



ADA TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE

Montana Department of Transportation



Involvement Plan



February 26, 2026

Prepared for:
Montana Department of Transportation



CONTENTS

Contents	i
Figures.....	i
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Planning Process.....	1
1.2 Purpose of the Involvement Plan	1
2.0 Audiences	2
2.1 Project Management Team	2
2.2 Advisory Committee	2
2.3 MDT Stakeholders.....	2
2.4 External Stakeholders	3
2.5 Public.....	3
3.0 Involvement Strategies	4
3.1 Website.....	4
3.2 MDT Stakeholder Interviews	4
3.3 External Stakeholder Notification	4
3.4 External Stakeholder Meeting	4
3.5 Online Open House & Public Review Period	4
3.6 Media Outreach and Coordination	5
4.0 Accessibility Considerations	5
4.1 Information Availability	5
4.2 Consideration of Public Input	5
4.3 Alternative Accommodations.....	5
5.0 Anticipated Schedule	5
Figures	
Figure 1: Anticipated Schedule.....	6

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has initiated an update to the 2021 *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan* which directs the Department's efforts to provide an accessible transportation system within the state of Montana. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance for removal of accessibility barriers in the public right-of-way on state-maintained routes and in MDT's public programs and services. The plan provides an overview of MDT's external ADA program, outlines MDT's mission and ADA policy, and identifies methods to assist MDT in complying with ADA regulations. Nearly five years have passed since the last *ADA Transition Plan* was finalized and the Department has experienced many changes. An update to the plan is now needed to ensure it provides a full and current disclosure of MDT practices and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance and requirements and that it continues to provide a consistent, repeatable, respected methodology to be used as a tool for MDT efforts to eliminate accessibility barriers.

1.1 Planning Process

The updated *ADA Transition Plan* will be completed in two phases.



During the **ADA Program Audit Phase**, the planning team will gather information about how MDT's ADA program currently functions, staff roles and responsibilities, changes or issues identified since the 2021 plan, and any related needs, challenges, and areas for improvement. In addition to research and conversations with MDT officials, a stakeholder meeting will be conducted to learn about external perspectives and concerns.



The **Documentation Phase** will be the culmination of the planning effort, with research, findings, and recommendations incorporated in the updated *2026 ADA Transition Plan Update*. MDT will host an online open house to facilitate public review. The final plan will reflect best practices, commitments, and updated actions and strategies for addressing accessibility barriers in the MDT transportation system.

1.2 Purpose of the Involvement Plan

Education and public outreach are essential parts of fulfilling the responsibility to successfully inform the public about the planning process. Public and stakeholder input is vital to understanding accessibility issues, concerns, and needs. Comments and input from the public and stakeholders foster cooperation and help the planning team, MDT staff, and elected officials make informed decisions. An initial step in the planning process is to develop an Involvement Plan (IP) to guide public input opportunities throughout the planning process. The IP outlines public participation strategies and opportunities for involvement with members of the public and stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities and disability advocates. The goal of the IP is to facilitate ongoing public engagement throughout the update process. The IP describes the information and input opportunities that will be provided as part of the development of the plan.

2.0 AUDIENCES

Broad participation and input will be encouraged throughout the planning process. The Advisory Committee (AC) and internal MDT stakeholders will include representatives from throughout the Department as well as FHWA representatives. These individuals will be involved in the planning process and tasked with making decisions both during planning and future implementation/rollout phases. External stakeholders include those with related interest or expertise, with particular focus on the disability community.

2.1 Project Management Team

A project management team (PMT) consisting of a core group of MDT staff will guide the update process and provide direction to the consultant team. Virtual PMT meetings will occur approximately every two weeks, for a total of up to 20 meetings over the study period. Meetings will be informal, with discussion items and follow-up action items communicated using electronic status reports before and after the meetings. These meetings will be important to ensure the consultant team stays on track with the overall study schedule and provides services in alignment with MDT goals and expectations for the study.

The following contact information for MDT and RPA will be provided in all published information and will serve as main project management points of contact for the plan.

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2.2 Advisory Committee

An AC comprised of representatives from MDT and FWHA will be established to guide work and review deliverables produced by the consultant team.

Three (3) virtual AC meetings will be scheduled in coordination with milestones and deliverables. Meetings are intended to be informational to report on consultant progress, identify issues and questions regarding the update development process, provide direction to the consultant team, and review deliverables. The group size and meeting sequence will be limited to a reasonable number to ensure productive, focused discussions and active involvement. The consultant will prepare meeting agendas and summaries for each meeting. Anticipated discussion topics are listed below.

