

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager
City of Cambridge

FROM: Gail Enman, Executive Director and ADA Coordinator
Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

RE: Compliance with ADA Requirements for Reasonable
Accommodations

DATE: December 3, 1992

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

In response to your request of 25 November 1992, I have prepared a summary of reasonable accommodations planned for, in progress, and provided by the City of Cambridge as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act which was implemented on January 26, 1992. These accommodations are characterized as structural, programmatic, and employment-related.

STRUCTURAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Non-complying curb ramps causing wheelchairs to flip over into traffic have been replaced in the entire Inman Square area.

Curb ramps were installed within crosswalks at Amherst Street and Massachusetts Avenue to provide pedestrian access to the accessible entrance at 77 Massachusetts Avenue on the MIT campus.

Curb ramps were installed along Amherst Street and at several intersections on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue in order to provide sidewalk access for an MIT graduate student who uses a wheelchair.

New sidewalks and curb ramps have been installed on both sides of Sherman Street, providing pedestrian access to Danehy Park and St. Peter's field.

A paved walkway to the highest point at Danehy Park will be constructed in order to provide access to the park's hilltop picnic area and its most panoramic views.

New accessible picnic areas with wheelchair seating are planned for installation throughout Danehy Park.

Playing fields and the seating areas adjacent to them at Danehy Park will be paved with materials permitting wheelchair access.

Brick sidewalks along the even-numbered side of Mellen Street have been replaced with concrete in order to eliminate uneven terrain caused by protruding tree roots and to provide safe access to the Lesley College campus from Massachusetts Avenue.

Non-complying curb ramps on Dawes Island, located at the intersection of Garden Street and Massachusetts Avenue, have been replaced with complying ramps, eliminating precarious pedestrian access conditions at that location.

A brick curb ramp at the intersection of Garden Street and Massachusetts Avenue has been repaired twice in order to eliminate the "bathtub effect" caused by the height of the curb and the slope of the terrain.

Curb ramps at the intersection of Concord and Garden Streets have been installed adjacent to the pedestrian walk signal and within the crosswalk to permit safe pedestrian access across a busy and formerly inaccessible intersection.

A privately-constructed mid-block curb ramp on Massachusetts Avenue was removed because it had been installed in the middle of a handicap parking space, causing persons otherwise legally parked in that space to incur a \$50.00 fine for obstructing a curb ramp.

Access signage has been installed at numerous public buildings, directing people to the buildings' accessible entrances and replacing signs in which the wheelchair logo was malproportioned.

Access signs have been re-stencilled on the pavement at City Hall, Public Works and the Green Street garage because the wheelchair logos faced in the wrong direction.

The Ryan Building in the Public Works yard has been ramped permanently to insure ready access during elections and throughout the year, and new, complying doors have been installed at the building's entrance.

A wheelchair-accessible portable stage has been acquired for citywide use in order to provide stage access for public events, performances and celebrations.

Two accessibility projects were recently completed in a cooperative effort with the Cambridge Housing Authority, enhancing pedestrian access by providing handrails at two ramps and regrading storm drains in the path of travel at the Manning Apartments which house numerous persons with disabilities.

The entrance to the LBJ apartments was regraded to provide permanent accessibility to this CHA elderly housing complex which also houses a neighborhood health clinic and serves as a polling site.

Curb ramps are planned for installation along Cambridge Street from Inman Square to the Courthouse, along Massachusetts Avenue from Porter Square to Harvard Square and from Norfolk Street to Main Street, and along River Street from Memorial Drive to Massachusetts Avenue.

Signage directing the public to accessible restrooms at Cambridge Hospital, the Macht Building, and the Cahill Building has been installed at inaccessible restrooms, and the accessible restrooms themselves are so-designated.

Accessible restrooms have been constructed at Cambridge Hospital and the Cahill Building, eliminating the need for patrons to travel from the Emergency Room to the seventh floor of the hospital in order to gain access to a restroom.

PROGRAMMATIC ACCOMMODATIONS

The Registry of Motor Vehicles has been petitioned to allow persons with disabilities to submit photographs along with their Handicap Placard applications instead of appearing in person at a Registry office to be photographed. The subsequent change in Registry policy resulted from an appeal of a Cambridge resident to the Commission office and will directly benefit the most seriously disabled members of the Cambridge community as well as the state as a whole.

