

Disability and Access Analysis

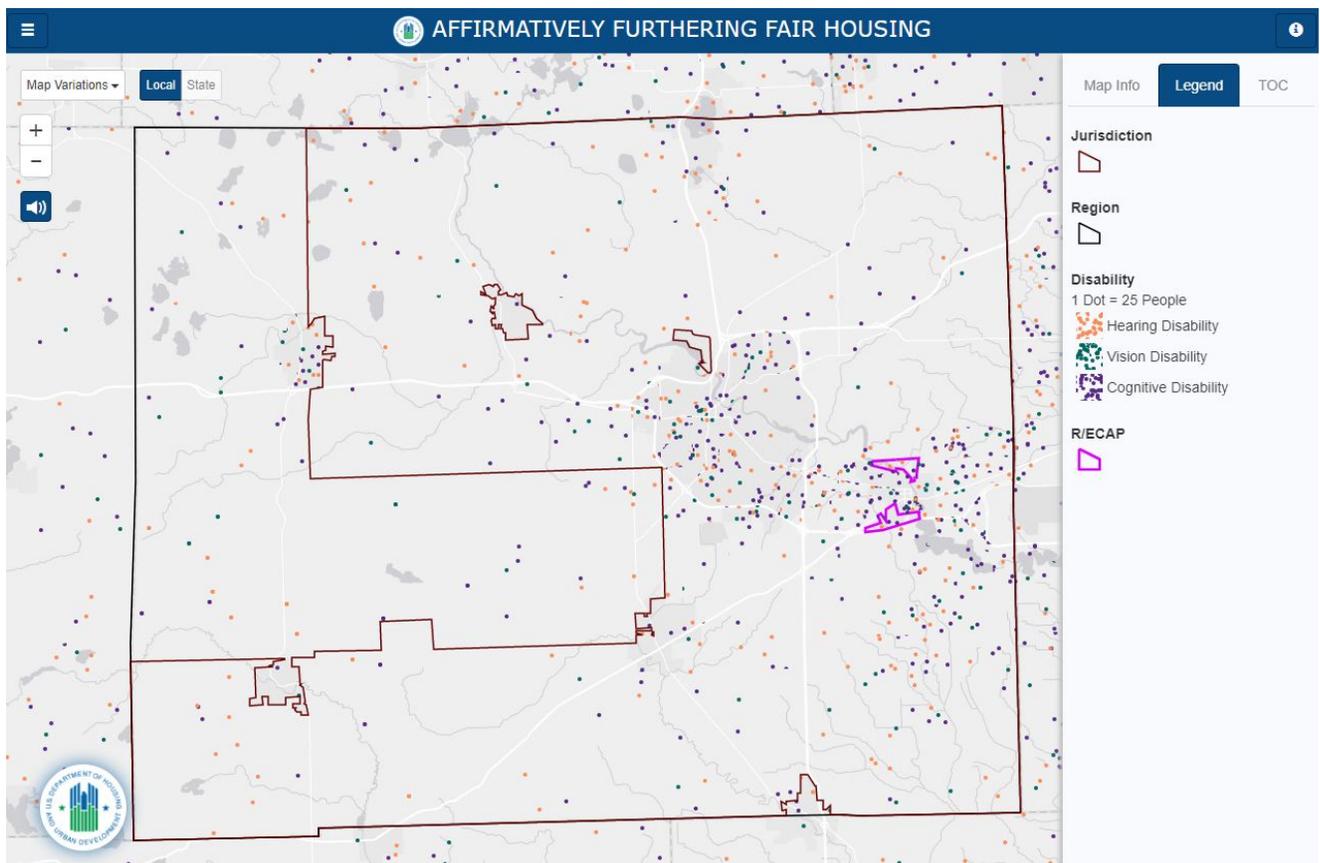
KEY FINDINGS

- With varied need and a dispersed population, disability and access needs can be overlooked, or at best, lack focused community attention
- The two Housing Commissions' RAD conversion efforts (and use of LIHTC) have helped increase the number and type of accessible and/or visitable units. However, more is needed in a variety of geographies.
- According to the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (CIL) single-family housing stock in particular lacks accessibility modifications, while more recent apartment developments often include some barrier-free units at a minimum.
- More analysis and engagement is needed to determine community-wide priorities

