

Report of the State Comptroller of Israel | November 2024

Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety

Accessibility of Public Transportation for People with Disabilities — Follow-Up Audit



Background

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), in 2022 there were approximately 1.096 million people with disabilities in Israel, constituting nearly 11.5% of the total population that year. The difficulties experienced by people with disabilities are compounded by challenges in using public transportation (PT), which is essential for independent mobility. Adapting the environment to accommodate the physical, sensory, emotional, and cognitive abilities of people with disabilities will significantly improve their functioning.

The obligation to provide accessibility is anchored in the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 1998 (the Equal Rights Law); the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; rulings by the Supreme Court; and various accessibility-related regulations enacted since the passing of the Equal Rights Law.



Key Figures

1.096 million

Number of people with disabilities in Israel in 2022 – approximately 11.5% of the total population that year

908,000

Number of people aged 20 and above with severe functional disabilities¹ approximately 16% of the population in these age groups in 2022

26 years

since the passing of the Equal Rights Law (1998); the obligation to provide accessibility in intercity bus lines has yet to be established in law²

19 years

since the amendment to the Equal Rights Law (2005), in which the Minister of Interior was required to enact accessible road regulations, and they have yet to be enacted

Only **2.6%** and **4.3%**

Percentage of intercity bus lines in 2023 that were accessible; and the percentage of accessible intercity bus lines planned for 2024

10.5%

Average rate of noncompliant findings regarding interior accessibility (sensory accessibility) on intercity bus lines, identified among most public transport operators in the first half of 2023

48%

Percentage of bus stops approved for accessibility upgrades by the Ministry of Transportation in February 2023 for approximately 109 local authorities, out of the total requests submitted (5,852 out of 12,234)

300 to 800

Number of accessible taxis nationwide lacking (as of 2023) to fully meet the needs of people with disabilities, according to an estimate calculated by the State Comptroller's Office based on Ministry of Transportation data.

According to CBS data, a person with a severe functional disability is someone who has great difficulty, or is entirely unable, to perform at least one of the following activities: seeing, hearing, walking or climbing stairs, dressing or bathing independently, remembering, or concentrating.

² Except for the obligation under the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (Sensory Accessibility in Intercity Buses), 2017.

Audit Actions



1 In October 2021, the State Comptroller published a report on "Accessibility of Public Transportation for People with Disabilities"3 (the previous report or audit). From August 2023 to March 2024, the State Comptroller's Office conducted a follow-up audit on the rectification of deficiencies identified in the previous report. The primary examination was carried out at the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety, with supplemental examinations conducted at the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the Ministry of Justice (the Commission for Equality) and the Ministry of Interior. Additionally, meetings were held with organizations and associations related to accessibility for people with disabilities.

Key Findings





Legislation of Accessible Roads Regulations – Amendment No. 2 to the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 2005, stipulates that intersections and sidewalks "shall be designed, constructed, and adapted" to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities and that the Minister of Interior shall establish the required accessibility adaptations. The previous audit revealed that, as of its conclusion in March 2021, the Minister of Interior had not yet enacted the Accessible Roads Regulations. In response to the findings of the previous audit, the Ministry of Interior stated that the target was to present these regulations to the Knesset's Labor Committee during the summer session of 2022. However, by the conclusion of the follow-up audit in March 2024, it was found that the issue had been rectified only to a small extent. Approximately 19 years after the amendment to the Equal Rights Law, and despite a Supreme Court ruling in June 2023 and the recommendations of the State Comptroller in the previous audit report, the Minister of Interior had yet to enact the Accessible Roads Regulations. Nevertheless, it was found that the Minister of Interior, through the Ministry of Interior, had initiated a process to advance the enactment of the regulations, which, as of the conclusion of the follow-up audit, had not yet been completed.

