

Chapter 3

Prioritization Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the City of Santa Fe utilizes a range of approaches in prioritizing the removal of pedestrian barriers and obstructions from the City's PROW. These include:

- Proactively identifying barriers or obstructions
- Responding to public comments and complaints
- Confirming that construction and improvement projects meet ADA compliance

This chapter of the Transition Plan will cover prioritization strategies used by other jurisdictions and will provide recommended prioritization strategies to supplement the City of Santa Fe's current prioritization process. The recommended prioritization strategy is based on the standards set forth by the 2011 ADA Accessibility Guidelines. Establishing a prioritization process will increase the likelihood of attaining additional funding since funding agencies generally award capital funds based on local assessments of need.

REVIEW OF PRIORITIZATION STRATEGIES USED IN OTHER AREAS

As part of developing the prioritization strategies to upgrade the City's pedestrian infrastructure, a brief review was conducted of other national examples which have been recognized as best-practices. The review identified the following ADA Transition Plans; the frame work behind their prioritization processes is summarized below:

City of Austin, Texas – Sidewalk Master Plan

The City of Austin, Texas completed their ADA Transition Plan, termed the Sidewalk Master Plan, in 2009. The authors of the plan have developed a prioritization matrix to rank potential improvement projects based on three scores including:

1. Pedestrian Attractor Score (accounts for 50% of base score)
 - Proximity to schools, transit stops, government offices, etc.
 - Median household income (areas at or below the median income)
 - Population
 - Existing facilities
 - Citizen/organization requests for improvements
 - Transit corridor
 - Bicycle lanes

2. Pedestrian Safety Score (accounts for 40% of base score)
 - Street characteristics (number of lanes, speed limit and traffic counts)
 - Public health data
 - Pedestrian and automobile incidents
3. Fiscal Availability Score (accounts for 10% of base score)

City of Bellevue, Washington – *Toward Universal Access: Americans with Disabilities Act Sidewalk and Curb Ramp Self-Evaluation Report*

The City of Bellevue, Washington’s ADA Self-Evaluation Report, completed in 2009, is perhaps on the most noteworthy reports to date due the City’s unique technological approach to surveying in the PROW. The City partnered with FHWA on the research and development of an ultra-light, slow-speed, inertial profiler (ULIP), based on existing light detection and ranging (LIDAR) technology. The ULIP unit was mounted on a Segway Human Transporter which was used to inventory sidewalks and curb ramps throughout the City.

The report developed two separate scores in its prioritization process. The first is an impedance score, based on curb ramp and sidewalk deficiencies, and the second is an activity score based on specific land uses, including:

- Concentrations of Persons with Disabilities (based on Metro Access rider home addresses)
- Higher Volume Streets
- Places of public accommodation (community centers, social services, libraries, hospitals, and government offices)
- High density housing
- Concentrations of Seniors (U.S. Census data)
- Transit Stops
- Employment centers
- Park Facilities
- Schools
- Retail stores

The combination of the activity and impedance scores provided the overall barrier ranking priority listing.

City of Eugene, Oregon – *Transition Plan for Accessibility in the Public Rights-of-Way*

The City of Eugene’s ADA transition plan, completed in 2015, has established a three-tier prioritization strategy for addressing barrier removal in the PROW. Acknowledging limited funding for improvements, the plan’s tiered approach reflects the adjacent land uses that

generate higher levels of pedestrian trips which would respond to the network needs of pedestrians. Lower priority areas may be addressed over time with an end goal of complete barrier removal. The plan's structured priority land uses are as follows:

- Priority 1 – State/Local Government and Public Use Facilities
 - State/Local Government Buildings
 - Hospitals/Medical Clinics
 - Schools
 - Public Parks
 - Public Transit Systems
 - Access to Shared Use Paths
 - High Use Areas or Facilities that service Alternatively-Abled Populations

- Priority 2 – Places of Public Accommodation and Employment
 - Major Commercial and Retail Sites
 - Major Employment Sites; e.g. Downtown
 - High-Density Multi-Family Housing Developments
 - Places of Public Assembly

- Priority 3 – Other Considerations
 - Individual Service Requests
 - Geographic Connectivity
 - Project/Funding Requirements

City of Rancho Cordova, California – ADA Transition Plan

The City of Rancho Cordova's ADA Transition Plan was completed in 2005 and is recognized by the FHWA as a best practice for municipalities. The plan prioritizes public input requests as the first line of priority; these requests come from community members who wish to access a range of facilities to accommodate their activities of daily living. Beyond individual, or group, requests, the City uses the following three priority areas:

1. Priority 1: State and Local Government and Public Use
 - State, county and local government buildings
 - Public hospitals, health clinics, medical clinics
 - Public housing projects and public homeless shelters
 - Sheriff neighborhood service centers
 - CalWorks offices and Employment Training Agency facilities
 - City parks
 - Public schools
 - State and local district offices with high public traffic (e.g. DMV)

2. Priority 2: Public Accommodations

- Private hospitals, doctor's offices, and medical and mental health offices
 - Senior facilities
 - Major shopping malls
 - Large housing complexes
 - Major employment sites
 - Supermarkets
 - Retail strip centers
 - Small apartment facilities
 - Service sites of disability organizations
 - Rehabilitation facilities
3. Priority 3: Low-Density and Other Uses
- Single-family residential areas
 - Industrial areas
 - Areas that have not fallen into the above groups

In addition to the three priorities listed above, Rancho Cordova has also developed evaluation factors called condition properties. Condition properties are based on the physical condition of an existing curb ramp, intersection, or sidewalk. The combination of priority areas and condition properties determine where improvement projects should be planned should additional funds be available once public requests have been satisfied. Condition properties are ranked one through five and are as follows:

1. Condition Property 1: Locations where existing conditions may cause a safety hazard including deteriorated conditions and vertical displacements
2. Condition Property 2: Locations where there is no existing pedestrian infrastructure
3. Condition Property 3: Locations where there is no safe path of travel across an intersection
4. Condition Property 4: Improvement of a location with difficult physical conditions such as major utility conflicts, physical barriers, or other constraints
5. Condition Property 5: Existing infrastructure that is functional for most persons but does not meet current accessibility standards (e.g. slopes, lack of detectable warnings, etc.)

RECOMMENDED PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY

The recommended prioritization strategy draws from the above examples from other municipalities across the country in addition to input that has been obtained from City staff and the Santa Fe Mayor's Committee on Disability. The goal of this strategy is to make improvements to curb ramps, intersections and sidewalks that will meet current ADA accessibility guidelines at locations which will benefit the greatest number of users. The recommended prioritization strategy is based on three main categories:

- Public requests
- PROW deficiency
- Priority areas

Public Requests

The highest priority for improvements to the PROW should be based on public comments or requests. These requests are typically submitted by community members with disabilities who wish to access priority areas (defined in the following Priority Areas section). The City of Santa Fe currently operates an ADA Grievance Procedure program; additional information is available at (http://www.santafenm.gov/grievance_policy_and_procedure).

Once requests are received by the City’s ADA Coordinator they should be evaluated to determine the scope of the issue and the feasibility of constructing ADA compliant curb ramps, intersections, or sidewalks. When determining the scope of the issue, the entire pedestrian network should be considered. For example, if the removal of a barrier is requested the entire block and adjacent intersections should be evaluated.

Following the evaluation and feasibility assessment, these projects should be ranked by priority and programmed into the following capital improvement cycle when funding is available.

PROW Deficiency

The PROW deficiency category takes into account the severity of the problem at each location. Severe deficiencies that render a block or area completely inaccessible should have higher priority over other problems which render a location non-compliant without making it non-functional. To differentiate these types of deficiencies the following high to low priority list has been developed.

High Priority Deficiency

High priority deficiencies are defined as locations that do not meet ADA compliance guidelines and are non-functional for persons with mobility or visual impairments. These areas may be difficult or impossible to traverse even for able-bodied persons. Contributing attributes include:

- Curb ramps and sidewalks that are less than 36 inches in width
- Obstructions
- Non-continuous sidewalks

Medium Priority Deficiency

Medium priority deficiencies represent areas which do not meet one or more of the ADA's guidelines but can remain functional, or accessible. This category largely includes:

- Curb ramps and sidewalks that are less than 48 inches in width
- Cross-slope issues
- Run-slope issues
- Surface gaps
- Vertical changes
- Protrusions

Low Priority Deficiency

Lower priority deficiencies are non-compliant with ADA guidelines but are functional (traversable by persons in mobility devices).