Population Profile

The maps below show individuals with disabilities predominantly living in the urbanized area of Washtenaw County. There doesn't appear to be any disproportionality with the location of individuals with disabilities and the R/ECAPs; however, indicated in Maps 53 and 54, it does appear that there may be more individuals with disabilities living east of US-23 - the geography of the county often considered more affordable due to rent and home-ownership rates. The City of Chelsea appears to have a somewhat higher rate of individuals with disabilities, likely due to the prevalence of assisted-living and nursing home facilities in the community in comparison with overall population size.

MAP 53_DISABILITY BY HEARING, VISION AND COGNITIVE



MAP 54_DISABILITY BY AMBULATORY, SELF-CARE, & AMBULATORY LIVING DIFFICULTIES

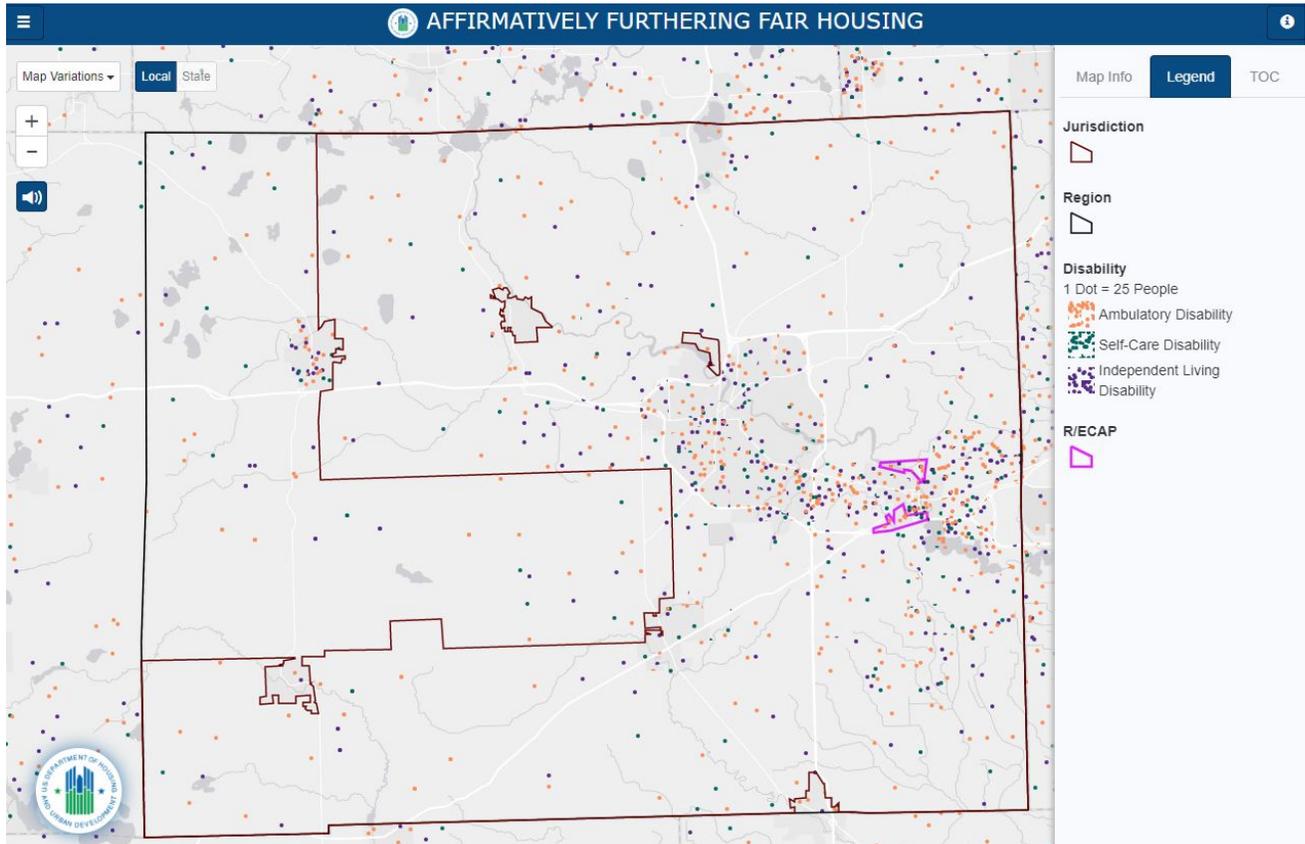


TABLE 42_DISABILITY BY TYPE

(Washtenaw County, MI CDBG, HOME, ESG) Jurisdiction			
Disability Type	#	%	
Hearing difficulty	6,784	2.29%	
Vision difficulty	3,409	1.15%	
Cognitive difficulty	10,049	3.39%	
Ambulatory difficulty	13,183	4.44%	
Self-care difficulty	4,907	1.65%	
Independent living difficulty	9,265	3.12%	

Source: HUD-provided Table 13, Disability by Type

TABLE 43_DISABILITY BY AGE GROUP

(Washtenaw County, MI CDBG, HOME, ESG) Jurisdiction			
Age of People with Disabilities	#	%	
Age 5-17 with Disabilities	1,982	0.67%	
Age 18-64 with Disabilities	14,479	4.88%	
Age 65+ with Disabilities	9,516	3.21%	

Source: HUD-provided Table 14, Disability by Age Group

TABLE 44_DISABILITY BY PUBLICLY SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM CATEGORY

	People with a Disability	
	#	%
Public Housing	9	23.08%
Project-Based Section 8	298	15.47%
Other Multifamily	9	8.49%
HCV Program	910	30.19%

Source: HUD-provided Table 15, Disability by Publicly Supported Housing Program Category

Based on Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) reporting, AAHC public housing units consist of 30% older adults, half of whom are also disabled. Another 41% of households include non-elderly residents with a disability.

Housing Accessibility

In conversation with staff at the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (CIL), some of the biggest challenges for individuals with disabilities include the following:

- Overall cost is the biggest issue, noting that often there are apartment rentals that are barrier-free or with other accommodations, but often too expensive for individuals, due to the limitations of fixed-incomes, part-time work, and/or generally some of the limitations for people with disabilities resulting in their earning lower incomes broadly.
- Physical accommodations are often lacking for those with a variety of physical disabilities. It was noted that apartments are often more accommodating than single-family homes, which almost always require costly alterations.

Public housing and nonprofit affordable housing providers in the area have been including barrier-free units in new or rehabbed units. The state’s scoring for Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) provides additional points for applications where 10% or more of the units are barrier-free (for new and rehab projects), and points for visitable units. The AAHC and the Ypsilanti Housing Commission (YHC) are both in the process of using the RAD program to convert all of the local public housing stock to a public/private partnership which will maintain affordability. As part of this effort both have added a number of barrier-free and accessible units.

AAHC RAD converted units, using LIHTC (all located in City of Ann Arbor):

As part of the RAD conversion, the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) has committed to providing more barrier-free and accessible units overall. West Arbor development added the following barrier-free units at West Arbor:

- One (1) 5-bedroom
- One (1) 4-bedroom
- One (1) 3-bedroom
- Two (2) 2-bedroom

- Two (2) 1-bedroom.

Features were also added to a 1-bedroom and a 2-bedroom for a visual/hearing impaired person. At West Arbor numerous units were made visitable (no step entry, 1st floor bathroom and bedroom):

- Nine (9) 5-bedroom
- Eleven (11) 4-bedroom
- Seven (7) 3-bedroom
- Two (2) 1-bedroom.

At Green-Baxter, the 6-unit burned down building was redeveloped with 6 visitable units:

- Two (2) 2-bedroom
- Three (3) 3 bedroom
- One (1) 4 bedroom

Entry ramps were added to 3 apartments at South Seventh, and 2 ramps at Pennsylvania, to improve accessibility for renters with mobility issues, but they are not fully ADA accessible.

Additionally, all apartments at Miller (106 units) and all apartments at Baker (64 units) are accessible. They are not all ADA compliant, but someone in a wheelchair or who has mobility issues can get into the apartment. The portion of the 106 units that are accessible/visitable by someone with mobility issues is 60%. Of all the housing stock (public housing and/or RAD converted), only 8% is fully ADA or set up for sight/hearing.

More 2-bedroom apartments are needed that are accessible and visitable for people in wheelchairs and mobility issues who have a care-giver. The AAHC will be adding 2 ADA compliant and 7 visitable 2-bedroom units with the redevelopment of White State Henry, in addition to 2 ADA 1-bedroom units. Further, regarding the Platt Road housing site, the following units will be added:

- Two (2) ADA and 4 visitable 2-bedroom
- Two (2) ADA 1-bedroom
- One (1) ADA 3-bedroom
- Three (3) visitable 3-bedroom
- One (1) ADA 4-bedroom
- One (1) visitable 4-bedroom
- One (1) ADA 5-bedroom
- Three (3) visitable 5-bedroom

The AAHC makes modifications to units as needed by the occupants in the apartments, by adding automated door openers, roll-in showers, modified kitchens, grab bars and ramps, and

removing doors to bathrooms and bedrooms upon request. The AAHC has never turned down a request for a reasonable accommodation that is documented. If AAHC continues to make about 10% of their new apartments fully ADA accessible, they could meet the need.

Ypsilanti Housing Commission

Much of the YHC's stock is in or adjacent to the Southside R/ECAP. However, larger buildings providing for Ypsilanti residents are all located in the south of Michigan Avenue neighborhoods. Chidester is reserved for persons with disabilities (151 units). Another property, Towne Center (102 units), reserved for individuals over 55 and often includes persons with disabilities. However, Towne Center has had serious issues maintaining working elevators. In a building serving an older and/or disabled population, this can result in tenants either being confined to their apartment/floor and/or not being able to access their apartments.

Access in Different Categories of Publicly Supported Housing

Individuals and families with disabilities are utilizing the variety of subsidized housing stock, in particular the housing choice vouchers (30%). Overall the multifamily stock could use additional accessible units in the long term.

There is overlap between public housing (administered by AAHC), Project-Based vouchers (using both housing commissions' RAD conversions), Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) (administered by the AAHC and MSHDA), and multifamily housing stock (which includes above as well as others). The long term goals ensure provisions provide more barrier free and accessible units in all publicly subsidized housing stock.

Integration of Persons with Disabilities Living in Institutions and Other Segregated Settings

Avalon Housing is the primary provider of supportive services in subsidized affordable housing. They contract with both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Housing Commissions for services, as well as with homelessness service providers. In efforts to reach across all unit types for services, but provide most services in the City of Ann Arbor. Several mental health providers provide group home options, but these are limited and are difficult to locate, maintain and/or acquire.

The AAHC reports a high need for assisted living with 24 hour supportive services. The AAHC and YHC properties are for people who can live independently with supportive services as needed. However, there are residents who need 24-hour individual care-givers, but there are limited places for them to move to. AAHC has 24-hour staffing at Miller Manor, but the staffing is not intended to cook, clean and pay bills for tenants, for example. That is a much more intensive service that is provided in group homes. Within AAHC properties, the need for supportive services (i.e. on-site eviction prevention and housing stabilization needs, which can include case managers, peer support, support groups, and medical support) needs to double. This is exclusive of individuals who need 24-hour care.

The Washtenaw County Continuum of Care (CoC) is committed to supporting and adding projects with supportive housing as part of homelessness services throughout the county. These programs include rapid rehousing and housing first programs, with wrap-around services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Many of these individuals and families have one or more disabilities. Through the program, the need for expanding supportive housing programming and services has been identified, reinforced and prioritized.

Disparities in Access to Opportunity

Government services and facilities

Public participation and engagement is encouraged by local units throughout the County. All provide accommodation for meetings upon request, including sign-language and other language interpreters. All public meetings are required to, and mostly are, held in buildings and rooms with barrier-free access.

