



November 1, 2018

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Taqwanya Smith, Senior Title VI and ADA Coordinator
Office of Business Opportunity and Equity Compliance (OBOEC)
4822 Madison Yards Way, 5th Floor South
Madison, WI 53705

Re: 2018 ADA Transition Plan

Dear Ms. Smith

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2018 ADA Transition Plan. Access and barriers to transportation are consistently identified as the top concerns for people with disabilities in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) has identified transportation as a critical—and largely unmet—need that impacts every aspect of people with disabilities and older adults' lives. Lack of transportation options as well as the limitations and challenges associated with existing transportation options are a focus of our five-year state plan, which is created based on statewide input from the disability community.

Too often transportation is the limiting factor for people with disabilities being included in the community and having opportunities to work, pursue their interests, and be as independent as possible. Accessibility barriers can further restrict limited transportation options or render them unusable for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Robust compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improves access to transportation options for many populations, and BPDD encourages DOT to make as many accessibility improvements as possible as quickly as possible.

Specifically, BPDD wishes to highlight the following improvements as being particularly useful to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD):

- **Curb ramps.** Many people with I/DD use mobility equipment—including wheelchairs, walkers—or have challenges with balance or vision and need a flat inclined surface rather than a step to access public transit and pedestrian areas.
- **Accessible doors.** Accessible entryways are critical for many people with I/DD who have mobility equipment or who have muscle weakness that can make pushing or pulling heavy doors difficult.
- **Investment in family and single-occupancy non-gender specific restrooms.** People with I/DD may have specific personal care needs that require assistance from paid caregivers or family members. Assisting with personal cares often requires additional space may involve a caregiver that is a different gender than the person with disability they are assisting.

- **Image-based signage.** Clear signage that minimizes words and uses symbols to represent meaning benefit people with I/DD who are visually impaired or who are non-readers.
- **Parking.** Expanding the number of parking spots that can accommodate side loading lift vans as well as parking enforcement benefits people with I/DD and their families and caregivers who rely on specialized vehicles.

Curb ramps, accessible doors, and single occupancy restrooms also benefit older adults, people with temporary mobility issues, parents with strollers, people moving materials on wheeled carts etc.

BPDD is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities.

Our role is to seek continuous improvement across all systems—education, transportation, health care, employment, etc.—that touch the lives of people with disabilities. Our work requires us to have a long-term vision of public policy that not only sees current systems as they are, but how these systems could be made better for current and future generations of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Swedeen". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities