



Better for Everyone

25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act



Progress Toward Accessible Transportation in Pennsylvania

July 2015

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush.

Among other provisions, ADA established standards for transportation accessibility to allow persons with disabilities (PWD) to lead more independent, productive lives.

This booklet highlights progress made toward improving transportation accessibility in Pennsylvania in the 25 years since ADA was enacted.



July 2015

Pennsylvania benefits when all of our residents can be productive and engaged in community life. In the 25 years since ADA, we have moved from retrofitting to designing facilities to make daily life easier for all of us—whether we have a weak knee and a heavy grocery bag or happen to use a wheelchair.

The commonwealth is proud of the progress made in public sector facilities and projects, knowing that much work remains. We continue to upgrade infrastructure, enhance programs, and open opportunities to ensure all of our citizens can contribute and all visitors are welcomed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Wolf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Tom" and "Wolf" being capitalized and prominent.

Tom Wolf
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



July 2015

PennDOT exists to improve access, whether that be enhancing multimodal connectivity, redesigning a highway interchange, or accommodating people with disabilities.

Partnership and persistence have been the hallmarks of PennDOT's journey toward fully accessible transportation systems. The 1990 ADA legislation formalized, expanded, and accelerated efforts already underway by our transportation leaders and transit agencies to retool our infrastructure and expand service options for people with disabilities.

Today, although we still have considerable work to do to upgrade Pennsylvania's legacy transportation assets, ADA compliance is business as usual. We work closely with the U.S. Access Board—the federal agency responsible for developing accessibility guidelines—and the U.S. DOT to align PennDOT policies and standards with the latest ADA requirements.

I look forward to working with our federal, state, and local partners; ADA advocates; and non-profit and private sector leaders to continue making strides in accessibility across our transportation system.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie S. Richards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "L" and "R".

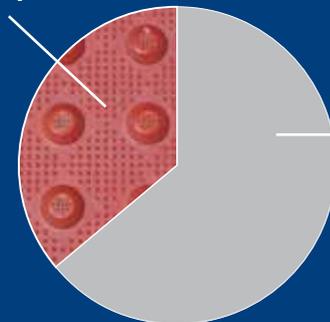
Leslie S. Richards
Secretary, Department of Transportation
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pedestrian Facilities



There are approximately 100,000 curb ramps on state routes in Pennsylvania.

36% of ramps are fully ADA-compliant



64% expected to be reconstructed over the next 15 years

Curb Ramps

- PennDOT constructs curb ramps to current ADA standards in conjunction with roadway resurfacing and reconstruction projects.
- PennDOT began addressing curb ramps in the 1990s.
- In 2008 PennDOT improved curb ramp design standards and increased enforcement.
- Between 2009 and 2014 PennDOT spent \$200 million to construct more than 36,000 curb ramps.

Curb ramp compliance considerations include:

- Ramp slopes;
- Level landing area;
- Detectible warning surface;
- Flush transitions to sidewalk and roadway;
- Slope of adjoining roadway; and
- Slopes of flares (at sides of ramp blending to sidewalk).



◀ Detectible warning surfaces for vision-impaired pedestrians became an ADA requirement in 2001.

**In Pennsylvania, one
ADA-compliant curb
ramp costs \$5,500
on average.**



- ▲ Accessible signal pushbuttons are within reach of a person in a wheelchair—without blocking ramps or sidewalks—and easy to push.

**Each of PennDOT's
11 regional engineering
districts has an ADA
Coordinator.**

Signals

- PennDOT provides funding to municipalities for signal upgrades which improve traffic flow, roadway capacity, and safety—while meeting ADA requirements—through grant programs such as Green Light–Go.
- Upgrades may include:
 - Improved signal pushbuttons;
 - Audible signals;
 - Countdown pedestrian crossing signals; and
 - Adjusted signal timing.

Sidewalks

- Obstacle-free sidewalks are vital connectors for all pedestrians. ADA sidewalk considerations include:
 - Slope;
 - Joints;
 - Width;
 - Connectivity to curb ramps;
 - Intersecting driveways;
 - Locations of light poles; and
 - Drainage.
- PennDOT funding can help municipalities bring sidewalks and crosswalks into ADA compliance as part of streetscape efforts.



- ▲ Maintaining sidewalk accessibility is a challenge on tree-lined streets.

“At PennDOT, the accommodation of persons with disabilities is a routine and integral element of project planning, design, construction, and Highway Occupancy Permits.”

Ryan VanKirk, P.E.
Statewide ADA Coordinator



- ◀ Gettysburg improved safety, accessibility, and aesthetics through its Steinwehr District Safety and Streetscape Improvements project, completed in 2012.