Barriers to Accessibility of Public Transportation for Persons with Pisabilities

- The previous audit revealed that in 2019, the Ministry of Transportation conducted a survey on the accessibility of public transportation (PT) for persons with disabilities. However, the survey did not include critical data such as the number of users with

See State Comptroller, Annual Report 72A - Part Two (2021), Accessibility of Public Transportation for People with Disabilities, pp. 643-741.



disabilities, their travel habits, the barriers preventing them from using PT, findings regarding their mobility limitations, and the reasons behind these limitations. Furthermore, no proposals were developed to remove these barriers following the survey. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been **rectified only to a small extent**. It was found that the Ministry of Transportation prepared a professional literature review in order to promote the removal of barriers to PT accessibility for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the follow-up audit revealed that the Master Plan for PT Accessibility is in preparation by the Ministry but has not yet been approved. However, the Ministry of Transportation has not conducted a survey that includes the aforementioned data on persons with disabilities – the number of users, their travel habits, barriers preventing them from using PT, findings, and reasons for their lack of mobility.

Accessibility of Urban Buses – The previous audit revealed that, as of its completion (March 2021), amendments had not been made to the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (Public Transport Accessibility), 2003, to reflect the technological advancements introduced since their enactment. Additionally, the Ministry of Transportation had not prepared a comprehensive and detailed plan to address this issue, in order to improve service accessibility for public transportation (PT) users on urban bus routes. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been rectified only to a small extent. As of the conclusion of the follow-up audit (March 2024), despite technological advancements since the Regulations were enacted in 2003 and amended in 2016 – and despite the deficiencies arising in the previous audit report underscoring the need for amendments - the Ministry of Transportation has neither reviewed nor pursued revisions to these Regulations, although such amendments fall within the Minister of Transport's authority. Moreover, the Ministry has not prepared a comprehensive and detailed plan to improve service accessibility for PT users on urban bus routes in light of these technological advancements since the Regulations were first enacted in 2003.

Accessibility of Intercity Buses

• Regulating the Accessibility of Intercity Buses – The previous audit revealed that, despite the enactment of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law in 1998, the Law still does not mandate the physical accessibility of intercity buses. In response to the findings of the previous report and the Prime Minister's response⁴, the Ministry of Transportation stated that for the past two years, it has been working on a proposal for a comprehensive update to the Equal Rights regulations for persons with disabilities. This proposal is expected to include updates to existing regulations and the introduction of new ones regarding the accessibility of local railways and metro systems, service dogs, the use of new technologies, and more.

⁴ Prime Minister's Comments on the State Comptroller's Report 72A, Part Two (October 2021), pp. 109–131.

The follow-up audit revealed that this deficiency has not been rectified. The Ministry of Transportation has not established a statutory requirement for the physical accessibility of intercity buses, despite the fact that the Equal Rights Law was enacted 26 years ago, in 1998. This failure to legislate physical accessibility is inconsistent with the Ministry of Transportation's own policy, which states that every person using a wheelchair should be able to reach their destination via accessible and convenient public transportation.

- Accessibility of Intercity Buses (Physical Disability) The previous audit revealed that the Ministry of Transportation had not advanced the accessibility of intercity buses, and aside from a letter from the Equal Rights Commission to the Knesset in 2018, no written requests from the Commission or the Ministry of Transportation were identified regarding promoting their accessibility. The followup audit found that this deficiency has been rectified only to a small extent. While the Equal Rights Law was not amended and there is no legal requirement to make intercity buses accessible, the Ministry of Transportation initiated a pilot program for making intercity bus routes accessible. In the years 2023-2024, 44 accessible intercity bus routes are planned to operate with 114 accessible buses serving 56 cities nationwide. In 2023, 27 intercity bus routes operated with 74 accessible buses; in 2024, an additional 17 intercity bus routes are planned to operate with approximately 40 more accessible buses. The follow-up audit further revealed that, as of November 2023, there were approximately 1,032 bus routes classified by the Ministry of Transportation as intercity routes. Thus, the 27 accessible intercity bus routes operated as part of the pilot program in 2023 represented approximately 2.6% of all intercity bus routes in Israel, while the 44 accessible intercity routes planned for 2024 would account for approximately 4.3% of all intercity bus routes in Israel.
- Accessibility of Bus Stops In the previous audit, it was revealed that as of 2019, approximately 10,000 bus stops had been made accessible, leaving approximately 13,500 urban stops and 3,500 intercity stops still inaccessible. Additionally, it was found that in 37.5% of 80 localities examined, not all of the stops had been made accessible, and in 22.5% of the localities, fewer than 85% of the stops had been made accessible. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been rectified only to a small extent. In March 2022, the Ministry of Transportation issued a public call to assist local authorities in completing the accessibility of bus stops under their jurisdiction, supported by financial assistance from the Ministry's budget. The follow-up audit and data from the Ministry of Transportation revealed that by February 2023, approximately 109 local authorities had submitted requests for the accessibility of approximately 12,2345 bus stops. By that date, the Ministry of Transportation had approved the accessibility of approximately 5,852 bus stops (approximately 48% of the requests) at a total cost of

