

Appendix E – Public Outreach Materials and Summary of Comments

The following pages include a summary of comments received and the poster boards and other materials that were used at the two public open house meetings.

Stearns County Building Facilities ADA Transition Plan

Public Open Houses Summary

Stearns County hosted two public open house meetings to solicit input from the public to better inform the ADA Transition Plan being developed for its building facilities. A summary of comments from the meetings follow. No formal written comments were received at the open houses.

Open House Meeting #1

This open house was held on February 22, 2018 at the Stearns County Administration Center.

Accessible Sites, Buildings, Spaces and Elements

- Handicap parking for Admin. Building not convenient location considering location of ramp to access building. Would like to see more Handicapped parking spots.
- Admin. Building ramp could use railing.
- Cobblestones/ pavers are not desirable due to uneven surface (not smooth)
- Curb cuts and pedestrian ramps not at all locations they should be.
- Maintenance of sidewalks and snow removal is important.
- Admin. Building hallway lighting to bathrooms seems dim.
- Driver's license not conveniently located, too far to walk for some.
- Consider adding more benches in side building. Benches would be nice outside the building also.
- Benches are only choice for some individuals.
- Elevators not always working, understand breakdown. Would be nice to have elevator "speak" floor number.
- Family rest room – need key or card to use, should be available for public use
- Scheduling of meetings- consider how bus system works when setting meeting times. Fixed route and dial-a-ride (only assist from main drop off to 1st door of building) have different set schedules. Meetings set for the even hour or half hour often require transit users to arrive much earlier and wait longer periods of time due to fixed route schedules.
- Handrails good not just for disabled users but also for the elderly.
- Standard ADA measurements not always practical, need more room to allow for personal care attendants to assist disabled person. Ninety-degree angles are not good for wheelchair turning movements.
- Push Buttons best practice for doors where possible
- Provide microphone option for meetings if room doesn't have good acoustics, consider taping meetings.
- Water fountains need to be recessed to no create unexpected obstacle for visually impaired individuals.
- Would like to see video phone available instead of TTY
- Wheelchair accessible tables, customer counters are important.
- West Service Center – walking distance from accessible parking too far.
- Jail – TTY only for prisoners; old fashioned TTY need to have video phones for prisoners. handbooks are in sign language (good), VRI (video remote interpreter) poor quality, signal weak.

Other

Attitudes towards disabilities are changing. In the past, people with disabilities were hidden, people told not to stare. An educational effort would be beneficial to help people/employees become comfortable with how to interact with disabled people. What behaviors are appropriate with different disabilities (least likely to cause offense). Example; for deaf person sign language may be 1st language, may not have good English skills for written communication. OK to ask if communicating through written notes is acceptable to the individual if sign language interpreter is not available.

Open House Meeting #2

This open house was held on February 28, 2018 at the Stearns County West Service Center.

Accessible Sites, Buildings, Spaces and Elements

- Handicap door push button; be mindful of moveable furnishing, plants so they don't obstruct push buttons.
- Handicap door push buttons can be a problem if sidewalk paved surface isn't wide enough, wheelchair wheel can go off edge when reaching to push button.
- Suggestion to explore the use of infrared technology instead of traditional push buttons for handicap door accessibility.
- General comment minimum accessible door width can still be a challenge especially for power wheelchairs.
- Administration Center – parking too far away, handicap ramp at furthest side; should have ramp on both sides or at least the side closest to parking. Railing on ramp is needed.
- Parks – Large ADA porta potties appreciated; lips on entrance still make it difficult to access.
- Restrooms- Consider changing tables for infants, at accessible height, and larger heavier duty changing tables for personal care attendants to assist clients. Often, laying on bathroom floor while personal care attendant assists client with diaper change is only option.
- Larger heavier duty changing tables would be most beneficial at outdoor gathering areas such as parks.
- Hard surface paths are bests. Wood chipped paths do not work for accessibility.
- Elevators – larger buttons and braille are important.
- Braille map of building in entry would assist visually impair individuals in navigating buildings.

Other

- Consider indicating on website what accessible features are available at different parks. This will help disabled persons plan which facilities best meet their needs. Include location of accessible restrooms on Park maps.
- Website – ensure proper file format for pictures, label pictures for those that can't see what the picture depicts.
- Service Animals – How can we ensure only service animals are being allowed in county buildings? Safety and liability concerns with non- legitimate service animals being brought into buildings. Tough for security to make a call, no current registration system; basically, must use best judgement. Service Center has signage stating No Pets/Service Animals Only; however, appears to be ignored at times.



What is an ADA Transition Plan?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted on July 26, 1990, is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability.

As a provider of public services and programs, Stearns County must comply with this Act, and is developing a Transition Plan detailing how the County will ensure that all facilities are accessible to all individuals.

Stearns County must meet these general requirements for individuals with disabilities:

- Access to all public programs and places
- Modification of policies that deny equal access
- Effective communication procedures
- An ADA Coordinator that coordinates ADA compliance
- Public notice of ADA requirements
- Grievance procedure for resolution of complaints

The transition plan being prepared will formally document progress and identify any remaining barriers to program and service accessibility. This will allow the County to promote strategies that have been successful in one department for use throughout the County, and to prioritize the removal of barriers to program accessibility that have not been accomplished thus far.



County Facilities

As part of the development of the Stearns County ADA Transition Plan, the following County service facilities will be evaluated:

- **Administration Center**
- **Courts Facility**
- **Courthouse**
- **West Service Center**
- **County Extension Office**
- **Public Works - Main Office**
- **Melrose Human Services**
- **Law Enforcement Center (LEC)**
- **Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHW)**





Recreational Facilities

As part of the development of the Stearns County ADA Transition Plan, the following County recreational facilities will be evaluated:

- Quarry Park & Nature Reserve
- Kraemer Lake/Wildwood County Park
- Fairhaven Mill Park
- Heims Mill Canoe Access
- Lake Koronis Regional Park
- Lake Sylvia Wayside
- Miller Landing
- Mississippi County Park
- Oak Park Township Site
- Rockville County Park
- St Martin Canoe Access
- Spring Hill County Park
- Two Rivers County Park
- Upper Spunk Lake Park
- Warner Lake Park

