-evaluation of its services, programs, activities, and facilities on public property and within public rights-of-way; and has developed this Transition Plan detailing the methods to be used to ensure compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

ADA and its Relationship to Other Laws

Title II of ADA is companion legislation to two previous federal statutes and regulations: the [Architectural Barriers Act \(ABA\) of 1968](#) and [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 is a Federal law that requires facilities designed, built, altered or leased with Federal funds to be accessible. The Architectural Barriers Act marks one of the first efforts to ensure access to the built environment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a Federal law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency. Title II of ADA extended this coverage to all state and local government entities, regardless of whether they receive federal funding or not.

Agency Requirements

Under Title II, the City of Dahlonega must meet these general requirements:

- Must operate their programs so that, when viewed in their entirety, the programs are accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities [[28 CFR Sec. 35.150](#)].
- May not refuse to allow a person with a disability to participate in a service, program or activity simply because the person has a disability [[28 CFR Sec. 35.130\(a\)](#)].
- Must make reasonable modifications in policies, practices and procedures that deny equal access to individuals with disabilities unless a fundamental alteration in the program would result [[28 CFR Sec. 35.130\(b\)\(7\)](#)].
- May not provide services or benefits to individuals with disabilities through programs that are separate or different unless the separate or different measures are necessary to ensure that benefits and services are equally effective [[28 CFR Sec. 35.130\(b\)\(iv\) & \(d\)](#)].
- Must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others [[29 CFR Sec. 35.160\(a\)](#)].
- Must designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate ADA compliance [[28 CFR Sec. 35.107\(a\)](#)]. This person is typically referred to as the ADA Coordinator. The public entity must provide the ADA Coordinator's name, office address, and telephone number to all interested individuals [[28 CFR Sec. 35.107\(a\)](#)].
- Must provide notice of ADA requirements. All public entities, regardless of size, must provide information about the rights and protections of Title II to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, employees, and other interested persons [[28 CFR Sec. 35.106](#)]. The notice must include the identification of the employee serving as the ADA Coordinator and must provide this information on an ongoing basis [[28 CFR Sec. 104.8\(a\)](#)].
- Must establish a grievance procedure. Public entities must adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints [[28 CFR Sec. 35.107\(b\)](#)]. This requirement provides for a timely resolution of all problems or conflicts related to ADA compliance before they escalate to litigation and/or the federal complaint process.

Designation of Responsibility

The City of Dahlonega has designated the following person to serve as ADA Transition Plan Implementation Coordinator, to monitor the City's progress and manage review and updates of this document:

Primary Contact Name: Mark Buchanan Job Title: City Engineer & Public Works Director
Contact information is provided in Appendix C.

Training is an important tool for ensuring compliance with ADA requirements. The ADA Coordinator will identify resources and opportunities for agency employees at various levels to receive ADA-related training appropriate to their job functions.

Self-Evaluation

Overview

The City of Dahlonega is required, under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and 28CFR35.105, to perform a self-evaluation of its current transportation infrastructure policies, practices, and programs. This self-evaluation will identify what policies and practices impact accessibility and examine how the City implements these policies. The goal of the self-evaluation is to verify that, in implementing the City policies and practices, the department is providing accessibility and not adversely affecting the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

This self-evaluation also examines the condition of the City's pedestrian access routes and identifies the potential need for pedestrian infrastructure improvements. This will include the sidewalks, curb ramps, and bicycle/pedestrian trails located within the city limits of Dahlonega. Any barriers to accessibility identified in the self-evaluation and the remedy to the identified barrier are set out in this transition plan.

The transition plan is intended to be an evolving plan. As such, the City of Dahlonega will annually review this plan and ensure that it is up to date with current standards. The plan will also incorporate improvements completed on the ADA features.

Process & Findings

In December 2023, the City of Dahlonega staff completed a self-evaluation of the city's facilities and parks with regard to accessibility. Detailed inventories and findings from the reviews are provided in Appendix E, under the headings Building Facilities (E-1) and Pedestrian Facilities (E-2).