Regarding the remaining approximately 1,038 stops (approximately 8% of the requests), no accessibility actions were required.



approximately NIS 76.5 million, to be paid to local authorities from the Ministry's budget. For an additional 5,344 stops (approximately 44% of the requests), funding for accessibility was not approved because maintenance work unrelated to accessibility was required. It should be noted that, according to documents from the Ministry of Transportation, local authorities are required to complete the accessibility of the approved bus stops no later than the end of 2025, with the final deadline for utilizing the budget allocated by the Ministry for this purpose set for September 2024. The follow-up audit also found that, as of its conclusion in March 2024, the Ministry of Transportation did not have comprehensive information on the number of bus stops made accessible in the local authorities under the approved plan. The Ministry had not been updated by the local authorities regarding the number of bus stops within their jurisdiction that had been made accessible since March 2022, as required by the reporting obligations set out in the Accessibility Regulations Implementation Procedure from January 2011. Furthermore, the Ministry did not insist on receiving updates or reports from the local authorities on this matter.

- Staffing in the Public Transport Accessibility Department at the Ministry of Transportation The previous audit found that, apart from the department manager, there were no additional employees in the Accessibility Department, with two external consultants assisting the manager in day-to-day operations. The audit also revealed that, during the two years preceding the previous audit period (September 2020 to March 2021), plans were made to establish sub-units within the department to enable it to fulfill all its tasks. However, the Ministry failed to advance the plan, and the department remained in its current framework. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency has not been rectified the Accessibility Department still has no staff members apart from the department manager, sub-units have not been established, and the manager continues to rely on external consultants.
- Reports from Public Transport Operators to the Ministry of Transportation and Public Accessibility Information The previous audit found that the Accessibility Department did not have reports from public transport operators as required by the Ministry of Transportation's procedures. Additionally, the Ministry of Transportation did not request information regarding the publication of accessibility details by operators, the installation of signage, or the handling of public complaints. Furthermore, the National Public Transport Authority failed to issue semi-annual reports concerning urban bus stops. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified. According to data provided by the Ministry of Transportation and its response to the State Comptroller in April 2024, no reports from public transport operators were found, as required by the Accessibility Regulations Implementation Reporting Procedure issued by the Ministry of Transportation in January 2011.
- Accessibility Complaints Received by the Ministry of Transportation The previous audit revealed that the Ministry's annual reports failed to address accessibility

issues or include a breakdown of findings on this topic across the various areas covered in the reports, such as analyses of different modes of transportation and operator-level activities. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been **rectified only to a small extent**. A review of the Ministry of Transportation's 2022 complaints report indicates that it does not include information about the accessibility of public transportation or a breakdown of complaints related to this issue. As a result, the Ministry of Transportation lacks data on complaints related to the accessibility of public transportation, which hinders its ability to effectively oversee and monitor public transport operators. It should be noted that the Ministry of Transportation is updating the "Accessible Government" form for submitting public complaints to the National Public Transport Authority. According to the Ministry, the updated form is scheduled to go online in the third quarter of 2024 and will include an option to select "Accessibility" as a complaint category.

