



Annual Report on Accessibility in County Facilities

September 2023

OVERVIEW

2023 marks the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the landmark federal civil rights law that guarantees fair access to all public facilities, services, and amenities. Increasing access to County public facilities has been a crucial part of the County's commitment to our residents, visitors, and to County personnel. The President and the Board of Commissioners have prioritized expanding equitable opportunities and access to our health, public safety, and other vital services. As part of those ongoing and increasing efforts, the Board requested annual updates on the status and ongoing efforts of the County toward expanding accessibility, not just with compliance with the ADA but with an eye toward full equity of access for all.

Since December 2010, the Offices Under the President have been undertaking the significant challenge of updating the legacy of approximately 19 million square feet of space to appropriate levels of compliance. The majority of Cook County's facilities were built prior to 1991 when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as applicable to government facilities went into effect. While code-compliant at the time of their construction, many of these facilities have conditions that are now identified as barriers to the disabled.

The County owns, leases, and operates a wide variety of facilities, which presents a wide range of challenges. These facilities are grouped into three portfolios, Health and Hospitals, Public Safety, and Corporate Facilities. They include Stroger and Provident hospitals, the Oak Forest Hospital campus, the County's community health clinics, the Cook County Jail, a dozen suburban and specialty courthouses, various community public safety agency facilities, two Loop office buildings, three large warehouses, and five highway or vehicle service facilities.

Initially, when President Preckwinkle took office, individual projects were undertaken to address the most urgent needs for accessibility. This included, for example, a series of renovations at our courthouses to provide access and building entry from the parking areas. A more comprehensive pursuit of compliance started with the development of

the Real Estate Asset Strategic Realignment Plan (REASRP, completed in 2014). The REASRP identified accessibility needs across all portfolios. It identified which County buildings need renovation, for reasons including compliance and efficiency, and which should be replaced.

Since the REASRP, the County has completed several ADA and ADA-related renovation projects in all three portfolios, totaling approximately \$86 million. In addition to renovations, the County has constructed major new facilities such as the \$97 million Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) at the DOC, completed in 2015, which provides accessible housing to compensate for several existing housing units that could not be structurally retrofitted to full accessibility, the new fully-accessible Professional Building addition to Stroger Hospital, completed 2018, and the new fully-accessible Belmont Cragin Health Center, completed in 2021..

POLICY ROADMAP

The Cook County Policy Roadmap, issued by the Office of the President in 2018, identifies multiple policy directions that require continuous improvements to accessibility across all County facilities. Specific policies that align with goals for achieving and maintaining full accessibility include but are not limited to:

Vital Communities, Objective 1:

1.1 Ensure equitable and inclusive policies and practices for recipients of Cook County resources.

Open Communities, Objective 1:

1.1 Make all Cook County services accessible to residents with disabilities and non-English speakers.

In implementing these policies, the County is also seeking to apply the principles of universal design in projects, to take a whole-building approach to accessibility.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The Department of Capital Planning and Policy (DCPP) has undertaken a series of studies, designs, and construction projects, to prioritize and address accessibility needs. This has been implemented through a **four-pronged strategy** to improve accessibility across Cook County's three capital portfolios (Public Safety, Corporate, and Public Health and Hospitals).

1. **Execute capital projects in response to reported accessibility deficiencies or challenges**

DCPP has received and addressed reports or requests that identify specific needs for accessibility upgrades in County facilities.

- The 2015 US Department of Justice (DOJ) Barriers Report indicated specific ADA challenges on the Department of Corrections (DOC) Campus. Since the report was issued, of 214 items identified as needing action or operational changes, 199 are either completed or closed, were in buildings that have since been demolished, or did not require capital modifications. All the remaining 15 items are included in an RFQ for a wrap-around assessment of the entire DOC Campus that is scheduled for advertisement later this quarter.
- Additionally, DCPP was notified by the judiciary in Fall 2018 that a disabled judge would be seated at the Skokie Courthouse in December of that year; Board-approved funds in that year's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for countywide ADA upgrades in the Public Safety portfolio allowed DCPP to expeditiously complete the first phase of that improvement. After the initial expedited accommodation was executed by Department of Facilities Management (DFM), DCPP, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Judge and other justice stakeholders, developed a new courtroom at the Skokie Courthouse, providing full accessibility not only for the judge but also for all courtroom participants. Design was completed in FY2021, construction of the first phase of the project is complete, and the new courtroom is scheduled for completion in FY 2024. It is expected to serve as a template for similar upgrades at other courthouses.

