

Accessibility in Dane County Public Spaces

August 6, 2026

Project Background

- ACL recovery & new perspective
- Conversations with community members
- Accessibility beyond ADA compliance
- User-centered approach
- Identify opportunities for improvement

Project Overview

- Evaluated accessibility across 56 public spaces in Dane County
- Included libraries, parks, recreation facilities, and government buildings
- Used the same evaluation process at every location
- Focused on identifying county-wide patterns, not individual buildings
- Identified practical opportunities for improvement

Methodology

Methodology	Approach
User-centered evaluation	Evaluated spaces based on real-world usability alongside technical accessibility standards
Community input	Conversations with individuals with different mobility challenges helped identify common barriers and priorities.
Standardized rubric	Every location was evaluated using the same categories and scoring system.
Public spaces	Evaluated a variety of government buildings, libraries, parks, recreation facilities, and other public locations across Dane County.
Documentation	Scores were supported by written observations.

Categories Evaluated

- Parking
 - Accessible Spot
 - Access Aisle
 - Accessible Spot Signage
- Path to Entrance
 - Clear Path
 - Surface Condition
 - Ramp Accessibility
 - Level Changes
- Entrance
 - Entrance Width
 - Threshold
 - Handle/Button Accessibility
 - Ease of Entry
- Interior
 - Hallway Width
 - No Obstacles
 - Counter Height
 - Level Changes
- Restrooms
 - Accessible Stall
 - Grab Bars
 - Sink Clearance
 - Maneuvering Space
- Signage
 - Braille
 - Contrast
 - Clarity
 - Staff Assistance
- Exit
 - Clear Exit Path
 - Exit Signage
 - Accessible Ramp/Route
- Overall Score
 - Average of all category scores

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Business/Place	Address	Date	Parking: Accessible Spot	Parking: Access Aisle	Parking: Accessible	Parking: Avg	Path: Clear	Path: Surface	Path: Ramp	Path: Level Change	Path: Avg
2	Middleton Public Library	7425 Hubbard Ave, Middleton	11/21	2	2	3	2.33	3	2.5	3	3	2.88
3	CVS Pharmacy Middleton	6210 Century Ave, Middleton,	11/22	2	2.5	2	2.17	3	2	3	2.5	2.62
4	Starbucks (Allen Blvd.)	2602 Allen Blvd, Middleton, W	11/22	2.5	3	2.5	2.67	3	2.5	N/A	3	2.83
5	Metro Market (Century Ave.)	6800 Century Ave, Middleton,	12/01	2.5	2	2.2	2.23	2	2.5	N/A	3	2.5
6	Kwik Trip (University Ave.)	5445 University Ave, Madison,	12/04	2	2	2	2	2.5	2	N/A	2	2.17
7	Kwik Trip (Ridge Way)	5301 S Ridge Way APT 03, Mic	12/08	2	2.5	1.5	2	3	3	N/A	3	3
8	Barnes and Nobles (Mineral Po	7433 Mineral Point Rd, Madisc	12/8	2	2.5	2.5	2.33	2.5	2.5	N/A	3	2.67
9	Starbucks (Rimrock Rd.)	2157 Rimrock Rd, Madison, W	12/12	3	2	2	2.33	2	2	N/A	2.5	2.17
10	Goodwill (Century Ave.)	6280 Century Ave, Middleton,	12/13	3	2.5	2.5	2.67	2.5	2.5	N/A	2.5	2.5
11	Target (Hilldale Way)	750 Hilldale Wy, Madison, WI	12/24	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2	3	2.5	2.5
12	Target (Mineral Point)	201 Junction Rd, Madison, WI	12/20	2.5	2.5	2	2.33	2.5	2	N/A	2.5	2.33
13	Walgreens (Old Sauk Rd.)	8302 Old Sauk Rd, Middleton,	12/22	2	2	2	2	2.5	2	N/A	2.5	2.33
14	Metro Market (Junction Rd.)	261 Junction Rd. Madison. WI	12/26	2	2.5	2	2.17	2	2.5	N/A	2	2.17