- Minor slope issues
- Minor surface obstructions

Priority Areas

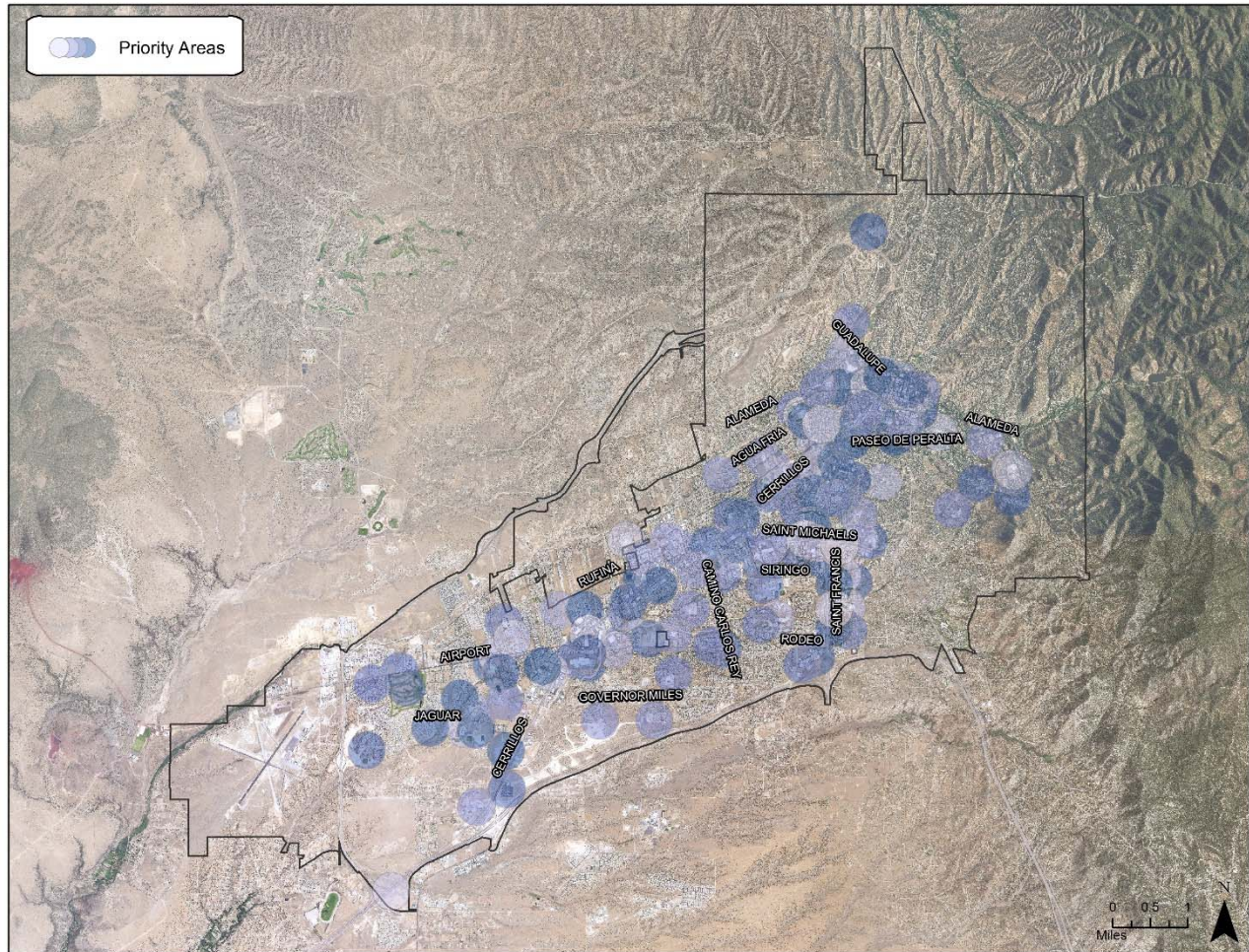
The priority area category identifies locations that are likely to attract the highest number of persons with disabilities as well as having generally high overall pedestrian activity, therefore identifying where improvements will have the greatest impact. The specific land uses and attributes that will be included in the prioritization strategy include:

- City parks
- Disabled population (U.S. Census data)
- Government office buildings
- Hospitals, medical clinics, and mental health clinics
- Large apartment complexes
- Major employment sites
- Major shopping destinations
- Museums and other cultural attractions
- Public housing and homeless shelters
- Schools; public, private, colleges and universities
- Senior centers
- Supermarkets/grocery stores

Figure 3-1 provides a map with the location of priority areas throughout the City of Santa Fe. The priority areas shown on the map are colored in varying gradients of blue to show the

amount of overlapping. The majority of priority areas are surrounding downtown and are also located along the City’s major transportation corridors; including Cerrillos Road, St. Francis Drive, and St. Michaels Drive among others.

Figure 3-1: Priority Area Locations



Overlapping Priorities

Identifying locations that meet multiple criteria will ensure that improvements will benefit the greatest number of people. In turn, funding for improvements will be more likely. The recommended priorities generally mimic the priorities set forth in the Santa Fe MPO’s Pedestrian Master Plan and comply with federal guidance for developing local ADA Transition Plans. Improvement projects stemming from this prioritized list should be further reviewed and coordinated with existing or planned sidewalk/road resurfacing, rehabilitation, or replacement efforts.

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