2. **Develop comprehensive accessibility assessments to determine project needs**

For example, DCPP requested multiple large-scale ADA assessment projects in the Public Safety portfolio to be approved by the Board as part of the FY2022 and subsequent CIP:

- RFQs have been issued, responses have been received and evaluated, and DCPP is bringing contract requests to the September 2023 Board meeting, for introduction and Committee referral, for full ADA assessments and preliminary designs for the renovations of all of the **outlying courthouses**.
- To capture needs not included in the above-referenced DOJ Barriers report or the various localized upgrades already completed at the Jail campus, DCPP is issuing an RFQ this quarter to contract design professionals to provide a wrap-around ADA assessment of all buildings (approximately 60 structures) at the **DOC Campus**.

- DCPD will also be issuing an RFQ this quarter to contract design professionals to complete an accessibility assessment of the **Juvenile Temporary Detention Center**.
- A contract for the ADA assessment and design of upgrades to the **Cermak Health Facility** has already been approved by the Board and the assessment phase for that entire building is underway.
- In FY2022 the County commissioned an assessment of the approximately 150 courtrooms in the **Daley Center**. Working with the Office of the Chief Judge (OCJ) and the Illinois Attorney General's office, the subset of courtrooms to be renovated for full accessibility has been identified, design work is underway, and we are projecting construction of the first of those ADA renovations as part of the FY2023 CIP. The Public Building Commission is commissioning the design firm for the ADA upgrades to the County tenant spaces in the Courthouse. In addition, the PBC is also conducting upgrades to the public areas of the building.
- An RFQ has also been issued and is soon to be brought to the Board for award, for the assessment of the **Leighton Criminal Courthouse**. Similar to the Daley Center, for Leighton DCPD worked with the OCJ to consult with the Illinois AG to confirm the interpretation of the requirements when it comes to accessible needs for the specialized functions of courtroom spaces and, in particular, how many courtrooms need to be renovated to ensure a satisfactory level of accessibility to the justice system.

3. Incorporate accessibility improvements within standard renovation projects

All three capital portfolios contain projects that redevelop or renovate existing spaces across the County. DCPD makes it a priority to address accessibility deficiencies or concerns in such renovation projects, to bring those areas up to current ADA standards and, where feasible, pursue universal design to provide accommodations beyond the minimum requirements.

- For example, in the Corporate Portfolio, the County is undertaking a multi-year, multi-floor renovation of the County Building (118 N. Clark), the result of the need to provide a fully accessible Board Room and office environment.
- The County is also conducting a multi-floor re-stack of both the County Building and the Dunne Building (69 W. Washington). As with all County renovation projects, full accessibility and, where feasible universal design upgrades, are part of the design program and requirements. In FY2022 the 31st floor was renovated to full current ADA compliance and, in FY2023,

the 29th floor was similarly upgraded. Additional full-floor renovations for the 27th and 30th floors are projected for design phase in FY2024.

- To ensure consistency across all projects in implementation of the County's accessibility policies and goals, the recently awarded Construction Management teams for the public safety and corporate portfolios include provision of an ADA/accessibility manager, to supplement the existing expertise of DCPD staff until a new ADA Project Director is on board (see below).



Rendering of County Building ADA upgrade

4. **Develop large-scale capital program initiatives**

The ADA/accessibility assessment and design contracts, taken together, cover the entire DOC campus and all county courthouses. Once construction is complete, they will result in upgrades in access by the public and staff across the entire portfolio, including:

- Multiple operational improvements projects at the Cook County Jail, including an expanded visitors center/screening and program support facility, all of which are being implemented in parallel.
- In tandem with the assessments of the existing courtrooms, in FY2022 the County began working with the full range of stakeholders (the Court, Sheriff, States Attorney, Public Defender, Clerk, Bureau of Technology (BOT), DFM, etc.) to develop, issue, and award a contract for professional services to develop and specify systems to upgrade the AV and IT systems for the County's approximately 330 courtrooms. The development by the team of the RFQ for these services is underway and is expected to be out

to the market in Q4 2023. Accessibility is a critical component and a primary driver of that initiative. Building upon what has been developed for the new fully accessible Skokie courtroom, and in consultation with the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (which has similar challenges) and the National Center for State Courts, the goal is to develop a new national standard in courtroom technology, and to implement those upgrades in a phased, multi-year capital program across the dozen courthouses in the Cook County system.