An important component of the self-evaluation process is the identification of obstacles or barriers to accessibility, and the corresponding modifications that will be needed to remedy these items. The following sections in the Appendix provide a summary of improvements that have already been made, and obstacles that the City plans to address as part of this Transition Plan.

Public Facilities and Parks

The City of Dahlonega is responsible for the following public facilities and parks:

- Facility 1 – City Hall (465 Riley Road, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Facility 2– Mount Hope Cemetery (438 West Main Street, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Facility 3– Memorial Park Cemetery (228 Turner Road, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Facility 4 – Head House Downstairs (47 S Park Street, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 1– Reservoir Boat Ramp (1687 Morrison Moore Parkway East, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 2– Reservoir Walking Bridge (1330 Morrison Moore Parkway East, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 3– Wimpy Mill Picnic Area (Wimpy Mill Road & Sky Country, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 4– City Playground (465 Riley Road, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 5– Hancock Park (Hawkins Street, Dahlonega, GA 30533)
- Park 6—Madeline Anthony Park (South Park St., Dahlonega, GA 30533)

The City has conducted a detailed accessibility evaluation of each of its building facilities, and related parking lots/areas, based on the [*ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities*](#) publication. The findings from this evaluation are provided in Appendix E-1. The accessibility barriers/issues identified as currently existing have been ranked in order of priority for improvement.

Improvement Schedule

The City of Dahlonega has set the following schedule goals for improving the accessibility of its buildings and public facilities within the City jurisdiction:

- After 10 years, 100% of accessibility features that were constructed after January 26, 1991, will be ADA compliant.
- After 20 years, 80% of accessibility features within the priority areas identified by the City staff will be ADA compliant.
- After 30 years, 80% of accessibility features within the jurisdiction of the City will be ADA compliant.

Pedestrian Facilities / Public Rights-of-Way

In December 2023, the City of Dahlonega staff conducted an inventory and evaluation of pedestrian facilities within the public rights-of-way inside the city's limits, which consist of the following:

- Sidewalks within the city limits of Dahlonega (8.62 miles)
- Curb ramps within the city limits of Dahlonega
- Crosswalks within the city limits of Dahlonega
- Traffic control signals within the city limits of Dahlonega (8 traffic control signals)

A detailed evaluation of these facilities with regard to accessibility compliance is provided in Appendix E-2, and will be updated annually.

Improvement Schedule

The City of Dahlonega has set the following schedule goals for improving the accessibility of its pedestrian facilities within the City jurisdiction:

- After 10 years, 100% of accessibility features that were constructed after January 26, 1991, will be ADA compliant.
- After 20 years, 80% of accessibility features within the priority areas identified by the City staff will be ADA compliant.
- After 30 years, 80% of accessibility features within the jurisdiction of the City will be ADA compliant.

Methodology

The City of Dahlonega will utilize two methods for upgrading pedestrian facilities to current ADA standards. The first and most comprehensive method is through scheduled street and utility improvement projects. All pedestrian facilities impacted by these projects will be upgraded to current ADA accessibility standards.

The second method is through specific sidewalk and ADA accessibility improvement projects that are identified individually. These projects will be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on a case-by-case basis as determined by the City of Dahlonega staff.

The City of Dahlonega has pursued and utilized several funding methods to install ADA improvements, which included the City's General Fund, Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG), GDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). The City will continue to pursue a variety of funding methods in order to achieve ADA compliance within the City's limits.

Policy

The City of Dahlonega's goal is to continue to provide accessible pedestrian design features as part of its capital improvement projects. The City has adopted ADA design standards and procedures as listed in Appendix A. These standards and procedures will be kept up-to-date with nationwide and local best management practices.

