

TARGET FIELD PROJECT TEAM RECOGNIZED FOR UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS FOR DISABLED FANS



Months before the first pitch, Target Field is getting ready to extend a warm welcome to fans of all kinds, including those with disabilities. Thanks to careful planning and thoughtful input from the Target Field Access Advisory Committee, the ballpark is on track to become one of the most accessible sports facilities in the country.

At the Minnesota Ballpark Authority's' December 4 Board meeting, Advisory Committee members Margot Imdieke-Cross and Jeff Bangsberg formally recognized this achievement by presenting the "Barrier Free Design Award" to the MBA and its project partners.

Early in the ballpark's design phase, the twenty-member Access Advisory Committee was formed to better serve fans with disabilities. At the Board meeting, both Bangsberg and Imdieke-Cross praised the project partners' unwavering commitment to acting on Committee's recommendations.

"The Ballpark has allowed the Committee to provide meaningful input on the accessibility features that we wanted both inside and outside of Target Field," said Imdieke-Cross.

The result, she said, is that the ballpark will comply with both the letter and the spirit of the accessibility codes. "It's been amazing to see a baseball team, a county, a city, the new ballpark owner, all work together to make sure that this goes far and above and beyond code . . . for us to be able to truly enjoy a baseball game," added Bangsberg.

The ballpark's commitment to accessibility will inform every aspect of the fan experience, from getting into and out of the facility, to buying tickets and concessions, to watching the game:

- Every one of the ballpark's entryways will be wheelchair accessible—far exceeding state and federal standards. To make this possible, the MBA worked with the Twins and Target Corporation to fund an extension of the ballpark's plaza to 1st Avenue.
- The ballpark will have improved drop-off zones and temporary parking, including at the home plate entrance.
- The area near the home plate entrance will also feature wider sidewalks and curb cuts. This seemingly simple innovation will make a big difference to mobility-impaired fans, who often struggle to find the curb cut in a big crowd of people, explained Bangsberg.
- Devices connected to the microphones at select ticket windows will allow agents to transmit directly into hearing aids.
- Speaker boxes at all ticket windows will be set below the agent's mouth so that those who are deaf or hard of hearing can read lips.
- Every seat in the ballpark will be within view of a captioning board.
- Every concession counter will be 34" high, so that all fans—whether in wheelchairs or not—can grab a snack anywhere in the ballpark.
- Sight lines guarantee that fans in wheelchairs won't miss the action during a big play, even if others are standing.
- On cold game days, radiant heaters in accessibility seating areas will keep fans in wheelchairs more comfortable.

At the Board meeting, Imdieke-Cross and Bangsberg also highlighted the decision to include dual elevators in the Vertical Circulation Building that connects transit users to the Hiawatha LRT platform.

"If that one elevator is not working . . . we won't be forced to go a half-mile to get to the accessible location up above," noted Imdieke-Cross.

In accepting the Barrier Free Design award, MBA Chair Steve Cramer credited the dedication and hard work

of the Committee in helping to make sure that Target Field would be fan friendly for everyone.

“We are honored to share this distinction with the Minnesota Twins and Populous, the project’s architect,” said MBA Chair Steve Cramer. “For everyone involved, I think there’s great pride and joy in the outcome. But it’s also a testament to the Committee and the work that it has done . . . to make sure that we all understand how important it is to address these sorts of concerns.”