Welcome Centers



- Pennsylvania's 14 welcome centers are ADA-accessible.
- Features include curb ramps and automatic doors as well as accessible sidewalks, restrooms, and picnic areas.
- As welcome centers and rest areas are upgraded, PennDOT reviews projects for compliance with the latest ADA requirements.



Driver and Vehicle Services



- PennDOT developed a standardized, Web-based training program for its Driver License Examiners that includes instruction on testing drivers with disabilities.
- Drivers using hand controls or other adaptive equipment are evaluated—as are all drivers—on their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

ADA specifies that all people regardless of their disability must have access to all public buildings, including Driver License Centers.

Fixed Route Bus



▲ Low-floor buses eliminate the obstacle of stairs. A ramp can be extended to the sidewalk.

All fixed route fleets in Pennsylvania are 100% ADA-accessible.

“Low-floor buses became available in the mid-1990s. They eliminated the challenges of wheelchair lift operation and maintenance and were easier for all passengers. LANta purchased its first low-floor bus in 1998, and our fleet was fully accessible by 2005.”

Armand Greco
former Executive Director
Lehigh and Northampton Transit Authority (Allentown)

Fixed Route Bus Accessibility

- ADA required transit agencies to transition to accessible equipment as buses were replaced.
- Accessible buses may have wheelchair lifts or be low-floor vehicles. Many also “kneel.”
- Newer technology provides automated stop announcements and screen displays.
- Drivers are trained to assist people with disabilities according to ADA requirements.



Everyone must have access to public transportation.



Eligible passengers with disabilities pay half-fare to ride fixed route buses during off-peak periods.



- ▼ Williamsport's Church Street Travel and Transportation Center opened in 2012. It provides accessible facilities for passengers on River Valley Transit as well as intercity bus service.



**PennDOT helps fund
ADA-compliant transit
center construction
and renovation through
grant programs.**



Transit Centers

- As bus stations and transit centers are renovated or constructed, they are upgraded or designed to ADA standards.
- Considerations include boarding and waiting areas, ticket counters, doorways, corridors, elevators, handrails, restrooms, parking, curb ramps, and guidance for passengers with impaired hearing or vision.

- ▼ SEPTA's Accessible Travel Center allows people to learn about accessible transit and practice boarding buses and trains in a no-pressure environment.



Passenger Education

- In 2012 the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) opened its Accessible Travel Center.
- SEPTA partners with local schools, universities, and organizations working with people with disabilities to provide travel training.
- The training promotes independence and enables many people to graduate from individualized service to public transportation.

In May 2015,
more than 11,000
passengers using
wheelchairs boarded
SEPTA buses.



SEPTA's bus fleet
became fully
accessible in
July 2004.

ADA-Complementary Paratransit

- ▼ CATARIDE complements the CATABUS fixed route service in State College by providing individualized service to people whose disabilities prevent them from using fixed route buses.

“Allegheny County implemented the ACCESS system in 1978 to provide door-to-door shared-ride service for people with disabilities. With support from PennDOT, ACCESS remains a model system.”

Rick Stafford
Carnegie Mellon University
Formerly of the Port Authority of
Allegheny County



ADA-complementary

ADA requires transit systems to provide alternative service for people with disabilities at a level comparable to the local fixed route service.

Shared-ride service

Curb-to-curb advance reservation transportation service available to the general public. Passengers share the vehicle and pay a fare (fulfills ADA-complementary service requirement).

Shared-ride program

Seniors age 65 and older and persons with disabilities ages 18-64 use shared-ride/paratransit service and receive an 85% discount on fares.

**PennDOT provides
100% funding for
shared-ride vehicle
purchases, using federal
and state sources.**

PwD Rural Transportation Program

- PwD advocates drew attention to the need for affordable, accessible transportation for PwD in rural areas of the state not served by fixed route systems.
- The PwD Rural Transportation pilot program began in 2001 with eight counties.
- In 2013, Allegheny County became the 66th and final county to be added to the PwD program.

“Freedom Ride '95 was a deeply moving event where individuals spoke of their need for affordable, accessible public transportation to be able to work, to shop for themselves, to participate in family events...

That personal testimony led to transportation being an element of Governor Ridge’s disability agenda and ultimately to legislative authorization and funding for the PwD program and transportation independence for thousands of Pennsylvanians.”