Accessible Taxis

- **Quantity of Accessible Taxis** The previous audit revealed that approximately 950 licenses for operating accessible taxis were issued, resulting in a ratio of one accessible taxi per 1,600 persons with disabilities, compared to a ratio of one nonaccessible taxi per 340 persons without disabilities. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency had not been rectified. Calculations by the State Comptroller's Office, based on data from the Ministry of Transportation, indicate a current shortage of 300 to 800 accessible taxis to adequately serve wheelchair users, which is projected to increase in the future. It was also found that the current framework for operating accessible taxis, which includes provisions for the number of accessible taxi licenses, is set to expire in 2024. In the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (Exemption from License Fee for Operating an Accessible Taxi), 2014 (the Accessible Taxi Regulations), it is stipulated that ten years after receiving a license for an accessible taxi, the license holder may convert it into a regular taxi. The Ministry of Transportation has not developed a new framework to determine the desired number of accessible taxis. Although the Ministry is reviewing alternatives for the operation of accessible taxi services starting in 2024, no alternative has been selected to date. Additionally, the follow-up audit found that the decisions of the Public Petitions Committee of the Knesset from March 2022 regarding the shortage of accessible taxis for persons with disabilities have not been implemented by the Ministry of Transportation. These include amending the regulations governing accessible taxis and publishing updated and accurate information on the Ministry of Transportation's website regarding accessible accessible taxi operators and the corporations managing them.
- Agreements with Accessible Taxi Operators In the previous audit, it was
 found that the recruitment of accessible taxi operators was conducted without the
 Ministry of Transportation setting criteria or threshold requirements. Any entity that
 submitted a request was granted a license based on the number of licenses
 allocated by the Ministry. Following the issuance of licenses, and even after the



operators began providing services, the Ministry of Transportation did not establish agreements with them to define their rights and obligations related to this service. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency **had not been rectified**. As of the conclusion of the follow-up audit in March 2024, the Ministry of Transportation has yet to establish agreements with accessible taxi operators, in order to regulate their rights and obligations concerning this service or to facilitate oversight and monitoring of their activity. Therefore, the Ministry relies on the Accessible Taxi Procedure established by it, which states that the Ministry will conduct regular oversight and monitoring processes for accessible taxi operators, without saying how this will be done. It should be noted that in practice, the Ministry of Transportation does not apply oversight or monitoring of the operators.

- Fare Rates for Accessible Taxis and Maintenance of Travel Logs In the previous audit, it was found that despite the operators of accessible taxis receiving a significant discount of approximately 95% on the licensing fee for an accessible taxi, deficiencies were identified concerning the overcharging of fares and the lack of documentation in travel logs, as required by the Accessible Taxi Procedure of 2014. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified. It was found that the Ministry of Transportation does not verify whether the corporations operating accessible taxis maintain travel logs as required or whether the drivers of accessible taxis overcharge passengers.
- Oversight and Enforcement by the Ministry of Transportation of Accessible Taxi Operators The previous audit revealed that the Ministry of Transportation's oversight unit does not monitor the implementation of the procedure within corporations, based on its detailed provisions. Additionally, the unit lacked data on trips, such as the number of trips performed, fares charged, and quality of service. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency had not been rectified. The Ministry of Transportation still does not possess data on complaints, the number of trips, fares charged, or the quality of service across the accessible taxi sector. Consequently, the Ministry's ability to carry out effective oversight and enforcement in this sector is significantly impaired.
- Training of Accessible Taxi Drivers by Corporations The previous audit revealed that no detailed guidelines were established for the training of accessible taxi drivers. Furthermore, the Ministry of Transportation did not verify whether drivers of accessible taxis held a certificate issued by the corporate managers confirming their training. Additionally, the State Comptroller's Ombudsman's Office had received complaints from passengers regarding the service provided by accessible taxi drivers. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified. Similar to the findings of the previous audit, the Ministry of Transportation has neither established detailed training guidelines for accessible taxi drivers nor verified whether these drivers have been adequately trained or possess a certificate from the corporate manager attesting to their training.

Reports from Accessible Taxi Operators to the Transportation **Superintendent** – The previous audit found that the Transportation Superintendent did not require accessible taxi operators to submit reports regarding the execution of accessible rides, their scope, and their locations. Consequently, the Ministry of Transportation lacks information about the accessible rides conducted, their volume, and their geographical distribution. Without reports from the operators, the Ministry cannot effectively monitor the services provided to persons with disabilities or ensure compliance with its guidelines. The follow-up audit found that the deficiency had not been rectified.



