



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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RECEIVED
2000 DEC - 7 PM 3:23
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager
From: Board of Election Commissioners *qsn*
Date: December 6, 2000
Subject: Council Order #1, dated 11/20/00, RE: report on the status of wheelchair accessibility at all polling places

In accordance with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's regulations for polling place accessibility, 950 CMR 51:00, all City of Cambridge polling sites were surveyed by the Election Commission and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities prior to the Fall 2000 elections. (A copy of the Commonwealth's "Polling Place and Registration Site Access" is attached for your information.) All polls, including temporary locations, were determined to be fully wheelchair accessible by means of a level entrance, ramp, elevator and/or wheelchair lift. Copies of site access reports for all polling places, including those which changed for the September Primary and the November General elections, were submitted to the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth before the elections.

Requirements for access mandate that at least one entrance to the polling place be wheelchair accessible and, if that entrance is not the main entrance, that signs direct voters to the accessible entrance. The entrance must be accessible by a ramp and/or wheelchair lift. The entrance must be either unlocked or, if security precautions make that impossible, include a mechanism such as a buzzer which prompts staff to unlock the accessible entrance when alerted by the buzzer. Working closely with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Election Commission made provisions for bringing all polling places into compliance with requirements. In some cases it involved making arrangements to have a buzzer installed at the accessible entrance, in others to produce signage directing voters to the accessible entrance, in still others to ensure that doors from the accessible entrance to the voting area were kept unlocked, and finally, to determine that all wheelchair lifts were in working order. Provisions for all locations were completed by Election Day, and all locations were deemed to be in compliance.

Unfortunately, in spite of having been serviced and tested days before the election, there was a mechanical failure of the wheelchair lift at one of the polling places on Election Day. We apologized in writing to one voter who wrote to us that she was inconvenienced and embarrassed by this incident. Future pollworker training will include contingency plans for dealing with similar unexpected mechanical failures so that the privacy and dignity of the voting process is guaranteed for all voters.

Attachment

POLLING PLACE AND REGISTRATION SITE ACCESS

LOCATION: _____ DATE: _____

WARD: _____ PRECINCT: _____

SURVEYOR: _____ SURVEYOR: _____

TITLE: _____ TITLE: _____

This checklist is based on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's regulations for polling place accessibility 950 CMR 51:00. To complete this survey, you will need a level and a tape measure. Please specify in the "Comments" section, below, any issues that need further clarification.

1. Site access (Path of Travel):

____ (a) The paths of travel to the polling place from the parking lot and from the street are clear, reasonably lit, and unobstructed.

____ (b) The paths have continuous common surfaces, not interrupted by steps or abrupt changes in level greater than 1/2 inch.

_____ (c) The path of travel is the same or a substantially similar distance for all persons entering the polling place.

Comments (City/Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):

2. Parking:

_____ (a) The required number of handicapped parking spaces is provided as follows:

<u>total no. of parking spaces</u>	<u>no. of handicapped spaces required</u>
1 - 25	1
26 - 50	2
51 - 75	3
76 - 100	4
101 - 150	5
151 - 200	6
201 - 300	7
301 - 400	8
401 - 500	9
501 - 1,000	2% of total
1,001 and over	20 plus 1 for each 100 over 1,000

(b) **for parking lots striped prior to 9/1/96:**

_____ (1) The handicapped parking spaces are 8 feet wide and have an adjacent 4 foot access aisle which is painted or striped yellow. The parking lot is reasonably lit.

_____ (2) The handicapped parking spaces are identified by a sign at each space or pair of spaces containing the International Symbol of Accessibility, with the top of the sign between 5 and 8 feet high above the ground.

(c) **for parking lots striped after 9/1/96:**

_____ (1) The handicapped parking spaces are 8 feet wide and have an adjacent 5 foot access aisle which is marked by high contrast painted lines or other high contrast delineation. The parking lot is reasonably lit.

_____ (2) Is there at least one "van accessible" space. (one in every eight accessible spaces must be van accessible, but no less than one) This space is 8 feet wide and has an adjacent 8-foot wide access aisle which is marked by high contrast painted lines or other high contrast delineation. The parking lot is reasonable lit.

_____ (3) Each handicapped parking space is identified by a sign containing the International Symbol of Accessibility, with the top of the sign between 5 and 8 feet high above the ground. Van accessible spaces shall include the words "Van Accessible."

_____ (d) Any sidewalk provided at the handicapped parking spaces has a curb cut (sidewalk ramp), with a slope no greater than 1:12, at each space or pair of spaces.

_____ (e) If no parking lot is available, there is at least one on-street parking space which is at least temporarily designated as a handicapped parking space during the election in front of the polling place.

Comments (City/Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):

3. Entrance

____ (a) At least one entrance to the building is accessible.

____ (b) The approach to the accessible entrance is a paved walk or ramp with a non-slip surface uninterrupted by steps or changes in level greater than 1/2 inch. There is a level space 60 inches from the door on both the exterior and interior sides.

____ (c) Lever handles or other accessible hardware are provided on doors, so that they may be operated with a closed fist.

____ (d) Doorways are at least 32 inches clear width. Door thresholds are no higher than 1/2 inch above the floor.

____ (e) If the main entrance is not accessible, signs direct people to the accessible entrance.

____ (f) If the accessible entrance is not the main entrance, it is unlocked and able to be used without assistance during the same hours as the main entrance.

Comments (City/Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):
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4. Ramps

____ (a) If the entrance has stairs, there is either a permanent or portable ramp. If permanent, the ramp has a slope no steeper than 1:12.

____ (b) The ramp is at least 48 inches wide.

_____ (c) The ramp has two pairs of handrails along both sides that are round or oval in shape and are set in pairs, one at a height between 34 and 38 inches and a lower one at a height between 18 and 20 inches.

____ (d) If the ramp is portable, it is as close to 1:12 as possible, and either handrails or wheel guards at least two inches high on both sides are provided.

(e) Please describe the portable ramp (if applicable):

Comments (City /Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):

5. Building Interior

____ (a) All interior doors, approaches, and ramps necessary to obtain access to the polling place comply with 3 and 4 above.

____ (b) An accessible route which provides a continuous unobstructed path at least 36 inches wide is maintained inside the polling place and shall coincide with the route for the general public.

Comments (City/Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):
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6. Voting Equipment

_____ (a) All Polls - A sample ballot will be posted on the wall no higher than 48 inches above the floor.

____ (b) Paper or Datavote ballots - At least one marking shelf (one for each party in a primary for Datavote) provides a clear space under it at least 30 inches wide, at least 27 inches clear to the underside, and no more than 32 inches high to the top. Any Datavote stylus handle is at least 1 ¼ inches thick and at least 3 inches long.

____(c) Voting machines - At least one machine has a sample ballot posted inside, not higher than 48 inches.

____ Voting levers are no higher than 48 inches above the floor, or a "reacher" is available for the upper levels.

Comments (City/Town Representative):	Comments (Monitor):

PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED SURVEY TO:

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH
ELECTIONS DIVISION**

ATTN: LAUREN GOLDBERG
1 Ashburton Place, Room 1719
Boston, MA 02108



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

December 18, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 00-123, regarding a report on the status of wheelchair accessibility at all polling places, received from the Board of Election Commissioners.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

5458

Consent Agenda Item#15

Awaiting Report Item Number
00-123, regarding a report on
the status of wheelchair
accessibility at all polling
places.

In City Council December 18, 2000

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