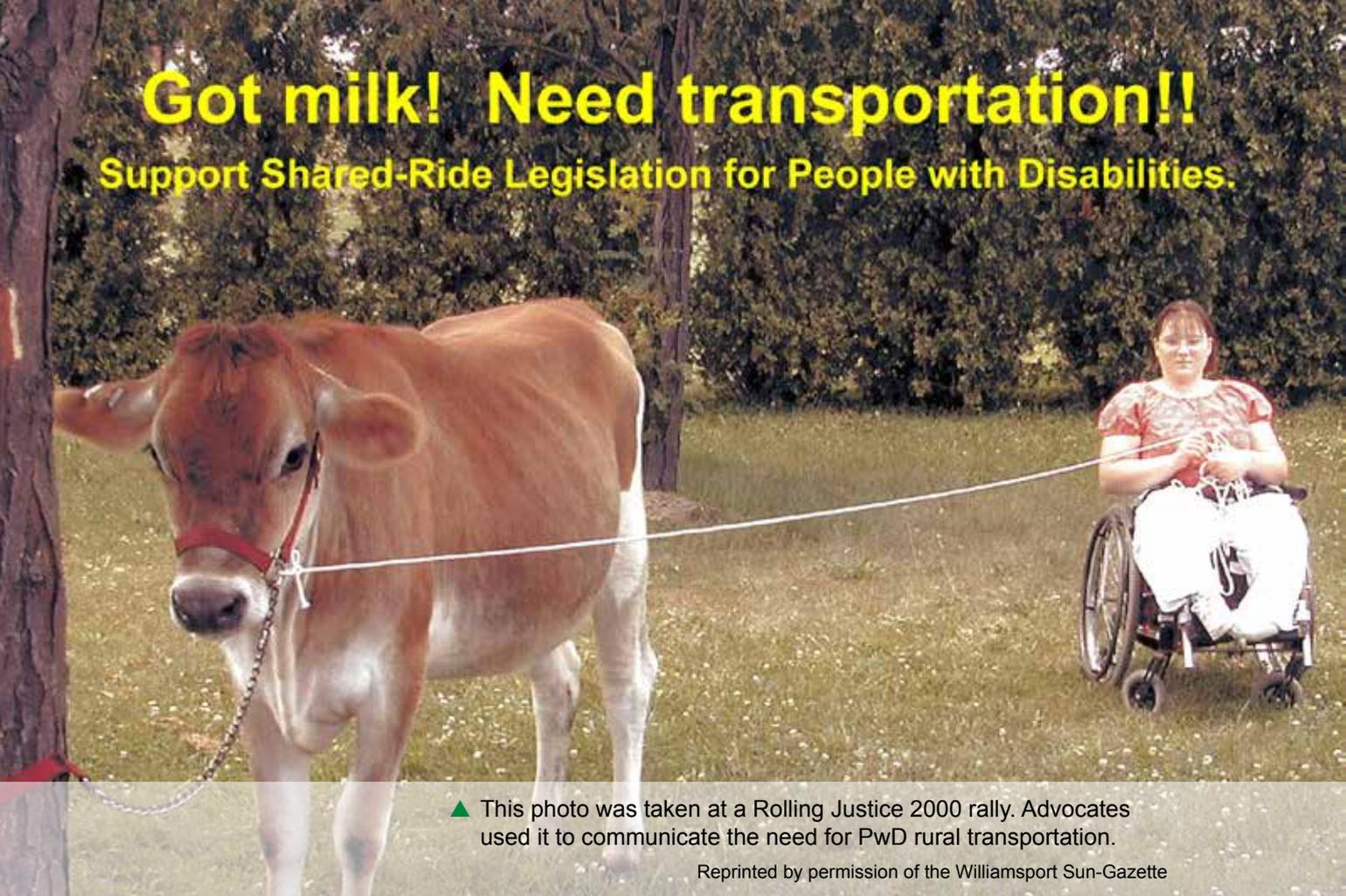
LaVerne Collins
former Director, PennDOT
Bureau of Public Transportation

- ▼ Rolling Justice 2000 rallies and parades began on the same day in Erie, Pittsburgh, and Scranton. Participants met in Harrisburg and traveled to Philadelphia for a high-profile rally.



Got milk! Need transportation!!

Support Shared-Ride Legislation for People with Disabilities.



- ▲ This photo was taken at a Rolling Justice 2000 rally. Advocates used it to communicate the need for PwD rural transportation.