The City will consider and respond to all accessibility improvement requests. All accessibility improvements that are deemed reasonable will be scheduled consistent with transportation priorities. The City will coordinate with external agencies to ensure that all new or altered pedestrian facilities within the City jurisdiction are ADA compliant to the maximum extent feasible. As a part of this policy, staff will perform continuous evaluation and maintenance to ensure functionality of all curb ramps and other ADA facilities.

Maintenance of pedestrian facilities within the public rights-of-way will continue to follow the policies set forth by the City. Examples of typical maintenance items relating to accessibility include: sidewalk repairs, renewal of crosswalk markings, and ADA ramp maintenance. These details are found in the Development Regulations of the City of Dahlonega, the City standard details and the latest version of the GDOT Standard Specifications. Detailed information is provided in Appendix E-2.

Requests for accessibility improvements (e.g. curb ramp installation) can be submitted to the ADA Transition Plan Implementation Coordinator. Contact information is provided in Appendix C.

Priority Areas

The City of Dahlonega has identified specific locations as priority areas for planned accessibility improvement projects. These areas have been selected due to their proximity to specific land uses. This includes areas within the vicinity of public facilities, such as schools, government offices, parks and recreational facilities, public transit facilities, and medical facilities.

1. Downtown District of Dahlonega
2. Areas within proximity of schools inside the city's limits
3. Areas within proximity of city facilities (ex: City Hall)
4. Areas within proximity of city parks
5. Pedestrian facilities within residential areas
6. Pedestrian facilities within commercial/industrial areas

Additional priority will be given to any location where an improvement project or alteration was constructed after January 26, 1991, and accessibility features were omitted.

External Agency Coordination

Several agencies are responsible for pedestrian facilities within the jurisdiction of the City of Dahlonega. The City will coordinate with those agencies (GDOT) to assist with identifying and facilitating elimination of accessibility barriers along their routes.

Public Outreach

The City of Dahlonega recognizes that public participation is an important component in the development of this transition plan. Input from the community has been gathered and used to help define priority areas for improvements within the jurisdiction of the City of Dahlonega. A draft of the ADA Transition Plan has been posted to the City's website for public review and comments.

Public Notice of ADA Requirements and Grievance Procedure

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, each agency is required to publish its responsibilities with regard to ADA compliance. A draft of this public notice is provided in Appendix B. If users of the City of Dahlonega facilities and services believe the City has not provided a reasonable accommodation, they have the right to file a grievance. In accordance with [28 CFR Sec. 35.107\(b\)](#), the City has developed a grievance procedure for the purpose of the prompt and equitable resolution of citizens' complaints or concerns. This grievance procedure is outlined in Appendix B.

Progress Monitoring and Transition Plan Management

This Transition Plan is considered to be a living document that will continue to be updated as conditions within the City evolve. The initial schedule is to formally review the complete document (main body and appendices) at least once per year, to identify any need for updates. Updates to the appendices or attachments may be made more frequently as needed. Any substantive updates to the main body of this document will include a public comment period, which will take place from June 1 through June 30 of each year, to continue the City's public outreach efforts. During the

public comment period, citizens can reach out to the City's ADA Transition Plan Implementation Coordinator (contact information is in Appendix C). At the end of the public comment period, the comments will be reviewed, and the ADA Transition Plan will be revised as necessary.

The City recognizes that ADA compliance is an ongoing responsibility which will require monitoring to identify future accessibility issues that may be encountered. For example, facilities that currently meet ADA requirements could fall out of compliance in the future due to factors such as damage, disrepair, or changes within public rights-of-way that could create new accessibility obstacles. Therefore, the ADA Transition Plan Implementation Coordinator will establish an ongoing monitoring/inspection process to ensure that facilities continue to comply with ADA requirements. Agency employees will also be encouraged to report any accessibility concerns or deficiencies that are identified.

Appendices

- A. Agency ADA Design Standards and Improvement/Compliance Procedures
- B. Public Notice of ADA Requirements and Grievance Procedure
- C. ADA Transition Plan Coordinator Contact Information
- D. Glossary of Terms
- E. Self-Evaluation
 - E-1. Public Facilities and Parks
 - E-2. Pedestrian Facilities / Public Rights-of-Way

Appendix A -Agency ADA Design Standards and Procedures

Design Procedures

Intersection Corners

Curb ramps or blended transitions will attempt to be constructed or upgraded to achieve compliance within all capital improvement projects. There may be limitations which make it technically infeasible for an intersection corner to achieve full accessibility within the scope of any project. Those limitations will be noted, and those intersection corners will remain on the transition plan. As future projects or opportunities arise, those intersection corners shall continue to be incorporated into future work. Regardless on if full compliance can be achieved or not, each intersection corner shall be made as compliant as possible in accordance with the judgment of City staff.

Sidewalks / Trails

Sidewalks and trails will attempt to be constructed or upgraded to achieve compliance within all capital improvement projects. There may be limitations which make it technically infeasible for segments of sidewalks or trails to achieve full accessibility within the scope of any project. Those limitations will be noted, and those segments will remain on the transition plan. As future projects or opportunities arise, those segments shall continue to be incorporated into future work. Regardless on if full compliance can be achieved or not, every sidewalk or trail shall be made as compliant as possible in accordance with the judgment of City staff.

Traffic Control Signals

Traffic control signals will attempt to be constructed or upgraded to achieve compliance within all capital improvement projects. There may be limitations which make it technically infeasible for individual traffic control signal locations to achieve full accessibility within the scope of any project. Those limitations will be noted, and those locations will remain on the transition plan. As future projects or opportunities arise, those locations shall continue to be incorporated into future work. Regardless on if full compliance can be achieved or not, each traffic signal control location shall be made as compliant as possible in accordance with the judgment of City staff.

Other policies, practices, and programs

Policies, practices and programs not identified in this document will follow the applicable ADA standards.

Design Standards

The City of Dahlonega complies with the design standards established by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

Appendix B – Public Notice of ADA Requirements and Grievance Procedure

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Dahlonega has posted the following notice outlining its responsibilities with regard to ADA compliance.

Public Notice

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Dahlonega will not discriminate against qualified individuals on the basis of disability in the City's services, programs or activities.

Employment: The City of Dahlonega does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Effective Communication: The City will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the City's programs, services and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The City will make all reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all City programs, services and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in City offices, even where pets are generally prohibited. Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service or activity, should contact the office of the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the City to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden. The City will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of service, activities, programs, or benefits by the City of Dahlonega Mayor and Council. The City of Dahlonega Personnel Policies and Procedures govern employment related complaints of disability discrimination. The application form is included. Grievances should be filed with the ADA Coordinator at:

City of Dahlonega
465 Riley Road
Dahlonega, Georgia 30533

The Grievance Procedure consists of the following:

1. A complaint should be filed in writing (but can be submitted in alternate format due to the needs on an individual's disability), containing the name and address of the person filing it, and briefly describing the alleged violation of the regulations or discriminatory act.
2. A complaint should be filed within 30 calendar day after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. Processing of allegations of discrimination, which occurred before this grievance procedure was in place, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. An investigation, as may be appropriate, will follow filing of the complaint and will be conducted by the City's ADA Coordinator. These rules contemplate informal, but thorough investigations, affording all interested parties and their representative, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to a complaint.
4. The City's ADA Coordinator will provide *for* review for the City Attorney, a written determination, as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, and a copy will be forwarded to the City Manager, along with the original complaint, no later than thirty (30) days after its filing.
5. The City's ADA Coordinator will maintain files and records relating to all ADA grievances/ complaints filed.
6. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of an ADA complaint with the responsible federal department or agency (i.e., U.S. Department of Justice). Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
7. These rules will be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested person, to meet appropriate due process standards, and to assure that the City of Dahlonega complies with the ADA and implementing regulations.