Training of Bus Drivers and Relevant Support Staff - The previous audit highlighted complaints regarding the behavior of drivers and the lack of proper training, as noted in surveys and public participation processes conducted by the State Comptroller's Office. However, these issues were not reflected in the Ministry of Transportation's oversight reports. The previous audit also noted that the Commission for Equal Rights reported receiving complaints about discriminatory behavior by drivers towards persons with disabilities using public transport, stemming from a lack of awareness and intolerance, as well as insufficient training of employees at public transport operators. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been largely rectified. It was found that public transport drivers now participate in 50 hours of annual training, 10 of which focus on accessibility, safety, and passenger service. According to an updated driver training document from the Ministry of Transportation, dated November 2023, the percentage of public transport drivers employed by nine operators who underwent training ranged from 64% to 95%, with an average of approximately 76%. The follow-up audit also revealed that the Ministry of Transportation plans to enhance the training program in order to increase its effectiveness. Additionally, since April 2023, the Ministry of Transportation has had a procedure in place addressing the training of public transport drivers and relevant support staff.

Ensuring Service in Accessible Taxis – The previous audit report noted that, upon the issuance of licenses for accessible taxis, the Ministry of Transportation became aware, through complaints and gathered information, that some corporations were preselling licenses for operating accessible taxis at inflated prices in the market. However, proving such sales was not possible, as transactions were conducted via power of attorney without an actual transfer of ownership. The follow-up audit found that this deficiency has been largely rectified. The Ministry of Transportation has implemented a block in its computer systems, preventing the transfer of ownership from an accessible taxi license to a regular taxi license within ten years of the license's issuance. This restriction can only be lifted if the owner of the accessible taxi license pays the difference between the regular taxi license fee and the reduced fee for accessible taxis.



Key Recommendations



The Minister of Interior, in consultation with the Minister of Transportation, should continue advancing the process of legislating accessibility regulations for roads through the respective ministries as soon as possible, to enable persons with disabilities to travel optimally. This is especially urgent given the significant delay of approximately 19 years since the amendment of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 1998, in 2005. They should also establish a realistic timeline to promote the process effectively and efficiently.



🏆 The Ministry of Transportation should finalize the approval of the master plan for public transport accessibility, ensuring it includes achievable timelines and goals. This will enable the Ministry to systematically address barriers to public transport accessibility for persons with disabilities and improve the services provided to them. Additionally, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation conduct a comprehensive survey to gather data on persons with disabilities using public transport, including the number of users, their travel habits, barriers preventing them from utilizing public transport, findings, and reasons for their lack of mobility. The Ministry should explore obtaining such information in alignment with data-sharing procedures from government agencies and other entities holding relevant information.



The Ministry of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation should continue working to provide an updated response to the needs of persons with disabilities who rely on public transportation, some on a daily basis, to facilitate their use of public transportation in an optimal and responsive way, tailored to their needs. Accordingly, they should consider amending the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities (Regulation of Accessibility to Public Transportation Services) Regulations, 2003, to align with technological advancements and better accommodate passengers with disabilitiesText Text.



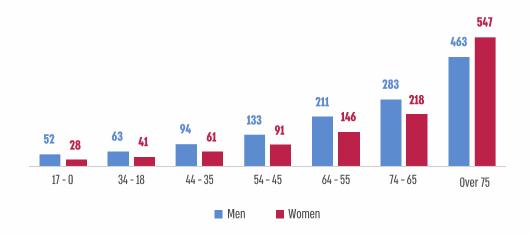
It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Equal Rights Commission urgently advance mandatory legislation regarding the accessibility of intercity bus lines and all matters related to intercity transportation. It is further recommended that the Ministry of Transportation continue advancing the pilot program for making intercity bus lines accessible in municipalities, significantly improving the ability of persons with disabilities to travel from one municipality to another as needed. This aligns with the Ministry's policy that ensuring accessibility for all intercity bus lines will enable any individual using a wheelchair to reach their destination via accessible and convenient public transportation. Additionally, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation contact local authorities to obtain information regarding the status of the implementation of the bus station accessibility process within their jurisdiction, as per the 2022 call for proposals. This will allow the Ministry to monitor the implementation of the program it has budgeted and will fund upon its completion, as well as track the overall progress of making all public

transportation stations accessible. Lastly, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation continue striving to achieve the accessibility of all bus stations nationwide.