Persons with temporary disabilities are eligible to receive temporary handicap parking permits for the duration of their disabling conditions through a program instituted by the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. One hundred eleven temporary permits have been issued to date in 1992, and the Police and Traffic and Parking Departments have recognized these permits as having standing equivalent to handicap plates and placards.

Continental Cablevision has instituted a "voiceover" for local access television programming in order to provide the City calendar of activities and other newsworthy items not only in bulletin board print but in audio format for persons with visual disabilities.

The Cambridge Cable Office is researching technology to provide real-time captioning and open captioning for live and taped broadcasts of City activities including City Council meetings and locally-produced video programming.

Persons with Registry plates or placards are eligible for handicap parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of their homes if they have no off-street parking options. The resident tow program, operated by the Commission in conjunction with the Department of Traffic and Parking, has resulted in the installation of dozens of handicapped parking spaces in 1992.

On-street handicap parking has been installed throughout Cambridge based on consumer requests in 1992.

The Public Works Department's snow clearing program to insure compliance with the provisions of the snow removal ordinance is in effect in 1992 for Cambridge's financially needy, disabled homeowners.

At the request of a disabled resident of Appleton Street, the timeline for placing trash at the curb has been extended in order to meet the requirements of her caregiver's schedule.

A review of municipal buildings is currently underway in order to identify meeting space for a monthly public meeting which fulfills physical accessibility requirements, including accessible restrooms, has handicap parking, is near accessible public transportation, and is within reasonable geographic distance for a resident of East Cambridge who travels by battery-operated wheelchair and requires an accessible sidewalk route from East Cambridge to the meeting's destination. The additional requirement is that the meeting space also accommodate the special needs of a person with a mental disability which places extreme limitations upon the types of spaces possible for meetings and the method of accessing those spaces.

Custodians were reassigned in order to provide access for an evening meeting at a municipal building ordinarily locked after hours.

EMPLOYMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Automatic door openers were installed at a municipal building's accessible entrance in order to accommodate an employee's mobility requirements.

Reserved handicap parking was installed adjacent to an employee's worksite in order to facilitate entry and exit from the building.

A brick walkway leading from handicap parking to a building's accessible entrance was replaced with concrete to enhance safe mobility.

An accommodation was scheduled to be implemented for an employment candidate who subsequently declined the offer of employment. Florescent lighting was to have been converted to incandescent lighting in the workplace.

Two employees with visual disabilities received magnifying implements to ease eye strain.

A non-complying ramp leading from reserved handicap parking to a municipal building's elevator was replaced with a complying ramp.

In the planning stage are structural modifications at municipal buildings which have no accessible restrooms but currently are frequented by employees and volunteers with physical disabilities.

Adjusted work schedules have been instituted to meet two employees' special needs associated with their disabilities.

An aide was hired to assume some of an employee's marginal job functions.

An employee with environmental allergies has received cleaning and maintenance accommodations.

This list not exhaustive but is representative of the efforts of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Public Works Department, and various other City departments and non-City entities to accommodate the general public and Cambridge employees with disabilities since January, 1992. It should be noted that ADA training efforts for Cambridge employees have only been completed at the Police Department, the Community Development Department, two divisions of the Department of Human Service Programs, and with management and administrators of the Hospital and School Department. Extensive training is required in order to inform Cambridge employees of their obligations to provide reasonable accommodations to the public under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and their rights as employees with disabilities under the legislation. Increased education and outreach will undoubtedly result in a multitude of requests for accommodations as employees and members of the general public learn about and assert their rights under the law. Since the obligation to accommodate is an ongoing one, it is likely that requests for accommodations will continue in the future indefinitely.

Please let me know if this information fulfills your needs and whether you desire periodic updates of the status of reasonable accommodations initiated by my office in conjunction with ADA compliance.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

January 4, 1993

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Attached, for your information, is an update of the City's progress in reaching compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Future updates will be provided to the Council periodically.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a large, stylized, and somewhat illegible signature that appears to be "Robert W. Healy".

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Attachment

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM #2

S-5

Update on the City's progress in reaching
compliance with requirements of the
Americans with Disabilities Act.

In City Council,

January 4, 1993

Placed on file