

Date: January 13, 2010

To: Lynette Geschwin, Affirmative Action Officer
Minnesota Department of Transportation

From: Joan Willshire, Executive Director
Minnesota State Council on Disability

Subject: Comments on Mn/DOT draft ADA Transition Plan

The Minnesota State Council on Disability (MSCOD) is a state agency that advises the governor, the state legislature, state agencies and the general public on public policy issues affecting persons with disabilities. We work to advance the rights of Minnesotans with disabilities.

My staff and I wish to acknowledge the effort and planning that Mn/DOT staff has put into this document. We appreciate the opportunity to respond to it and look forward to ongoing involvement in its evolution and implementation.

Comments

District Expertise/Work Group:

MSCOD recommends that Mn/DOT put in place regular reporting requirements from each district to the ADA External Advisory Committee. This is a statewide plan and many of the issues needing attention are as much rural as they are metro issues. It is important that a communication link be established where the committee will be kept apprised of the many issues impacting the disability community around the state. Each district has its own unique needs and issues that need to be addressed, therefore, the districts should be required to meet with the ADA External Advisory Committee on a quarterly basis to provide updates and discuss access issues.

Transition Plan Management:

MSCOD strongly recommends that the routine updates take place every two years for the first decade that the ADA Transition Plan is in existence. With long lists of outstanding projects needing attention, routine updates every five years that is proposed in this draft seems inadequate. This recommendation would be beneficial during the period when a majority of projects are addressed and updated. Once these projects have been completed, then reviewing and updating the plan every five years seems reasonable and appropriate.

Self Evaluation:

MSCOD encourages Mn/DOT to refocus its efforts and devote the necessary time and energy to complete a comprehensive self-evaluation encompassing all physical and non-physical barriers to equal access for people with disabilities. MN/DOT must ensure that the self-evaluation is complete and all information is at hand to develop a meaningful transition plan. A self-evaluation is intended to cover all aspects of a public entity's activities, programs, services and procedures to identify barriers to access by persons with disabilities. MN/DOT has admitted that much of the information needed to evaluate its activities, programs, services and procedures is not yet fully available. To develop a transition plan with significant information not included is premature and creates a document with little impact and without meaningful time tables for completion of projects or cost estimates for budgeting.

Rest Areas:

MSCOD strongly recommends that immediate attention be given to rest areas around the state and that each and every rest area be made accessible to travelers with mobility disabilities. Mn/DOT rest areas should be identified by class, prioritized within that class and given a time line for when full accessibility will be achieved.

Pedestrian Bridge and Underpass Inventory:

MSCOD strongly recommends that all pedestrian bridges throughout the state be identified and based on a number of variables including location, destination, usage, etc, be prioritized and made accessible. This needs to be incorporated into the transition plan.

Policies:

There is a list of policies with no explanation of how they impact accessibility or what conflict they may have with accessibility goals. It would be useful to hear more detail about how these policies.

Numerous Spelling and Grammatical Errors:

I am disappointed that such little attention was paid to a document of this importance in regard to spelling and grammatical errors. Listed below are numerous corrections that should be incorporated into the final document.

Page 2 Edits:

These curb ramps were installed to help eliminate ~~the~~ barriers that curbs caused for.....

Page 3 Edits:

Second Paragraph

They also serve as a voice for members of Minnesotan's ~~disabled~~ disability community.

Fourth Paragraph

The report identified which policies, procedures and practices ~~that~~ do not comply with the Title II

Sixth Paragraph

And finally, in 2009, as part of the development of Mn/DOT's Transition Plan, the agency elected to adopt **PROWAG** as its primary guidance for public facility design.

Spell out what PROWAG stands for and then put (PROWAG). Also it would be helpful to give a small paragraph of the significance of PROGWAG, i.e. why Mn/DOT adopted PROWAG as its primary guidance for public facility design.

Last Paragraph

The Title II coordinator will be located in **the** Affirmative Action Office and will **be** responsible for addressing.....

Page 4 Edits

First Paragraph

The ADA Implementation Coordinator is currently under the direction of the Employee and Corporate Service Division and will remain part of that division until June 30, ~~2009~~ **2010**.....(Shouldn't this be 2010? 2009 is 6 months over due?)

Last Paragraph

.....and a representative from the Minnesota State Council on ~~Disabilities~~ **Disability, and the** Met Council Transportation Advisory Committee,.

*Note there is an extra comma after Committee and before the period.

The committee ~~is~~**has** also been involved with the development of Mn/DOT's transition plan.

Page 5 Edits

Second Paragraph

The first update for the Mn/DOT's transition plan ~~will~~ is scheduled to occur.....

Page 6 Edits

Sixth Paragraph

Public meetings, trainings, programs, or other events must be in an.....

Last Paragraph

Priority one buildings are those buildings that have employee use and a high potential for public use. (Top of page 7) Priority two buildings ~~is~~ **are** those ...

Page 8

Fourth Paragraph

As part of the inventory each ~~Mn/DOT~~ intersection received a rating....

Factors outside the ranking that affect ~~the~~ an intersections priority for APS include the number of pedestrians at the intersection, surroundings *** such as needs....

****This currently makes no sense. Surrounding what? surrounding areas, such has.....or some other insert after 'surrounding'.**

Page 9

First Paragraph

An inventory form was developed ~~by~~ **to** record data....

This currently makes no sense.

Suggestions: An inventory form was developed ~~by~~ to record data....

Or

An inventory form was developed by **insert whom** to record data....

Page 11

First Paragraph

All new construction, reconstruction, and alteration projects in Mn/DOT's right of way are required **to** provide for

Conclusion:

MSCOD is concerned that this transition plan lacks critical information that is necessary to create a meaningful ADA transition plan. At this time we recommend that Mn/DOT complete the self-evaluation of activities, programs, services and procedures of all physical and non-physical barriers to equal access for people with disabilities. This information along with a prioritized list of projects and a time line for project completion is fundamental to the transition plan.