- 😰 It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation review the structure of the Accessibility Division and the resources allocated to it to ensure that the division can carry out its tasks and achieve its objectives within the designated timelines.
- The Ministry of Transportation must ensure that public transportation operators submit reports regarding all accessible bus routes, the dissemination of information to the public about these accessible routes, and the presence of accessible signage at bus stops, as required by the Ministry's regulations. These reports will assist persons with disabilities in traveling more efficiently and easily using public transportation and will improve public transportation services for this population.
- It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation promptly arrange the continued operation of accessible taxi services for individuals with disabilities who rely on wheelchairs. This service is a critical mode of public transportation for independent mobility, as it enables door-to-door travel, either as a standalone option or in combination with other public transportation modes. The importance of this service is heightened by the fact that there is still no legal requirement for the accessibility of intercity bus routes. The Ministry of Transportation, in collaboration with the Equal Rights Commission, should explore ways to increase the availability of accessible taxi services for individuals with disabilities nationwide, with particular attention to areas where such services are lacking. Additionally, the Ministry should formalize the provision of these services through agreements with accessible taxi operators, thus facilitating more effective oversight and regulation in order to improve the quality of this service.
- It is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Transportation Superintendent require corporations operating accessible taxis to provide structured reports on the execution of accessible rides, as stipulated in the Ministry of Transportation's Accessible Taxi Procedure. This reporting is essential for analyzing the data, drawing necessary conclusions, and improving the accessible taxi service provided to persons with disabilities. Additionally, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Transportation Superintendent establish an online reporting system and that the Ministry's oversight unit develop and implement a proactive monitoring plan to ensure optimal service in accessible taxis for persons with disabilities.
- It is further recommended that the Ministry of Transportation establish an effective oversight and monitoring process for the accessible taxi sector. This process should include examining all complaints brought to its attention, not limited solely to issues of overcharging for rides in accessible taxis. Such oversight is crucial for enhancing the service provided to passengers with disabilities, who rely on this service for independent transportation to specific locations and at specific times of their choosing.



People with Disabilities, by Gender and Age, Rate per 1,000 Population, 2022



According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, processed by the State Comptroller Office.

Summary

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics for 2022, there were approximately 1.096 million people with disabilities in Israel that year, accounting for nearly 11.5% of the country's total population. In addition to the challenges they face, individuals with disabilities also encounter difficulties in using public transportation, which is essential for their independent mobility. Adapting the physical and human environment to the physical, sensory, emotional, and cognitive abilities of people with disabilities would enhance their functionality and yield extensive economic and social benefits. These include increased social and economic mobility, new employment opportunities, and improved labor productivity in the economy. Under the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 1998, Israeli society is obligated to uphold the rights of people with disabilities, based on the principles of equality, the inherent dignity of all individuals, and mutual respect.

The follow-up audit revealed that the vast majority of deficiencies identified in the previous audit report, a total of 22 deficiencies, were either not rectified or only partially rectified: 13 deficiencies were not rectified at all, including the absence of a statutory requirement for intercity bus line accessibility in the Equal Rights Law; the lack of updates to the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities (Regulation of Accessibility to Public Transportation Services) Regulations, 2003; a shortage of accessible taxis; the absence of agreements with operators of accessible taxis; and inadequate oversight of reporting from public transportation operators. Seven deficiencies were partially rectified, including the enactment of accessibility road regulations, the preparation of a master plan for public transportation accessibility, the promotion of intercity bus line accessibility, improvements in bus stop accessibility, and the development of technological tools (such as applications for fare payment or accessing public transportation service information) for people with disabilities who require public transportation services. The remaining two deficiencies were largely rectified. The Ministry of Transportation must take prompt action to address or complete the rectification of deficiencies that have not been resolved or have only been partially resolved.

The State Comptroller recommends that the Ministry of Transportation complete the preparation of the public transportation accessibility plan by 2040. The plan is expected to address the need to close the gaps in the accessibility of public transportation across Israel. Additionally, the State Comptroller recommends that the Ministry of Transportation legislate mandatory accessibility for intercity bus lines, especially considering the 26 years that have passed since the enactment of the Equal Rights Law in 1998. The Ministry is further advised to regulate the accessible taxi sector, ensuring that their services are equitably distributed across the country, available within the designated timeframes, and provided effectively at the cost of standard fares. These measures would significantly enhance the ability of persons with disabilities to travel independently.



Extent of Rectification of the Main Deficiencies Indicated in the Previous Report

		The Deficiency	The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Regulation of accessibility in public transportation	Ministry of Transportation	Approximately 16 years after the amendment to the Equal Rights Law, the Minister of Interior has yet to enact Accessible Roads Regulations.				