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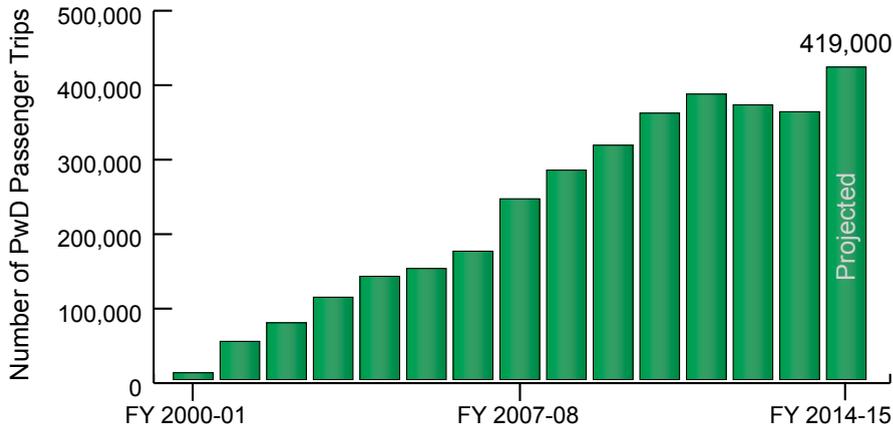


- ◀ Bobbie Simmons, whose vision is impaired, was York County's first PwD rider in 2001.

- ▶ Ms. Simmons still uses rabbittransit's shared-ride service as part of her commute to her job in Adams County.



PwD Rural Transportation Program Ridership



- ▲ Devoted advocacy by Pennsylvanians such as John and Denise Lorence was instrumental in securing funding to develop the PwD program.

- ▶ The Millionth Rider Celebration at the State Capitol in October 2008 marked the expansion of affordable, accessible transportation.



Half of all PwD trips are work-related.

Passenger Rail



The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) required PennDOT to subsidize operations and maintenance of Amtrak service in Pennsylvania.

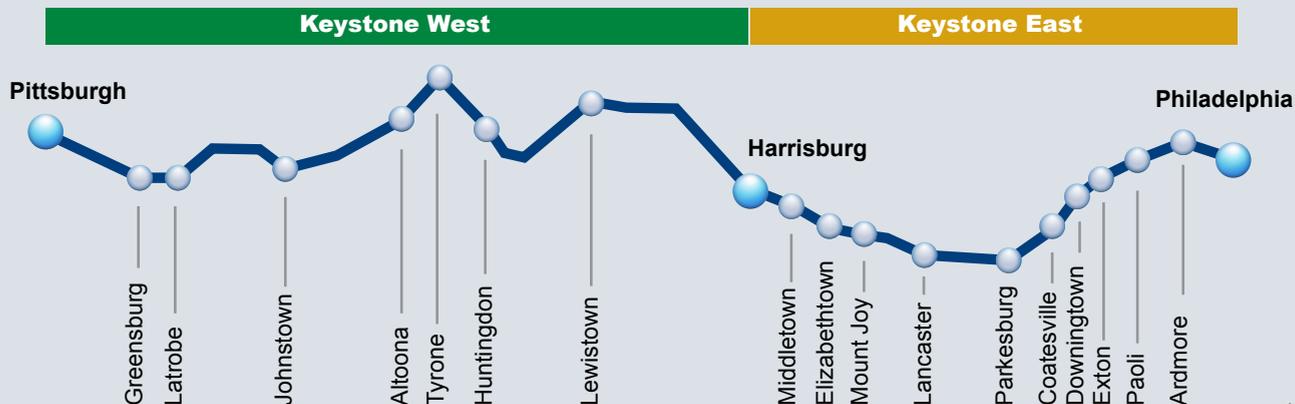
- Amtrak acknowledges that accessibility is an issue nationwide due to the magnitude of work involved in modernizing the U.S. passenger rail system.
- Amtrak owns the Keystone Corridor track and stations from Harrisburg to Philadelphia; Norfolk Southern owns the track from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh.
- Provisions of PRIIA allowed PennDOT to take a leadership role to accelerate station modernization.

Keystone Corridor Improvements

- PennDOT launched the Keystone Corridor Improvement Program in 2009. Progress as of July 2015:
 - Two historic stations have been made accessible through major renovation programs:
 - Elizabethtown
 - Lancaster
 - Eight new, accessible stations are under development:
 - Middletown
 - Mount Joy
 - Parkesburg (Amtrak-led)
 - Coatesville
 - Downingtown
 - Exton (SEPTA-led)
 - Paoli (SEPTA-led)
 - Ardmore (SEPTA-led)
 - Three stations were made accessible through retrofits:
 - Pittsburgh
 - Harrisburg
 - Philadelphia's 30th Street Station
- After Keystone East stations are upgraded, PennDOT intends to address Keystone West from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh.

Train station ADA considerations include:

- Full-length, high-level boarding platforms;
- Detectable warning surfaces along the platform edges;
- Platform connectivity (access in both train directions);
- Elevators;
- Restrooms;
- Ticket counters;
- Water fountains;
- Doors and corridors;
- Parking; and
- Station building access ramps.