- **AC Meeting #1:** Kickoff, work plan overview, MDT interview preparation
- **AC Meeting #2:** ADA program audit summary, recommendations discussion
- **AC Meeting #3:** Public review summary, final modifications to the plan
- **Final AC Email:** Notification of federal review status and website posting

2.3 MDT Stakeholders

An internal stakeholder contact list will include MDT leadership and staff with relevant interest, expertise, and involvement in ADA accessibility relating to inventory data, planning, design, construction, maintenance, stakeholder outreach, program management, and other related functions. Informal interviews will be conducted as part of the MDT ADA program audit effort. Potential discussion topics may address how the existing program currently functions, any changes or issues with data inputs and outputs since the 2021 transition planning process, staff roles and responsibilities, and associated needs, issues, challenges,

and areas for improvement. The list of interview participants will be developed in coordination with the MDT PMT. Internal stakeholder representatives may be identified within the following areas of the Department:

- Director's Office
- Civil Rights
- District Offices
- Information Services
- Statewide Planning & Modal Operations
- Project Development & Delivery
- Asset Strategy, Operations, & Maintenance

2.4 External Stakeholders

Building on participants from the 2021 plan update process, an external stakeholder contact list will include individuals or groups with potential interest in the plan update and knowledge about ADA accessibility issues and concerns. These stakeholders will be notified when the update process is launched and invited to participate in outreach activities. Potential stakeholder groups include:

- Disability Rights Montana
- Montana Statewide Independent Living Council
- Centers for Independent Living (including North Central Independent Living Services, Ability Montana, Summit Independent Living, and Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow [LIFTT])
- Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Montana Association for the Blind (MAB)
- Montana Association of the Deaf (MAD)
- Montana Disability and Health Program | Montana Disability and Health Community Planning Group
- Montana Assistive Technology Program (MonTECH)
- The University of Montana Rural Institute on Developmental Disabilities
- Silver Bow Developmental Disabilities Council
- ADAPT Montana
- Coalition of Montanans Concerned with Disabilities (CMCD)
- AARP Montana
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) | Montana Area Agencies on Aging
- Montana Senior Centers
- Rocky Mountain ADA Center
- Bike Walk Montana
- Montana Public Transportation Systems
- Others as identified or requested

2.5 Public

Members of the public have a vested interest in safe, accessible travel on Montana's public roadways, with elevated accessibility expectations for disabled individuals. To address public concerns, comments and input will be collected and considered throughout the update process. An official comment period will be provided to coincide with release of the draft report and the online open house. While MDT encourages comments at any time as ADA accessibility-related transportation issues arise, the plan update presents an opportunity for targeted outreach on this topic to better understand needs and concerns from the perspective of disabled users, disability advocates, and other interested members of the public.

3.0 INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

A variety of involvement strategies will be used throughout the planning process. On-demand engagement strategies allow interested individuals to participate at their convenience, while targeted approaches typically involve a higher level of commitment at a designated time. A combination of these strategies will be used to reach a wide-ranging audience and gather meaningful input.

3.1 Website

MDT will host a website to encourage public interaction and provide study information. The website will be hosted by MDT with updates throughout the planning process. Informational materials will include a description of the transition plan update process, contact information, announcements, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and published documents. The website may be linked through the existing External ADA website, or a new project website may be developed.

3.2 MDT Stakeholder Interviews

The plan update process will involve a series of interviews with MDT leadership, key staff, and other individuals with knowledge or experience related to the program. These informal discussions will offer opportunities to learn insightful information about how the existing program currently functions, any changes or issues with data inputs and outputs, staff roles and responsibilities, and associated needs, issues, challenges, and areas for improvement. Information gathered from the conversations will directly influence updates to the transition plan.

3.3 External Stakeholder Notification

A notification email will be issued to the external stakeholder contact list announcing the plan update process, providing a link to the website, summarizing the plan update schedule, soliciting interest in a virtual meeting, and requesting input on any initial areas of concern. Responses to this email will inform the invitation list and discussion items for the external stakeholder meeting.

3.4 External Stakeholder Meeting

During the ADA program audit task, MDT will facilitate a virtual meeting with interested external stakeholder representatives. The purpose of this meeting will be educational and interactive to explain the update process, outline MDT's external ADA program objectives, and discuss stakeholder issues, concerns, and potential focus areas for the plan update. The meeting will offer an opportunity for constructive, process-oriented input directly related to the plan update to help the consultant team identify focus areas for special consideration. Recognizing that external stakeholders may also have feedback about accessibility barriers in specific geographic locations, we will communicate about how MDT will collect and address site-specific concerns over time with continued implementation of the MDT *ADA Transition Plan* through the external ADA program.

3.5 Online Open House & Public Review Period

MDT will host an online open house during the public review period for the draft *ADA Transition Plan* using enhancements to the MDT website portal. The open house will feature an interactive map, pre-recorded video, and exhibits to explain the update process, summarize key findings, and identify updates to the plan. Stakeholders and members of the public will be invited to view posted information and submit comments at their convenience during the review period.

