Public Abstract

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The aim of this research is to improve safety and mobility for the disabled community by examining the impacts of the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Another aim is to identify the economic consequent for cities throughout United States for meeting PROWAG. The impacts of PROWAG were analyzed via the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plans; namely, what are the impacts on cities to meet PROWAG guidelines, how are the land size, population, and differences of city characteristic in each classification contributing to the differences in cost of improving facilities, and how are the costs and revenues contribute to the unduly burdensome standard? Twenty cities examined in this research were chosen because of the availability of informative ADA Transition Plans. After analyzing the Transition Plans, a classification schemes based on U.S. Census Bureau classification schemes general concepts was applied. The scheme divided cities into small cities areas with the population of 50,000 or less, medium cities areas with the population between 50,000 to 250,000, and large cities areas with the population of 250,000 or more. The cities were classified into 7 small cities, 7 medium cities, and 6 large cities. The descriptive statistics were calculated by using population, land size, and population density as factors for describing and comparing the differences of city characteristic in each classification. The differences of city characteristics in each classification show the effect of the cost of improving facilities. Therefore, a meta-analysis was calculated to demonstrate the city characteristics differences that contribute to significant differences in facility improvement costs. The results showed that the characteristics of the cost of improving facilities and PROWAG disproportionately affect different classification of cities. For instance, typical small cities required fewer facilities to be improved because of the small land size. While typical medium and large cities required more facilities to be improved because of the large land size. The percent of overall cost of improving facilities to the overall city's revenues/expenses were calculated by analyzing ADA Transition Plan and Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports. The results showed that small cities had the highest percent of overall cost of improving facilities to the overall city's revenue/expense compared to medium and large cities. In other words, small cities have the greatest financial impact to meet PROWAG guidelines. With limited revenue, the issue of unduly burdensome could be especially relevant in small cities. However, PROWAG has not been formally adopted and ADA Transition Plans are still developing. Therefore, the overall results of the research are preliminary due to the limitations of the data. Future research could involve another investigation after PROWAG is adopted and Transition Plans are more complete.