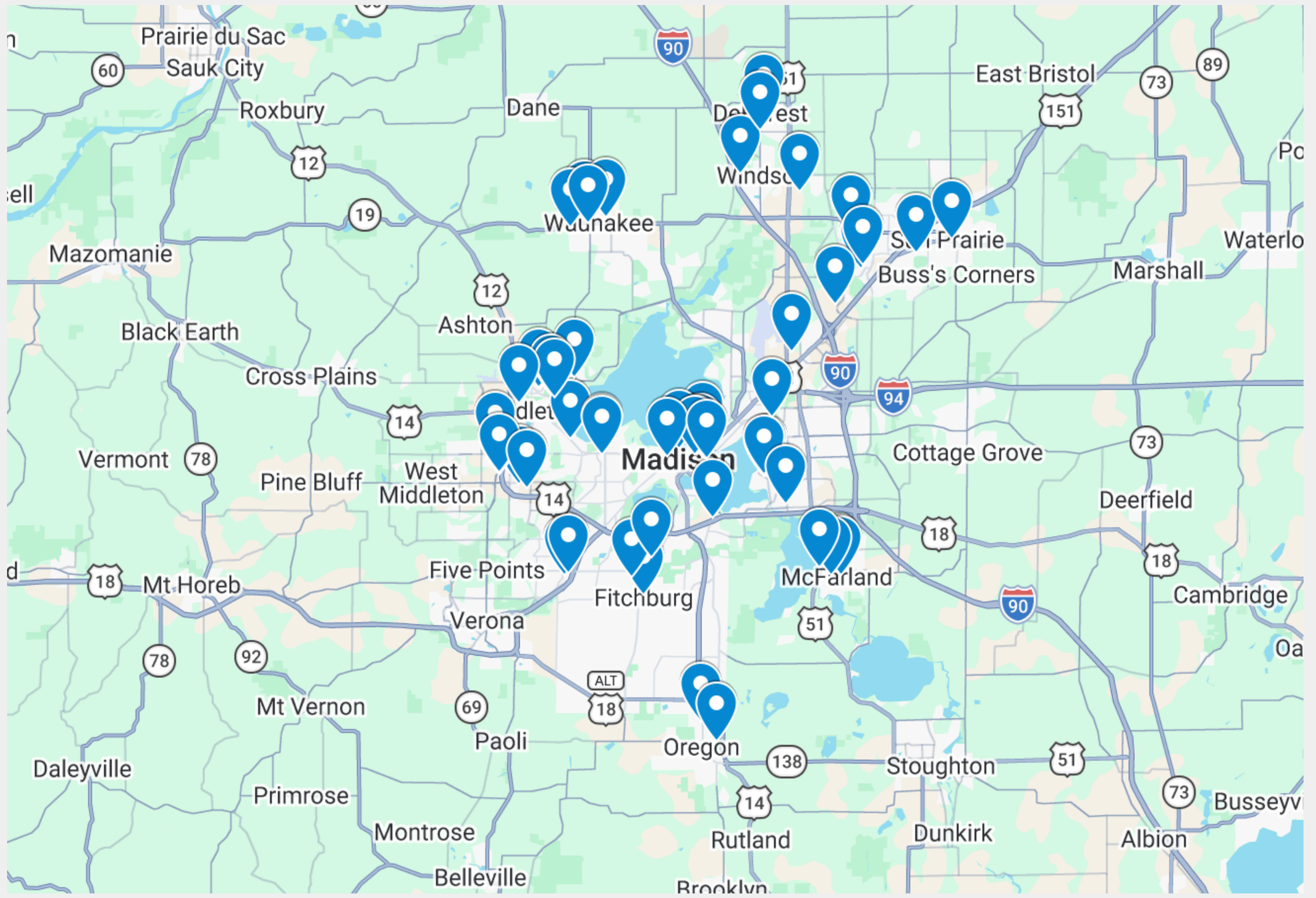
58 Spaces Evaluated

Geographic Distribution

Madison.....	19
Middleton.....	9
Sun Prairie.....	5
Fitchburg.....	5
Waunakee.....	4
McFarland.....	4
Monona.....	4
DeForest.....	3
Oregon.....	2
Windsor.....	1

Facility Types

Retail/Commercial.....	20
Government Buildings.....	6
Libraries.....	6
Parks.....	6
Community Facilities.....	6
Recreation/Fitness.....	3
Other.....	9



Countywide Overall Findings

Exit	2.62
Entrance	2.53
Path to Entrance	2.52
Interior	2.50
Signage	2.40
Restroom	2.29

- Overall average total score: 2.32/3.00
- Most public spaces were generally accessible but still contained barriers that affected the overall user experience.
- Accessibility was strongest in building entrances, interior circulation, and exit routes.

What's Working Well

- Public Buildings
 - Government buildings consistently scored among the highest.
 - Recently renovated libraries demonstrated strong accessibility throughout.
- Entrances & Routes
 - Wide entrances and accessible doorways.
 - Clear interior pathways with few obstacles.
- Highlight Example: Overture Center
 - Dedicated Accessibility Hub for patrons.
 - Offers Braille programs and assistive listening devices.
 - ASL interpretation available upon request.

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Common Accessibility Barriers

- Restroom accessibility was the most common challenge.
 - Limited sink clearance for wheelchair users.
 - Tight maneuvering space made it difficult to turn or transfer independently.
- Accessibility signage was inconsistent.
 - Braille signage was the lowest-scoring feature in the entire audit.
 - Directional signs were often difficult to locate or read.
- Parking accessibility varied significantly.
 - Missing or poorly marked accessible parking spaces.
 - Access aisles were sometimes too narrow or obstructed.

Possible Contributing Factors

- Older facilities and infrastructure: Built before modern accessibility standards.
- Incomplete accessibility renovations: Improvements made, but some barriers remain.
- Overlooked design details: Small accessibility features are often missed.
- Inconsistent inclusive planning: Not all accessibility needs are considered.
- Deferred maintenance: Accessibility features deteriorate over time.

Recommendations

Short-Term Improvements

- Prioritize accessibility in small maintenance projects, not just major renovations.
- Encourage departments to address low-cost barriers identified during routine inspections.
- Continue accessibility education for facility managers and planners.

Cost-Effective Solutions

- Share accessibility best practices across county departments.
- Explore opportunities to recognize facilities demonstrating exemplary accessibility.
- Incorporate user-experience audits into routine facility evaluations.
- Expand community feedback by partnering with disability advocacy organizations.

Questions

Thank You