**“Not only did we make Elizabethtown Station ADA-compliant,
we saved an important historic resource.”**

Toby Fauver
Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, PennDOT



◀ New full-length, high-level covered platforms make travel safer and more convenient for all passengers.



Elizabethtown Station Renovation

- Elizabethtown’s passenger rail station was originally constructed in 1915.
- The building was in disrepair and vacant for many years. Access to the tracks was by outside stairs.
- A \$9.3 million project led by PennDOT and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act renovated the station and made it fully accessible in 2011.



- ▲ An accessible pathway connects the station and downtown. All Keystone Corridor station projects examine multimodal station access.

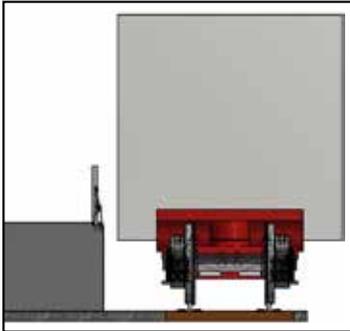
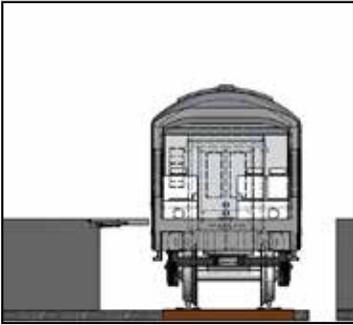
“Train stations are about transportation, but they can also be anchors in the community that facilitate desirable transit-oriented development. While improving accessibility, PennDOT closely coordinates station projects with local revitalization efforts.”

Jenn Granger
PennDOT Bureau Director and Keystone Corridor Project Manager



- ◀ Designated parking spaces, curb ramps, and an elevator provide an accessible path to the trains.
- ▶ Restrooms were reconstructed to be accessible—a challenge in an historic building.





Technology Improves Accessibility

- Platform improvements at Coatesville must accommodate through freight trains.
 - Flip-up edges on the platforms are planned—up, they allow wide freight loads to pass, down, they close the gap to provide level boarding for passenger trains.
 - PennDOT is working with a manufacturer to develop a flip-up edge design in a material that will not rust and is remotely operated.
- ◀ Platforms with a flip-up edge accommodate both passengers and freight.

The improved flip-up edge platform will improve safety and accessibility while reducing labor and maintenance.

- ▶ The Mount Joy stop is physically challenging for nearly everyone.

New accessible covered platforms, towers with elevators, and upgraded parking are under development.



Commuter Rail and Subways

- All key stations on SEPTA's commuter rail and subway lines were fully ADA-compliant by September 2012.
- Improvements continue, with the goal of full system-wide accessibility.
- Station rehabilitation work includes ADA-compliant:
 - Ramps;
 - Elevators;
 - Curb ramps;
 - Handrails;
 - Guardrails; and
 - Technology enhancements.



- ▼ In 2012, SEPTA debuted its ADA-compliant Silverliner V Regional Rail cars, which feature automatic bridge plates for wheelchair boarding, automatic stop announcements, and digital signage.



**Completion of SEPTA's
100th accessible rail
station was celebrated
in July 2012.**

“On July 26, 1990, as Attorney General of the United States, I was on the sun-drenched White House lawn to witness President George H.W. Bush’s signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It was a day of optimism and hope and cheers when President Bush said, “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” Many of those walls—accessibility, mobility, education, health care, community assimilation—if not down, have taken a tumble because of the ADA.

While we are proud of what has been done, our task is not finished. Too few employment opportunities. Too many children with disabilities in our juvenile justice system. Too many wounded warriors in poverty. Too many persons with psychiatric disabilities without care. And while ADA has sparked a worldwide recognition of the rights and needs of our planet’s more than one billion persons with disabilities, the United States Senate has yet to ratify a forward-reaching treaty, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Despite this unfinished business, the ADA at 25 is more than just a good beginning; it marks a new day for persons with disabilities and a new day for our country. It is the foundation to finish the unfinished...to turn the walls to rubble.”

Dick Thornburgh
U.S. Attorney General, 1988-1991
Governor of Pennsylvania, 1979-1987



**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Multimodal Transportation Deputate
717-787-8197**

“We have come a long way over the past 25 years in eliminating the barriers that made it impossible for many people to get around and enjoy the quality of life available to the rest of society. Working together the state and local communities have systematically leveled those impediments. Accessibility is more than simply brick and mortar projects; it is a liberation of the spirit.”

Senator Randy Vulakovich
Allegheny County