



**2023
ADA Transition Plan**

**Adopted: December 28, 2012
Updated: November 21, 2022**

OVERVIEW

The American with Disabilities Act Transition Plan (“Plan”) is the Town of Munster’s commitment to providing equal access to its public programs, services, facilities, and activities for citizens with disabilities. To develop this plan, the Town of Munster has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of its facilities and programs to determine what types of access barriers exist for individuals with disabilities. This plan replaces previous self-evaluation and transition plans developed by the Town and its departments and will be used to guide future planning and implementation of necessary accessibility improvements.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a Federal Civil Rights Legislation, which mandates non-discrimination to persons with disabilities. The U.S. Congress signed the ADA in 1990, and it went into effect in 1992. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Title I of the ADA prohibits local governments from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Title II of the ADA prohibits general discrimination by local governments on the basis of disability contained in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It prohibits the Town from denying persons with disabilities the equal opportunity to participate in its services, programs, or activities, either directly or indirectly through contractual agreements.

As a recipient of federal funding, it is important that the Town of Munster complies with all applicable federal and state laws, including those protecting persons with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In November 2012, the Town developed its initial ADA Transition Plan. This plan was updated in 2018. This 2023 version is the most recent revision.

The Town of Munster will continue to work to remove physical barriers to accessibility when facilities and roadways as funding allows. Where access is not feasible or available, alternate means to provide the same opportunities to persons with disabilities will be provided.

Responsible Official

The Deputy Town Manager has been designated as the Town of Munster’s ADA Compliance Coordinator. This person is responsible for the development and implementation of the ADA Transition Plan and overall compliance of the ADA, including public rights-of-way (streets, sidewalks, intersections) and public structures and facilities (buildings, parks).

Public Notice

The Town provided two public meetings for public comment on the original ADA Transition Plan. Meetings were held on December 10, 2012 at 7 PM and December 28, 2012 at 11 AM.

The current version of the Plan will be posted on the Town's Website and will also be made available in the offices of the Town Manager and Clerk-Treasurer.

The Town will update the plan and its associated improvement project lists once per year to reflect completed improvement projects, or additions or changes suggested by the public as appropriate.

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 services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Town. The Town's Grievance Procedure is outlined below:

1. The complainant and/or his/her designee should submit the grievance as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the alleged occurrence. Submit grievance, using the form provided in Appendix A, to the Munster ADA Compliance Coordinator:

Jill E. DiTommaso, PE
Deputy Town Manager
1005 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321
Email: jditommaso@munster.org
Phone: (219)836-6907
Facsimile: (219)836-6540

2. The complaint should be presented to the ADA Compliance Coordinator either in writing, in person, or in any other format for the Administrator to be able to document the incident(s) of alleged discrimination. Any complaints should also be copied to the Town Manager. The complaint should contain the following information about the alleged discrimination: full name, address, phone number of the complainant; location of the occurrence, date, and description of the alleged discrimination. The complaint will specify the Department involved and any employee and/or witness involved in the occurrence. Upon request, alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape/video recording of the complaint, will be made for a person with disabilities.
3. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Compliance Coordinator, or designee, will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions.
4. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Compliance Coordinator will respond in writing or in another form acceptable to the complainant. The response provides a final resolution of the complaint.
5. If the individual who has filed a grievance continues to have concerns after this process concludes, he or she is welcome to bring any unresolved concerns to the Town Manager of the Town of Munster.
6. All appeals received and responses given by the ADA Compliance Coordinator will be kept by the Town of Munster for at least five (5) years, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES

The Town must ensure that programs, services, and activities are available and accessible to persons with disabilities. To that end, the Town surveyed all its departments to learn how they communicate with the public and what tools and techniques they use to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to programs, services and activities. Many Town departments felt that they currently provided full and equal access to all its services, programs, and activities for people with disabilities.

TOWN PROGRAMS, SERVICES, ACTIVITIES

1. Customer Service
 - a. Walk-In Service
 - i. At most of the Town of Munster buildings, where the public is assisted, there are clear pathways, clear of temporary or permanent barriers such as tables, chairs, coat, racks, etc.
 - ii. Service desks are counter height.
 - iii. Building is difficult to navigate for first-time visitors.
 - b. Recommendations
 - i. Redesign customer service desk areas to provide appropriate window height for customers using wheelchairs.
 - ii. Provide clearer wayfinding and signage for visitors.
2. Public Meetings, Hearings, Events
 - a. The Town provides public meetings, hearings, and other events that are open and accessible to all citizens, regardless of disability.
 - b. All departments that hold public meetings, hearing, or other public events, provide accommodations to people with disabilities.
 - c. Public meetings are available virtually through ZOOM with links available on the Town's website.
 - d. Meetings are recorded and available on the Town's website.
 - e. The Department of Parks and Recreation provides many programs to the public. By their nature, some are not accessible to all. Wherever possible, alternative accommodations are provided.
3. Printed Materials
 - a. The Town provides a variety of informational and promotional materials for public use, including forms, brochures, fact sheets, reports, plans, proposals, agendas, ordinances, and resolutions.
 - b. Recommendations:
 - c. All departments must be able to provide documents and other printed materials in alternate forms, as requested. This includes Braille, audio recordings, enlarged print and computer disks at no charge to the individual making the request.
 - d. Instructions about how to provide these alternate formats should be provided to all employees, with reminders sent out once a year.
4. Website
 - a. The Town maintains a website to provide information to the public.
 - b. Recommendations
 - i. Continue to improve accessibility of the Town's website.
5. Contracting and Purchasing
 - a. The Town currently uses requirements that do not discriminate based on disability when selecting contractors, consultants or vendors for projects or services.

TOWN FACILITIES

The Town of Munster owns and operates a number of municipal and utility buildings, public streets, parking lots, community centers, parks, trails, and sports fields. These facilities are listed below.

<u>Building</u>	<u>Address</u>
Town Hall	1005 Ridge Road
Police Department	1001 Ridge Road
Public Works Garage	508 Fisher Street
Fire Station #1	1007 Ridge Road
Fire Station #2	550 Fisher Street
Fire Station #3	10121 Calumet Avenue
Community Park Social Center	8751 Lions Club Drive
Centennial Park Clubhouse	1005 S Centennial Drive

<u>Park</u>	<u>Address</u>
Beech Park	8101 Beech Avenue
Bieker Woods Nature Area	1050 Ridge Road
Bluebird Park	1900 Holly Lane
Briar Creek Park	10299 Fox Run
Burlwood Park	10139 Burlwood Drive
Centennial Park	901 N Centennial Drive
Circle Park	1737 Inner Circle
Cobblestones Park	801 Treadway Road
Community Park	8601 Calumet Avenue
Evergreen Park	209 Timrick Drive
Frank H. Hammond Park	1101 Fran Lin Parkway
Grove Park	8201 Tapper Avenue
Heritage Park Gazebo	1154 Ridge Road
Kiwanis Park	213 Timrick Drive
Munster Community Pool	8837 Calumet Avenue
Munster Skate Park	8601 Calumet Avenue
Orchard Park	8807 White Oak Avenue
River's Edge Disc Golf Course	1 River Drive
Stewart Park	1600 Fran Lin Parkway
Sunnyside Park	7800 Hohman Avneue
Twin Creek Park	9747 Twin Creek Boulevard
West Lakes Park	9701 Margo Lane
White Oak Park	9700 White Oak Avenue

Most of the Town's public facilities are ADA compliant. Many parks have marked and signed accessible parking and paved walking paths. The majority of playground facilities have been updated to meet current accessibility standards. Sunnyside Park includes a sensory play area. A planned upgrade to the Town Hall complex will include updating our facilities to increase accessibility.

Accessibility improvements that can be made through general maintenance of Town facilities (e.g., signage, clear pathways, relocation of restroom fixtures), or as part of the regular administrative duties of department staff (e.g., providing documents in alternate forms, training, website improvements) will typically be completed first. Larger capital improvement projects will be completed when funding is available.

PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

The Town continues to make progress on installing curb ramps and sidewalks along its roadways and providing increased access to its outdoor parks and recreation facilities.

Standards currently implemented by the Town of Munster, when undergoing new or improvement road projects, adhere to those ADA laws and published under the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Standard Drawings for Sidewalk Details (E 604-SDWK), Sidewalk Curb Ramps (E 604-SWCR), and Drives (E 610-DRIV). The program is based on the inventory conducted by the Town of Munster and it constitutes the Transition Plan of accessibility and upgrades.

Please note that this assessment of ADA compliance for public streets in Munster is based on the 2011 Proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way (PROWAG) published by the United States Access Board. The PROWAG document has not been adopted or approved. PROWAG is recognized as a best practice and has been recommended for use by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Compliance or non-compliance as noted herein, is in reference to PROWAG, assuming it is the standard by which we should be measured. The Town of Munster does not endorse or dispute the validity of PROWAG.

Background

The Town of Munster has approximately 107 miles of public streets, over 480 public street intersections, and 29 signalized intersections. It has been and continues to be a priority for the Town to improve accessibility for pedestrians through the expansion of an accessible sidewalk network. The Town has implemented several programs and policies, and developed funding mechanisms to address the tremendous system needs for accessibility, including:

- Ensure all transportation capital projects consider and/or provide pedestrian access and meet the current ADA design standards and guidelines.
- Provide funding in all pavement management overlay projects for constructing new and/or replacing non-compliant existing curb ramps.
- Require that all new developments and site expansions or improvements include accessible facilities in the public rights-of-way.
- Administer an on-going cost share program for replacing deteriorated and non-compliant sidewalks.

Sidewalks and Curb Ramps

In 2017, the Town's engineering consultant completed an inventory of sidewalks and curb ramps. Curb ramps were assessed for slope, width, landing area, and presence of detectable warning strip. Sidewalk tripping hazards were identified and ranked on a scale of 1 to 4.