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat Iow-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Barriers to accessibility in public transportation for persons with disabilities	Ministry of Transportation	In 2019, the Ministry of Transportation conducted an insights survey regarding the accessibility of public transportation for persons with disabilities. However, the survey did not examine the following data regarding persons with disabilities using public transportation: the number of users, their travel habits, the barriers preventing them from utilizing public transportation, findings, and the reasons for their lack of mobility. Additionally, no proposals were developed following the survey to address and remove these barriers.				

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessibility of urban buses	Ministry of Transportation	Since the enactment of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (Accessibility of Public Transportation Services) 2003, numerous technological advancements have required the revision of these regulations. In 2017, the Ministry of Transportation proposed amendments to these regulations. However, by the conclusion of the previous audit, the regulations had not been updated, and the Ministry had not prepared a comprehensive and detailed plan to address				
The obligation to make intercity buses accessible	Ministry of Transportation	Although the Equal Rights Law was enacted back in 1998, it has yet to establish a statutory obligation for the physical accessibility of intercity buses.				



		The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body		Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessibility of intercity buses – physical disabilities	Ministry of Transportation	Aside from a letter from the Equal Rights Commission to the Knesset in 2018, no additional written appeals from the Commission or the Ministry of Transportation advocating for the accessibility of intercity buses were identified.				

			The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification N			
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessibility of intercity buses – sensory disabilities	Ministry of Transportation	The insights survey conducted by the Ministry of Transportation highlighted the need to improve the accessibility of intercity buses by defining fixed locations for accessible stop buttons and announcements, standardized heights and placements accessible to persons with disabilities, wheelchair-adapted heights, and tactile features for individuals with visual impairments. The survey further noted that, as the Equal Rights Law currently does not apply to intercity buses, accessibility measures such as grab handles, announcement systems, and visual screens are required.				

Abstract
Accessibility of Public Transportation for People with Disabilities — Follow-Up Audit

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Training of drivers and other employees of public transportation operators	Ministry of Transportation	In surveys and a public consultation process conducted by the State Comptroller's Office, complaints emerged regarding driver behavior and the lack of proper training for providing services to persons with disabilities. However, these issues were not reflected in the Ministry of Transportation's oversight reports. The previous audit also noted that in April 2021, the Commission for Equal Rights informed the State Comptroller's Office that it had received complaints about discriminatory behavior by drivers towards persons with disabilities using public transportation, stemming from a lack of awareness and tolerance, as well as inadequate training of employees of public transportation operators.				



			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessibility of bus stations	Ministry of Transportation	In 2019, approximately 10,000 bus stations were accessible, but an estimated 13,500 urban stations and 3,500 intercity stations remained inaccessible. Additionally, it was found that in 37.5% of 80 localities examined, not all of the stops had been made accessible, and in 22.5% of the localities, fewer than 85% of the stops had been made accessible.				
Use of applications to improve public transportation accessibility	Ministry of Transportation	The State Comptroller's Office recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Commission for Equal Rights consider implementing recent technological developments to facilitate the independent mobility of persons with disabilities.				

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			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Smart transportation and flexible transport services	Ministry of Transportation	The Ministry of Transportation is exploring technological solutions to optimize transportation systems for persons with disabilities; however, their implementation has yet to commence.				

		The Extent of Deficiencies Rectifica in the Follow-Up Audit				
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Travel planning	Ministry of Transportation	The 2019 insights survey conducted by the Ministry of Transportation highlighted the following conclusions: the National Information Center requires the capability to fully support trip planning from the point of origin to the desired destination, including taxis and service taxis, with a focus on accessibility, as existing applications are not accessible to all individuals with disabilities. There is a need to add accessibility information for transportation modes in existing applications and improve the accuracy of arrival time data. Accessible transportation options, including intercity routes and taxis, should be publicized.				

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			The Exten		ncies Rectificat Iow-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Public Transportation Accessibility Division at the Ministry of Transportation – staffing	Ministry of Transportation	The Public Transportation Accessibility Division lacks staff beyond its director, who relies on two external consultants for routine operations. In the two years preceding the previous audit, plans were made to establish subunits within the division to address all its tasks; however, the Ministry did not advance the plan, leaving the division in its current structure.				