Public Infrastructure

The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living has successfully taken legal action against multiple jurisdictions regarding their ADA sidewalk ramp program. The result is a number of court-monitored implementation programs, requiring the local units to replace or add ADA ramps as part of the local sidewalk network.

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS)

Most of the urbanized areas of Washtenaw County have been working to implement traffic calming, including road diets, improved crosswalks, midblock crossings and other safety infrastructure to improve the pedestrian network. However, the prevalence of roads designed by, and under the jurisdiction of, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), bisecting what would be walkable communities, often encourages speeding to dangerous levels, and does not allow for smaller-scale pedestrian improvements. For example, Washtenaw Avenue passes through four jurisdictions in the County, and has the most-heavily used transit route (AAATA Route 4) in the County. However, MDOT has dedicated minimal resources to fill in sidewalk gaps, constructing mid-block crossings or even crosswalks along large sections of the trunkline. As a result, improvements have not occurred that are needed to address dangerous conditions for pedestrians, and particularly people with disabilities, who may need to cross the road to get to services, a residence, bus stop, etc.

Transportation

Within the fixed-transit routes, AAATA provides kneeling buses which accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, etc. A-Ride is a complementary paratransit¹ shared-ride transportation service for persons with disabilities who, due to their disability, are prevented from traveling by The Ride's regular accessible line bus service. A-Ride is comparable to The Ride's regular line

¹ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/49/37.131>

bus service in terms of shared rides, service area, trip lengths and days of operation. A-Ride trips are provided in lift-equipped buses and sedan type vehicles.

As well, AAATA partners with the People's Express (PEX), a low-cost public transportation service for townships in Washtenaw County with transfers to several bus stops on the AAATA bus route. Most our buses and vans are lift-equipped and meet ADA requirements. People's Express also provides transportation along the bordering townships of Oakland and Livingston County along the US-23 corridor from I-96 to Washtenaw County Hospitals (U of M and St. Joseph Mercy), Colleges, Businesses, Appointments and other destinations.

Proficient school and education programs

Currently more than 6,500 students receive special education services in Washtenaw County, including the 13 eligible categories covered under the current Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The list includes: autism, deaf/hearing impairment, blind/visual impairments, cognitive impairments, early childhood developmental delays, emotional impairments, physical impairments, speech & language impairments, severe multiple impairments, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments (chronic or acute conditions).

The Washtenaw intermediate School District (WISD) provides special education services and programs to support the efforts of 9 local school districts, 14 private school academic and 20 private schools. This includes early childhood support, early intervention services, classroom support services, parent support, assistive technology and legal requirements. These services support approximately 300 students with moderate to severe disabilities, emotional disabilities, deaf/hard of hearing impairments, visual impairments from birth to 25 years old, and the Washtenaw County Court involved youth program.

School districts also develop special education plans and means for students and families to request accommodations and assistance. A renewal millage is scheduled for November 2017 to renew funding for more than 6,500 students receiving special education services in Washtenaw County.

Jobs

Several community based organizations work with persons with disabilities around hiring, and/or provide jobs for persons with disabilities. Michigan Ability Partners (MAP) provide vocational services, Goodwill provides similar vocational supports and employment. The CIL provides a microenterprise program for those looking to pursue entrepreneurship, while also serving as a free staffing service to public and private groups and businesses looking to hire persons with disabilities. Michigan Rehabilitation Services works with eligible customers and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence. This includes assisting persons with disabilities to prepare for and obtain competitive employment, and exploring the possibilities of self-employment or owning a small business. Comprehensive Services for the Developmentally Disabled, located in Saline, provides support for individuals to develop, display and sell art.

Reasonable accommodations

Several of the groups mentioned above, provide support to individuals as they enter the workplace and/or find housing and provide technical assistance related to the provision of reasonable accommodations.

Homeownership

Staff at the CIL noted that while there is rental stock that is barrier-free and/or available, most houses for sale lack any accessibility features. Housing Bureau for Seniors offers a small program to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with housing modification programs but it is modest. Washtenaw County's OCED administers a housing rehabilitation program, but the program has temporarily suspended its accessible ramp program. Staff hopes to reinstate it by 2018.