Looking forward, DCPP will expand upon the above projects to create a roadmap to future ADA accessible capital developments across all portfolios. Professional services will be required as annual budgets are approved to provide interpretation and guidance.

Below are highlights of projects with accessibility-related scope across the Public Safety, Corporate, and Public Health Portfolios.

DCPP has undertaken multiple efforts to hire a new ADA Project Director, to provide subject matter expertise both on projects focused on accessibility and to serve as a resource for all our Project Directors on projects that have an accessibility component. This position will also be responsible for the development of a County-wide facilities accessibility policy.

In the meantime, the Department executed contracts in 2022 with three Construction Management teams, one for each of the portfolios. For the Public Safety and Corporate Facilities portfolios, the teams will each be providing an ADA/Accessibility consultant, to support the Department's Project Directors on accessibility issues until the Department is successful in filling the ADA Project Director role. For projects in the Health and Hospitals portfolio, we will be working directly with Cook County Health and their consultants and designers since accessibility is such a fundamental component of healthcare environments.

In addition, the Department and the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer have issued a solicitation for a Program Management Office (PMO). The PMO team will include technical resources and expertise to support the Department in developing program-wide policies and initiatives to go beyond the legal minimums for accessibility to move the County's assets toward Universal Design solutions until the ADA Project Director is on board. The PMO contract is expected to be brought to the Board in Q4 2023.

PROJECTS

Public Safety Portfolio

In the annual Capital Improvement Plan, developed under the President and approved by the Board of Commissioners, ADA upgrades and compliance projects constitute the highest priority for ongoing Capital projects, along with life safety and security.

In the FY2023 CIP, there are 26 projects in the Public Safety Portfolio that are either ADA-specific or ADA-involved, totaling a 2022 budget amount of \$7,735,000 and a projected total value of \$61,560,000.

In addition to projects with specific accessibility aspects to them, numerous other projects such as elevator modernizations, toilet room renovations, various interior renovations and build-outs as well as exterior parking projects, each will inherently have accessibility components which will increase the level of access provided at County facilities.

The new Construction Management team for the portfolio includes a subconsultant firm with subject matter expertise to assist with the implementation of the County's accessibility goals in the portfolio.

The following is a list of FY2023 CIP Projects, current year budgets and status, incorporating ADA design approaches:

- Three (3) Projects in Planning or Evaluation \$1,075,000
- Fourteen (14) Projects in Design Procurement \$3,100,000
- Three (3) Projects in Design \$1,533,645
- One (1) Projects in Construction Procurement \$100,000
- One (1) Projects in Construction \$370,000
- Four (4) Project at Final Completion \$1,556,355

Corporate Facilities Portfolio

In the FY2023 CIP, there are 24 projects in the Corporate portfolio that are either ADA-specific or ADA-involved, totaling a projected value of \$23,985,000.

There are multiple full- or partial-floor renovations of the County Building as part of the multi-phase re-stacking projects starting on the 5th floor (President/Commissioner suites and Board Room), with next project on the 1st/2nd floors (Clerk), and following project on 7th/11th floors (multiple bureaus). Similarly, there are multiple full- or

partial-floor renovations of the Dunne Building to consolidate County functions, freeing floor space becoming more efficient in our operations. These re-stack projects (over a half-dozen floors between the two buildings) will also result in full accessibility for each new or renovated office space.

There are also multiple upgrades to various miscellaneous End User spaces outside the re-stack projects in the County and Dunne buildings that are in progress or completed that result in full accessibility for each renovated space.

At the same time, the County Building elevators completed a full modernization renovation and upgrade at the beginning of FY2023. That work included upgraded and fully compliant cab controls, hallway lanterns and cab arrival annunciators, dwell time reprogramming, cab button and door jamb signage on all floors for those with visual challenges, etc.

At Rockwell Warehouse, there are multiple upgrades to various miscellaneous End User spaces that are in progress that result in full accessibility for each renovated space.

New space currently being planned for DOTH district facilities and for DEMRS at the Oak Forest Campus will greatly improve existing operational conditions and will result in full accessibility for each renovated space and, where feasible, universal design elements.