**City of Dahlonega
ADA Grievance Form**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: (H) _____ (M) _____

Email Address: _____

Location of problem: _____

Date Noticed: _____

Description of the problem: _____

**Please attach additional pages if needed.*

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the alleged violation to:

City of Dahlonega
ATTN: Mark Buchanan, City ADA Coordinator
465 Riley Road
Dahlonega, Georgia 30533
mbuchanan@dahlonega.gov
(706)-482-2712

Appendix C – ADA Coordinator Contact Information

Dahlonega ADA Transition Plan Implementation Coordinator

Name: Mark Buchanan Job Title: City Engineer & Public Works Director

Office Address: 465 Riley Road, Dahlonega, GA 30533

Phone: 706-482-2712

E-mail: mbuchanan@dahlonega.gov



Appendix D – Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms

ABA: See Architectural Barriers Act.

ADA: See Americans with Disabilities Act.

ADA Transition Plan: Transportation system plan that identifies accessibility needs, the process to fully integrate accessibility improvements, and aims to ensure that all transportation facilities, services, programs, and activities are accessible to all individuals.

ADAAG: See Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Accessible: A facility that provides access to people with disabilities using the design requirements of the ADA.

Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS): A device that communicates information about the WALK phase in audible and vibrotactile formats.

Alteration: A change to a facility in the public right-of-way that affects or could affect access, circulation, or use. An alteration must not decrease or have the effect of decreasing the accessibility of a facility or an accessible connection to an adjacent building or site.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Civil rights legislation passed in 1990 and effective July 1992. The ADA sets design guidelines for accessibility to public facilities, including sidewalks and trails, by individuals with disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG): Contains scoping and technical requirements for accessibility to buildings and public facilities by individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

APS: See Accessible Pedestrian Signal.

Architectural Barriers Act (ABA): Federal law that requires facilities designed, built, altered or leased with Federal funds to be accessible. The Architectural Barriers Act marks one of the first efforts to ensure access to the built environment.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP): The CIP for a public agency typically includes an annual capital budget and a five-year plan for funding the new construction and reconstruction projects on the agency's transportation system.

Detectable Warning: A surface feature of truncated domes, built in or applied to the walking surface to indicate an upcoming change from pedestrian to vehicular way.

DOJ: See United States Department of Justice.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the federal-aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

FHWA: See Federal Highway Administration.

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation.

Pedestrian Access Route (PAR): A continuous and unobstructed walkway within a pedestrian circulation path that provides accessibility.

Pedestrian Circulation Route (PCR): A prepared exterior or interior way of passage provided for pedestrian travel.

PROWAG: An acronym for the *Guidelines for Accessible Public Rights-of-Way* issued in 2005 by the U.S. Access Board. This guidance addresses roadway design practices, slope and terrain related to pedestrian access to walkways and streets, including crosswalks, curb ramps, street furnishings, pedestrian signals, parking and other components of public rights-of-way.

Right-of-Way: A general term denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for the network of streets, sidewalks and trails creating public pedestrian access within a public entity's jurisdictional limits.

Section 504: The section of the Rehabilitation Act that prohibits discrimination by any program or activity conducted by the federal government.

Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS): Accessibility standards that all federal agencies are required to meet; includes scoping and technical specifications.

United States Access Board: An independent federal agency that develops and maintains design criteria for buildings and other improvements, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and electronic and information technology. It also enforces accessibility standards that cover federally-funded facilities.

United States Department of Justice: Federal executive department responsible for enforcement of the law and administration of justice (also referred to as the Justice Department or DOJ).

Appendix E – Self-Evaluation

Self-Evaluation

A public entity that employs 50 or more persons is required, for at least three years following the completion of the self-evaluation, to maintain on file and make available for public inspection:

- A description of areas examined and any problems identified;
- Cost to remove the ADA barrier; and,
- A description of any modifications made and the date the modification was made.

Descriptions of areas examined, problems identified, and any modifications made are listed in the following sections E-1 and E-2.