			The Exten	ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	tion Noted	
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Public Transport Accessibility Division at the Ministry of Transportation – Reports to the Ministry of Transportation	Ministry of Transportation	No reports from public transport operators were found in the Public Transport Accessibility Division in accordance with the Accessibility to Public Transport Services Regulations, nor did the Ministry of Transportation require information from operators on publicizing accessibility services, installing static signage, or handling public complaints. Nor did the Ministry request a list of accessible bus stops from local authorities, and the National Public Transport Authority failed to produce a semi-annual report on urban bus stops.				

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Public Transport Accessibility Division at the Ministry of Transportation – reporting on received complaints	Ministry of Transportation	An analysis of topics and information from the Ministry's annual reports revealed that accessibility is not addressed in these reports, across various categories such as analysis of transport modes and operator-level activities.				
Accessible taxis – licensing for operators	Ministry of Transportation	Approximately 950 licenses for accessible taxis have been issued, equating to a ratio of one accessible taxi per 1,600 persons with disabilities, compared to one non-accessible taxi per 340 persons without disabilities.				

			The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification I in the Follow-Up Audit			
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessible taxis – geographical distribution of the service	Ministry of Transportation	Of the 19 corporations holding public rights, seven are located in the Jerusalem area, four in the Tel Aviv and central regions, and six in other areas. The licenses for most of these corporations are set to expire within approximately five years from the conclusion of the previous audit. It was further found that some of these corporations did not utilize all the rights granted to them for operating accessible taxis. This impacted the availability of services for target populations and the quality of service, as reflected in public complaints, particularly in peripheral areas.				

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body		Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessible taxis – agreements with operators	Ministry of Transportation	The recruitment of accessible taxi operators was carried out without the Ministry of Transportation establishing criteria or threshold requirements. Any entity expressing interest in obtaining a license received it based on the number of licenses allocated by the Ministry for this purpose. The Ministry failed to establish agreements with the operators in order to regulate their obligations and rights regarding the provision of these services.				

			The Exten		ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessible taxi fare and trip log management	Ministry of Transportation	Despite corporations benefiting from a 95% discount on the license fee for operating a taxi (NIS 10,000 instead of NIS 240,000), deficiencies were noted, including charging high fares and failing to maintain trip logs as required by the Accessible Taxi Procedures of 2014.				
Training of accessible taxi drivers by corporations	Ministry of Transportation	No detailed guidelines have been established regarding the training of drivers, and the Ministry of Transportation has not verified whether accessible taxi drivers hold a certificate from corporate managers attesting to their training.				

			The Extent of Deficiencies Rectification Noted in the Follow-Up Audit			
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessible taxis – reporting to the Transportation Superintendent	Ministry of Transportation	The Transportation Superintendent did not require reports on accessible taxi rides, in the format specified by the Ministry of Transportation's procedure, from the corporations operating accessible taxis. As a result, the Ministry of Transportation lacks information regarding the scope and locations of these specialized rides. The absence of such reports from the corporations hinders the Ministry's ability to monitor the service provided by them to persons with disabilities and to verify compliance with its directives.				

			The Extent of Deficiencies Rectific in the Follow-Up Audit			
The Audit Chapter	Audit The Audited No	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
Accessible taxis – oversight and enforcement	Ministry of Transportation	The oversight unit within the Ministry of Transportation does not monitor the implementation of its guidelines by corporations operating accessible taxis, as required by the detailed provisions. Additionally, the unit lacks data on rides conducted by these corporations, including the number of rides, the fares charged, and the quality of service provided.				

					ncies Rectificat low-Up Audit	ion Noted
The Audit Chapter	The Audited Body	The Deficiency Noted in the Previous Audit	Not Rectified	Slightly Rectified	Significantly Rectified	Fully Rectified
taxis – ensuring service Transportation issua licen the l Tran learr follo com rece infor colle som corp had licen	When the issuance of licenses began, the Ministry of Transportation learned, following complaints received and information collected, that some corporations had pre-sold licenses to operate					
		accessible taxis				
	market pric However, th could not b substantiate the sales w conducted through por of attorney	through powers of attorney without actual transfer of				



All Deficiencies Arising in the Previous Report, Categorized by the Extent of Their Rectification