3.6 Media Outreach and Coordination

MDT will issue a news release and advertisement announcing the online open house/public review period. The materials will publicize the website and announce the availability of the draft *ADA Transition Plan* update for review. In addition to traditional media coordination, MDT will also post announcements to social media channels to encourage public participation.

4.0 ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

MDT will ensure individuals of all abilities can access information and participate in outreach activities for the plan update.

4.1 Information Availability

All public-facing study materials will be compliant with Health and Human Services (HHS) Section 508 and Accessibility Standards Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), which requires that when MDT develops, procures, maintains or uses information and communication technology (ICT), it shall be accessible to people with disabilities.

4.2 Consideration of Public Input

Input and comments from stakeholders and the public will be considered by the AC throughout the planning process. All public comments will be documented in the project file and summarized in the plan update.

4.3 Alternative Accommodations

Accessibility accommodations will be offered for all outreach activities, including virtual meetings. Upon request, MDT's External ADA Coordinator will provide alternative participation methods and materials.

5.0 ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

The plan update must be completed before the five-year period elapses from the previous plan dated November 2021. A public draft of the updated MDT *ADA Transition Plan* is anticipated by September 2026. Following a public review and comment period, all work is anticipated to be completed by the end of November 2026. The anticipated schedule is depicted in **Figure 1** and is subject to modification over the course of the planning process in coordination with MDT.

Anticipated Schedule

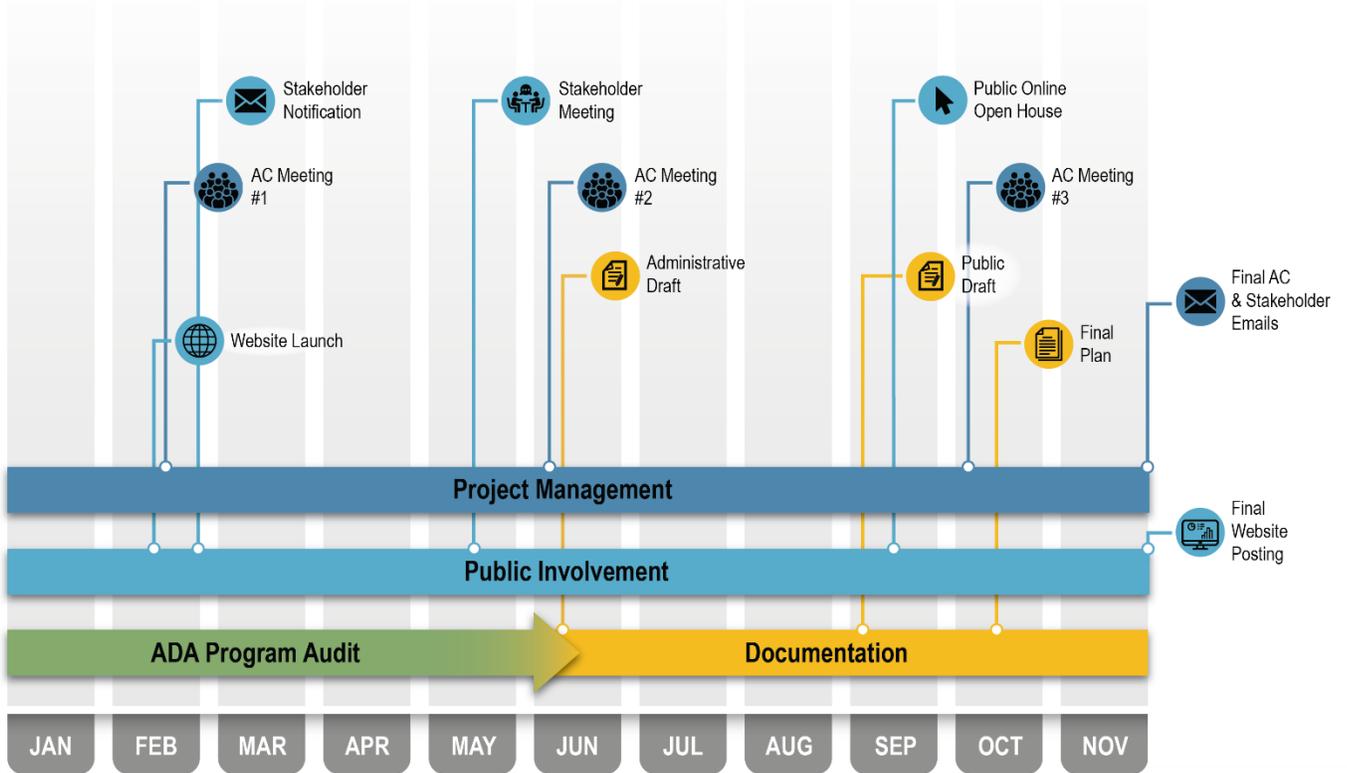


Figure 1: Anticipated Schedule



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