



City of Cornelia Transition Plan

INTRODUCTION

Title II of the “Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Act” (ADA) is the title that applies to public entities like state and city governments. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is divided into a number of titles. Title II requires nondiscrimination on the basis of disability, in state and local government services. These “public entities” – including departments, agencies, or other instrumentalities – are required to comply with the ADA.

Title II of the ADA therefore requires that all Programs, Services and Activities (PSA's) of public entities, including those considered “instrumentalities” of the government, assure that individuals with disabilities have access to all of their:

- Programs
- Services
- Activities

Program accessibility means that, when viewed in its entirety, each program is readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. Program accessibility is necessary not only for individuals with needs related to mobility disabilities, but also to individuals with needs related to speech, cognitive, vision and hearing disabilities. The following are simply a few examples of barriers to accessibility:

Physical Barriers

- Parking
- Path of Entry/Travel
- Doors
- Service Counters
- Restrooms

Other Barriers

- Building Signage
- Customer Communication and Interaction
- Communications (via internet, public meetings, telephone)
- Participation opportunities for events sponsored by the City

City facilities, programs, services, policies, practices and procedures will continue to be surveyed on an on-going basis, and the ADA Transition Plan may be revised to account for changes to City activities. The most recent survey of buildings with public access was completed in 2011 and is currently being reviewed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the citizens of Cornelia are provided full access to the City's programs, services and activities in as timely a fashion as is reasonably possible. The City's elected officials and staff believe the ability to accommodate disabled persons is essential to good customer service, the quality of life Cornelia residents seek to enjoy and to effective governance. This Plan has been prepared after careful study of all of the City's programs, services and activities.

STATEMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY

The City of Cornelia shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the City can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity. The City of Cornelia will not place surcharges on individuals with disabilities to cover the cost involved in making programs accessible.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

The City owns a limited number of properties and does not have many options on locations from which it can offer programs, activities and services without incurring significant financial cost. Below is a list of the City's facilities:

1. City Hall, 181 Larkin St.,
2. Municipal Building, 156 Foreacre St.,
3. North Fire Station, 347 Hwy 441 N.,
4. Police Dept., 163 Larkin St.,
5. Depot, 102 Grant Place
6. City Shop, 248 Elrod St.,
7. Water Sewer Maintenance Shop, 168 Second St.,
8. Water Treatment Plant, 1277 Camp Creek Rd.,
9. Wastewater Treatment Plant, 514 Nicolon Dr.,
10. Community House, 601 Wyly St.,
11. Ballard Center, 353 Chattahoochee St.,
12. Big City Park, Wyly St.,
13. Oak St. Park, 265 Oak St.
14. Irvin St. Park, 560 Irvin St.,
15. Library Park, 395 Chattahoochee St.,
16. MLK Park, 231 MLK Jr. Dr.,
17. Farlinger St. Park, 235 Farlinger St.
18. Irvin St. Building, 655 Irvin St.

A self-evaluation/assessment of each of the City's physical facilities will be conducted in conjunction with the execution of this Plan. Deficiencies in the City of Cornelia's physical features of facilities that diminish the ability of disabled persons to benefit from the City's programs, services and activities will be identified. A correction plan or other course of action will be noted for each deficiency.

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Each of the City's facilities will be reviewed in light of several "baseline" conditions, including:

- Access to parking and entry into the facilities themselves;
- Access to a clear and distinct path of travel;
- Access to programs and services themselves;
- Access to public areas and restrooms; and
- Access to related amenities.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING EXISTENCE OF IMPEDIMENT

Criteria will be established to determine whether corrective action needs to be taken at a particular facility. The criterion includes, but is not limited to:

- ***The nature of unique programs or services.*** Some facilities and sites are the only location that a particular program or service may be provided;
- ***Facilities already in compliance with ADA accessibility guidelines.*** None of the City's facilities were constructed or underwent major renovations after the effective date of the ADA except the Community House's renovation to include handicapped parking and access to the building;
- ***Ability to relocate programs from one facility to another accessible facility.*** Because the City offers special programs and services at more than one location, consideration was given to distribution of the special programs and services when viewed in their entirety;
- ***Current state of accessibility.*** The current condition of each facility in terms of barriers already removed, or planned to be removed, will be identified by City administration;
- ***Cost.*** The cost of alternatives to physical barrier removal versus the cost of an alternative corrective action plan; and Public use.
- ***The population served by a particular program or service and whether the public can obtain service from an alternative City location.***

OTHER BARRIERS

The City recognizes not all barriers to the City's programs, services and activities are physical in nature. Other administrative barriers exist that must be overcome to provide complete government services to those who are disabled.

COMMUNICATIONS

The City's Plan incorporates steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. Effective communication means that whatever is written or spoken must be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people who do not have disabilities.

There are also other types of communications that the City handles, including web site communications, communications relating to City administration and open public meetings, and other communications regarding the City's programs, services and activities, the City is in the process of:

- Identifying local resources for auxiliary aids and services,

- Identifying ways of producing documents in Braille or acquiring other aids or services, including software that can convert text into speech, and
- Contacting qualified interpreter services and other providers so that interpreters and other aids and services may be available on short notice.

The City conducts all public meetings in ADA accessible facilities, and to the extent feasible will make specific accommodations, where necessary, to ensure that meetings among residents and City staff can be held within ADA accessible facilities.

ACCOMMODATION OF DISABLED PERSONS IN MUNICIPALLY SPONSORED PROGRAMS

The City is committed to allowing persons with disabilities to participate in municipally sponsored programs. This includes recreation opportunities, community forums and other events hosted or sponsored by the City. The City will achieve this goal by integrating all of the steps outlined above into these programs, including providing for effective communications and ensuring meeting and events are, to the extent possible, held in ADA-accessible parks and facilities.

CONCLUSION

The City will continue to work towards timely remedies to barriers to access in an effort to ensure that the disabled citizens of Cornelia are given access to the City's programs, services and activities.