<u>Hazard Rating</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
1	3-inch or greater
2	2 to 3-inch
3	1 to 2-inch
4	Less than 1 inch

The Town maintains a GIS database of non-compliant curb ramps and sidewalk tripping hazards and makes updates as repairs are made. As sidewalk conditions change over time due to frost heaving, tree roots, and general deterioration, a reassessment of these conditions should be made regularly.

The Town does not budget funding directly to curb ramp replacements. Instead, non-compliant curb ramps are replaced in conjunction with road reconstruction projects every year. The Town budgets \$1 million dollars for paving projects each year, using funds from the state's Community Crossings Matching Grant program to effectively double the amount available for pavement rehabilitation.

Every year, the Town replaces approximately 3,000 to 4,000 feet of sidewalk as part of the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program. Replacement sections are prioritized based on severity of hazard and proximity to schools, parks, and commercial areas. Typically, the Town budgets \$150,000 each year for our 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement program.

The Town continually looks for, and has successfully obtained, additional funding for these projects from other sources, including grants from local, state, and federal programs.

The Town of Munster has incorporated ADA compliance into street repaving and construction contracts in order to maximize our effective compliance. The following table shows the amount of ADA compliant new sidewalks and the number of curb ramps installed.

Year	Sidewalk (feet)	Ramps (#)
2017	-	110
2018	2,300	110
2019	2,140	43
2020	4,185	93
2021	3,622	55
2022	4,360	-

Traffic Signals

The Town of Munster has 29 signalized intersections. All traffic signals have pedestrian signals and/or pedestrian pushbuttons. In 2022, the Town began to collect data on the layout of these intersections.

Generally, the Town's primary focus is to install ADA compliant pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections whenever any signal improvements are constructed at a given intersection. Additionally, the following criteria are used to help prioritize projects:

The Town does not currently budget for traffic signal improvements.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The following is a summary of the currently identified accessibility improvement priorities and needs for the Town of Munster.

Year	Project	Funding Source
2023	Update Infrastructure Specifications to address US Access Board ADA guidelines and to better incorporate pedestrian facilities.	GO Bond
	Update sidewalk and curb ramp survey	GO Bond
	Curb Ramp Reconstruction Hathorne, Cypress, Crestwood, White Oak White Oak, Camellia, Beverly	22-1 CCMG 22-2 CCMG
	50/50 Sidewalk Replacement	GO Bond
2024	Curb Ramp Reconstruction – streets TBD	2023 CCMG
	50/50 Sidewalk Replacement	GO Bond
	Town Hall Upgrade	GO Bond
2025	Curb Ramp Reconstruction – streets TBD	2024 CCMG
	50/50 Sidewalk Replacement	GO Bond
	Ridge Road Complete Street Project – curb ramps, sidewalks, traffic signals	RAISE Grant
	Main Street Reconstruction, Phase 1 – curb ramps, sidewalks, traffic signals	TIP
2026	Curb Ramp Reconstruction – streets TBD	2025 CCMG
	50/50 Sidewalk Replacement	GO Bond
	Ridge Road Complete Street Project – curb ramps, sidewalks, traffic signals	RAISE Grant
2027	Curb Ramp Reconstruction – streets TBD	2026 CCMG
	50/50 Sidewalk Replacement	GO Bond

APPENDIX A



GRIEVANCE FORM

All written complaints about any matter relating to civil rights, shall be submitted on this form. The Town of Munster will assist those who submit verbal complaints to transfer these complaints onto this written form. You are required to complete all sections. You should expect an acknowledgement within 10 working days and will be informed of the outcome of your complaint within 90 days, unless the Town of Munster notifies you that the investigation will need additional time. This form should be sent to the Deputy Town Manager, Jill DiTommaso, at jditommaso@munster.org

Please keep a copy of this form for your records, plus any material you submit.

SECTION A - YOUR DETAILS

Title _____ **Name (First & Last)** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone _____

SECTION B – NATURE OF THE COMPLAINT

Please set out below the main points of your complaint.

Use additional sheets if necessary.

PLEASE LIST ANY DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE ATTACHED AND MAKE SURE YOU KEEP A COPY. (e.g., any correspondence, list of dates when events occurred, or other documentation related to your complaint)

SECTION C - AN OUTLINE OF THE ACTION YOU HAVE TAKEN SO FAR

Please outline the steps you have already taken to resolve your complaint **informally**:

With whom was it discussed? _____

Date(s): _____

Position(s): _____

Department(s): _____

Describe the outcome of any action taken so far and explain why you believe that the matter has not yet been resolved.

SECTION D - DESIRED OUTCOME

Please describe the action you would like to see taken to resolve the complaint to your satisfaction.

SECTION E – DECLARATION

I believe that the above information is accurate. I confirm that details of this complaint can be passed on to the Town Manager for appeal (if applicable).

Signature: _____

Name (First & Last): _____

Contact Information: _____

Date _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

<p>Acknowledgement sent: _____</p> <p>Reply sent: _____</p> <p>Complaint forwarded to department: _____</p> <p>Response received: _____</p> <p>What action (if any) is now needed? _____</p>
