



For Immediate Release  
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**Press Conference to Launch Disability Rights Commission's Access Madison Campaign and  
DMI's Downtown Madison Accessibility Report**

On **Friday July 26<sup>th</sup>** the City of Madison Department of Civil Rights, Downtown Madison, Inc., and Access to Independence will be holding a **press conference at 10:00am in front of the Great Dane, 123 East Doty** to launch the Disability Rights Commission's Access Madison Campaign, and DMI's Downtown Madison Accessibility Report. A representative from the Mayor's Office and Alder Mike Verveer will also be participating in the press conference.

Two years ago DMI and Old National Bank approached the Disability Rights Commission about changing the international symbol of accessibility as part of a national movement. At that time the commission felt more impactful steps needed to be taken in order to improve accessibility in Madison. DMI, through its Inclusiveness Committee, heard this feedback and began their Beyond Compliance Taskforce to address disability-related inclusion and accessibility barriers in downtown Madison. The taskforce is led by Jason Beloungy, executive director of Access to Independence, which is a member of DMI. The Department of Civil Rights, DMI and Access to Independence enlisted the assistance of Urban Assets to develop a survey and subsequent report outlining barriers to accessibility that exist in 6 core areas:

Mobility, Public Transportation, Private Businesses, Community Events, Parks and Open Spaces, and Semi-Public Spaces

The report outlines feedback from over 90 community members, and provides quantitative, and qualitative information on difficulties faced by people with disabilities to enjoy all that downtown Madison has to offer. This report is the important first step needed to understand what the barriers are, and areas to prioritize.

This official launch of DMI's "Downtown Madison Accessibility Report," as well as the Disability Rights Commission's "Access Madison Campaign" highlights the unique partnership between government, the business community, and the disability community that can address barriers together. Representatives from all three groups will be at the Disability Pride Festival on July 27<sup>th</sup> for a workshop at 1:00 pm to gather feedback from people with disabilities about possible solutions to the barriers outlined in the report. From there, this partnership will work together, with the disability community, to address barriers outlined in the report.