The following is a list of FY2023 CIP Projects, current year budgets and status, incorporating ADA design approaches:

- Seven (7) Projects in Planning - \$3.775M
- Seven (7) Projects in Procurement - \$15.458M
- Five (5) Projects in Design - \$3.940M
- Five (5) Projects in Construction or Complete - \$0.812M

Health and Hospitals Portfolio

In the FY2023 CIP, there are 22 projects in the Health and Hospital portfolio that include improvements to accommodations or are specifically focused on improving accessibility to County facilities. The projects' budgets for fiscal year 2023 total \$18.8M. The majority of these projects will be carried over into or completed in FY2024. In addition, two new projects have been requested for the upcoming fiscal year focused specifically on ADA improvements.

The Health and Hospitals portfolio includes a mix of ambulatory, acute care, and administrative space. While accessibility is extremely important in all facilities; there is an increased focus on accessibility in the clinical occupancies as many of the patients using these facilities are healing and are more likely to acquire accommodations to effectively move through the facility. The Facilities Guidelines have additional accessibility requirements beyond ADAAG that ensure all clinical projects include accessibility from the initial discussions. These requirements include larger door frames, installation of handrails, contrasting/slip-resistant flooring, and others.

Current projects the team is managing that enhance or improve accessibility including multiple elevator modernizations at both John H. Stroger and Provident Hospital, entrance upgrades at the Professional Building and John H. Stroger Hospital, new behavioral health units at Provident Hospital, and others. The list below includes a summary of the current and planned accessibility projects by phase, including the current FY2023/proposed FY2024 budgets:

- Two (2) Projects in Planning - \$0.5MM
- Three (3) Projects in Design - \$3.2MM
- Thirteen (13) Projects in Procurement - \$13.4MM
- Two (2) Projects in Construction - \$1.7MM
- Two (2) Projects in FY24 - \$0.2MM

ESTABLISHMENT OF COOK COUNTY DISABILITY ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

Background:

The Office of the President convened the Disability Advisory Working Group as part of larger equity and inclusion initiatives from the President and the Board of Commissioners. The Working Group is part of efforts to increase diversity of access to County services, facilities, information, support, and opportunities on an equal basis.

In addition to these efforts by DCP, prior conversations with Commissioner Alma Anaya and members of the Racial Equity Working Groups indicated that there is a need for the County to have a working group to discuss issues of accessibility and equity for Cook County's residents.

Below is a structure that had been outlined for the Disability Advisory Working Group with representation from the Racial Equity Leadership Council, Cook County Bureaus that are decision makers on issues of accessibility, and external partners who may be advocates for the disabled community.

Recommendations from the Council are used to help guide DCPD in developing and implementing further future accessibility accommodations at our facilities, as well as in developing or evaluating proposed operational policy changes for the various user agencies.

On major accessibility renovations such as multi-floor renovations in the County Building and the assessments and design contracts for the Public Safety portfolio, the advisory working group will be convened to receive updates to the group as well as to provide feedback to the various design teams.

Working Group Members

Chair- Selected by Racial Equity Leadership Council or a member of the Racial Equity Leadership Council

Member – Commissioner Donna Miller (Chair of County’s Asset Management Committee)

Member – Commissioner Alma Anaya

Member – Commissioner Scott Britton

Member – One representative from Bureau of Human Resources

Member – One Representative from the Racial Equity Working Group

Ex Officio – President’s Office and Bureau of Asset Management

Member – Representatives from an Advocacy Organization and/or an external partner working on accessibility issues

Member – Representatives from Bureau of Asset Management

Governance Structure

It was previously recommended that this Working Group continue to be part of the numerous working groups created through the Racial Equity Leadership Council. Because of the ebb and flow of pandemic and vaccination delivery responses, and the changes in members’ availability, the frequency of meetings for this working group

was intermittent in 2021. The Department will include the ADA subject matter experts from the Construction Management team and Program Management team to supplement the Working Group resources in future meetings and evaluations. Due to shifts in the assignment of the members, the Working Group did not have a regular meeting schedule in 2022.

Current or Future Discussion Items for this Working Group:

- ADA Improvements to Public Facing Facilities
- Pedway ADA Access
- Equity and Accessibility in Communications
 - Use of ASL interpreters, accessible wayfinding and signage
 - Digital Accessibility/Technology

This group will be our main disability community engagement and planning resource.

Summary

Cook County has undertaken a structured series of actions to expand access to its facilities, not only to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, but to pursue opportunities to provide additional support or accommodations, to pursue Universal Design, and to increase our ability to provide effective access to services for all County residents.