Disproportionate Housing Needs

As mentioned above, affordability continues to be the biggest issue, creating a disproportionate need, as many persons with disabilities have fixed incomes through SSI and related programs. Supporting homeownership for individuals with disabilities through financial support with purchase and/or modification is needed.

Disability and Access Issues Contributing Factors

Each chapter discusses contributing factors that continue, worsen, or otherwise prevent resolution to the fair housing issue discussed in the chapter. These contributing factors help direct the development of goals and strategies to counter the issue.

Access to proficient schools for persons with disabilities

While there is a broader question about access to proficient schools (less available to low-income families of color), all school districts in the county provide special education classes and supports.

Access to publicly supported housing for persons with disabilities

30% of HCV are utilized by households with disabilities, and 20% of public housing is used by accessible housing.

Access to transportation for persons with disabilities

There are gaps in service and availability in some rural areas and on the edges of the AAATA service area.

Inaccessible sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, or other infrastructure

The CIL's litigation against various local jurisdictions around ADA sidewalks and curb cuts has resulted in improved attention to detail and improved accessibility.

Most of the urbanized areas of Washtenaw County have been working to implement traffic calming, including road diets, improved crosswalks, midblock crossings and other supports to improve the pedestrian network. However, the prevalence of MDOT roads cutting through what would be walkable communities, often increase speeds to dangerous levels, and does not allow for smaller-scale pedestrian improvements. For example, Washtenaw Avenue passes through four jurisdictions in the County, and has the most heavily used transit route (AAATA Route 4) in the County. MDOT has dedicated minimal resources towards adding in sidewalk gaps, installing mid-block crossings or even crosswalks through long sections of the road. This has been inadequate and sometimes dangerous for pedestrians, and particularly people with disabilities who may need to cross the road to get to services, a residence, bus stop, etc.

Lack of affordable in-home or community-based supportive services

The AAHC and other housing providers have documented the need for additional in-home supportive services (up to 24 hours). As well, the demand for supportive services is ongoing and particularly paired with the homelessness work in the community.

Lack of affordable, accessible housing in range of unit sizes

Both housing commissions are working to add to the variety of accessible housing including range of unit sizes as part of the RAD conversion projects.

Lack of affordable, integrated housing for individuals who need supportive services

Based on focus group responses, it is not common where an individual alone can provide for their housing and support services needs, even when receiving SSI, Medicaid and other government supports. Most families indicated that they provide additional financial support, and assistance with procuring and maintaining supportive services. Families also noted discrimination of apartment managers, providing examples when managers said no to disabled applicants who were looking to live in what would be an integrated setting. This indicates both a supply and a discrimination issue.

Lack of assistance for housing accessibility modifications

Modifications for tenants of properties in federally subsidized units is more common, in particular those managed by one of the housing commissions and/or Avalon Housing, MAP and other non-profit developers. Focus group participations have noted varying responses in the private sector. The Fair Housing Center of Southeast and Mid Michigan (FHC) noted that in their experience with many local building departments are not enforcing federal fair housing requirements as part of multifamily development, citing a lack of jurisdiction.

Lack of assistance for transitioning from institutional settings to integrated housing

Washtenaw County Community Mental Health staff report lack of resources for transition, and are looking to participate in broader discussions on providing additional supports.

Land use and zoning laws

The prevalence of single-family zoning districts makes up the bulk of zoning districts throughout the region and limits the housing choices, price point and availability to populations most in need of housing. In some cases, there have been efforts to limit the number of affordable units or use of HCV through the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning. In other communities, PUDs have been utilized to encourage affordable housing. In Washtenaw County, similar to the nation, lower-income populations often includes communities of color.

As part of the prevalence of single family districts, there are limitations on group home placement. There are often negative associations with group housing and similar housing types, making it difficult to have them approved even as a conditional or special use.

Location of accessible housing

Accessible housing is included in the majority of committed affordable units, so is most prevalent in Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township and in the urbanized area as a whole.