
MEMORANDUM

TO: SHA SENIOR LEADERSHIP
FROM: OHD DIRECTOR ERIC MARABELLO, P.E. *Eric Marabello*
SUBJECT: 2026 SHA ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR
PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES ALONG STATE HIGHWAYS
DATE: MAY 21, 2026
RESPONSE
REQUESTED N/A
BY:

PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM

To release the 2026 update to the State Highway Administration (SHA) Accessibility Policy and Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities along State Highways (SHA Accessibility Guidelines) and establish a timeline for implementation on applicable projects.

SUMMARY

The State Highway Administration has published the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines for use on projects along state highways and other projects subject to the requirements of these guidelines. The SHA Accessibility Guidelines were last published in 2010 and have been updated to comply with the Maryland Department of Transportation Complete Streets Policy; to align SHA guidance and minimum requirements with the U.S. Access Board's Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG); and to provide updated SHA-specific accessibility design guidance.

In August 2023, the U.S. Access Board issued a final rule that establishes PROWAG as minimum guidelines for the accessibility of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way. PROWAG represents an improvement in the accessibility guidance available for use on pedestrian facilities adjacent to roadways compared to the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design (2010 ADA Standards) which provide accessibility guidance for buildings and facilities. While PROWAG has not yet been adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice and is not a federally enforceable standard, SHA is proactively updating the SHA Accessibility Guidelines to align with PROWAG to ensure that the pedestrian facilities constructed or altered along state highways are consistent with the latest guidance from the U.S. Access Board and are readily accessible to and usable by pedestrians with disabilities.

In addition to the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines, typical details for curb ramps, median cut-throughs, driveway crossings, depressed curbs, detectable warning surfaces, and sidewalk bump-outs are being developed for use on projects subject to the requirements of the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines. These details are based on the existing standard details in the SHA Book of Standards for Highway and Incidental Structures and are being updated to align with the guidance in the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines. These details should be included in contract documents and referenced on contract plans for projects subject to the requirements of the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines, where appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following implementation guidance shall be used to determine which projects are required to meet the requirements of the 2010 SHA Accessibility Guidelines and which are required to meet the requirements of the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines. Use of some or all the updated design practices in the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines is encouraged, where possible, to improve accessibility on all current design projects even if not required per the implementation guidance below.

Design Projects

- Any SHA project that Advertises after June 30, 2027, must meet the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.
- Any Local Public Agency (LPA) project that is subject to the requirements of the SHA Accessibility Guidelines that Advertises after June 30, 2027, must meet the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.
- Any Access Permit project with an SHA permit issuance date after June 30, 2027, must meet the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.
- Design projects initiated after the release of the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines should meet the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.

Construction Projects

- Projects in construction will be evaluated for ADA compliance based on the design guidelines and standards that the advertised construction plans were based on. Therefore, all projects currently under construction will be evaluated based on the 2010 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.

Standards

- As noted above, typical details developed due to the updated guidance will be converted to SHA Standard Details on or about June 2027 to match the implementation schedule for the 2026 SHA Accessibility Guidelines.

Training

- The Office of Highway Development will provide a presentation to SHA on the changes resulting from the updated guidance in Spring 2026. This presentation will be made available for entities outside of SHA.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Conan Andrzejewski, State Highway Administration (SHA) Office of Highway Development Team Leader, at 410-545-2803 or by email at candrzejewski@mdot.maryland.gov or Jared Paper-Evers, P.E., SHA Office of Highway Development Assistant Division Chief, at 410-545-8400 or via email at jpaperevers@mdot.maryland.gov.

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