

Commission for Accessibility

Meeting Agenda

Monday, April 11, 2022 5:00PM

Via Zoom (access information below). Should someone need a special accommodation in order to participate in this meeting please contact Tony Phillips at 203 807-4524.

Policy: Commission for Accessibility meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.

5:00 PM. Call to Order

Public Comment

Review Minutes from 03/07/2022

Review of Town Accessibility Issues.

Town Handicapped Parking

Adjourn



Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut **Transition Plan**

Prepared by the Institute for Human Centered Design
Collated by the Commission for Accessibility

Part A - Executive Summary
Part B - Evaluation of Non-Discriminatory Policies and
Practices in Programs, Services and Activities
Part C – Self-Evaluation Summary

First Selectman's Copy
March 21, 2022

Town of Ridgefield

ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

[Project Description](#)

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[Recent/Annual
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Project Description

The Town of Ridgefield is committed to providing equal access to its public programs, services, facilities, and activities for all citizens including those with disabilities. To achieve this end, the Town has developed an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for the public right-of-way, buildings, parks, and Town services, programs, and activities in compliance with federal and state law.

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To satisfy the requirements set forth by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (CFR 28 Part 35), this ADA Transition Plan intends to:

- **Identify physical and communicative barriers** in Town of Ridgefield's public facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs, services or activities to individuals with disabilities;
- **Describe the methods** to be used to make the facilities, programs, services or activities accessible;
- **Provide a schedule** for making necessary modifications to provide better access and achieve compliance; and
- **Identify the public officials responsible** for implementation of the plan.

The Town of Ridgefield's [ADA Notice](#) provides more information on the precedent for ADA compliance and the Town's legal responsibilities.

Documents

The Town's Final Adopted **ADA Transition Plan** is now available. Please send any questions to Tony Phillips, ADA Coordinator, Director of Social Services, by email at socialservices@ridgefieldct.org.

Executive Summaries

Town Locations & Facilities

Town Outdoor Spaces & Facilities
Public Schools, Facilities, Outdoor Amenities
Priorities for ADA Transition Plan

On the following two pages is an **INDEX** for locating specific parts of the Transition Plan. Upon downloading the T.P. on your computer, you will see a page number at the top of the screen. The Index is in alphabetical order by section and lists the page number for each study allowing access by scrolling to that listing. If accessing multiple studies, you can print the 2 index pages for your convenience.

Note to Stakeholders and Public. The estimated costs appearing on the lists was submitted by IHCD, the contractor that completed the T.P., and was based upon a commercial cost-estimating program. It should not be assumed these estimates reflect actual local costs, which can only be determined by the town's purchasing procedures.

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Recent/Annual Accomplishments

The Town of Ridgefield adopted the ADA Transition Plan on XXX XX, 2022. The Town will provide annual reports of progress in removing barriers to accessibility from the public right of way as identified in the ADA Transition Plan. Annual reports will be provided to The Board of Selectmen and posted on this website during the first quarter of the following year.

Project Schedule

The Town of Ridgefield contracted with The Institute of Human Centered Design (IHCD), Boston, MA, to prepare the town wide Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. IHCD is home to the [New England ADA Center](#), one of 10 regional ADA Centers comprising the [ADA National Network](#). Since 1991, the ADA National Network has provided information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), tailored to meet the needs of business, government and individuals at local, regional and national levels.

How Can You Be Involved?

Have an idea about how to make Town of Ridgefield's public right of way more accessible to people with limited mobility, vision, hearing or cognitive disabilities? Here are ways to let us know!

There are positions open on the Commission for Accessibility for individuals interested in furthering these efforts of ensuring accessibility.

- **Ongoing Public Involvement** - We welcome ongoing public comments and suggestions on our ADA Transition Plan and notification of barriers that you may observe. You may comment on the

Plan or observed barriers by contacting the ADA Coordinator or the ADA Transition Plan Project Manager.

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- **Contacts regarding the ADA Transition Plan -**
 - Tony Philips, ADA Coordinator/ Social Services Director
 - socialservices@ridgefieldct.org
 - Don Ciota, Chairman, Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility
 - socialservices@ridgefieldct.org
- The Town would especially value input from:

Individuals with disabilities;

- Senior citizens;
- Individuals that encounter accessibility barriers such as parents/family members/friends of individuals with disabilities;
- Members of groups that provide services or transportation to individuals with disabilities;
- Individuals with experience and knowledge of ADA planning and requirements;
- Interested Ridgefield residents.

Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility

The Commission for Accessibility includes members of the community whose function is to advise the Board of Selectmen on issues related to issues of accessibility and others focusing on persons with disabilities. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability, which is defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Role of the Commission for Accessibility

- Provided advice, identify accessibility barriers and recommend accessibility improvements to new and existing City programs, services and facilities as it relates to Title II of the ADA.
- Developed relationships with other local organizations serving individuals with disabilities as identified by the ADA.
- Supported City public engagement efforts for the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan process including review of engagement tools and materials for accessibility.
- Future support of Town staff on ADA Transition Plan implementation and future Plan updates.

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- Supported City public engagement efforts for the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan process including review of engagement tools and materials for accessibility.

The Commission meets on a monthly basis, currently via Zoom. It's meeting schedule is published on the Town website. The public is welcome to attend.

Town Staff Contacts

For questions regarding the ADA Transition Plan described above, please contact:

ADA Coordinator/Social Services Director

Tony Phillips
 400 Main Street
 Ridgefield, CT 06877

Commission for Accessibility

Don Ciota, Chairman
 400 Main Street
 Ridgefield, CT 06877

Other ADA Resources: Grievance Procedure

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities programs or benefits by the Town of Ridgefield.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews, or other means, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

Complaints should be sent to:

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Tony Phillips, ADA Coordinator
400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Information updated 03/20/2022

Town Handicapped Parking.

This is a chronic issue that arises regularly. Recently, Tony related an experience at a Tiger Hollow sports event regarding widespread disregard for Handicapped Parking. The following has been compiled to see how this issue is handled elsewhere in the interest of making suggestions to the BOS for improving compliance.

Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility Study on ADA Handicapped Parking Regulations and Enforcement.

Compiled by Don Ciota. Chairman

April 6, 2022

Volunteer Enforcement of Handicapped Parking Laws

SB 409 (2010 regular session) would have required the commissioner, together with police departments in three municipalities, to conduct a pilot program to use civilian volunteers to enforce handicapped parking laws. The police department of each municipality selected to take part in the program would invite its residents to participate, and the police chief would select volunteers with the approval of the town's legislative body. DMV would report on the program and its results. SB 409 was favorably reported by the transportation, planning and development, and public safety committees, but died in the Senate.

DMV STUDY

PA 09-187, § 38, required the commissioner, in consultation with municipal police departments, to review and evaluate alternative methods of enforcing handicapped parking laws in areas that police officer usually do not patrol. The study, issued January 15, 2010, is available on-line at <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/handicapparking.pdf>.

DMV stated in the report that it surveyed members of the police chiefs association and reviewed procedures in other states. The survey suggested several possible ways to improve enforcement. These include:

Enforcement Sweeps

Noting that most towns issue fewer than 100 tickets a year for violations of the handicapped parking laws, several police chiefs suggested conducting three or four enforcement sweeps a year for violations of these laws. These sweeps also would serve to raise public awareness of the issue.

Media Campaign

Several chiefs suggested a public relations campaign, similar to the "Ticket or Click It" seat belt campaign, to raise public awareness of the problem. Such a campaign could occur at the same time as the enforcement sweeps. The chiefs proposed eliciting suggestions for the campaign from state residents and disability activists and organizations.

Enforcement by Citizen Volunteers

Some towns, such as Huntington, New York, use volunteers to issue affidavits to violators. In that program, which is non-confrontational, volunteers in cars photograph possible violations. They later send a card with the photo, date, and location of the offense, and a sworn statement that the vehicle was violating the law, to the program coordinator. The coordinator files and processes the affidavits in the courts.

Although some respondents to the survey said they used non-police officers to enforce parking laws, others expressed concern about citizens' authority to issue citations, or to access the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) COLLECT (Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communications Teleprocessing) system to verify parking permit information. (As noted above, legislation to create a civilian volunteer program was proposed, but failed, in 2010.)

DPS "COLLECT" System

Several chiefs said there should be an easier way to verify handicapped parking permit information in DPS's COLLECT system. The report said DPS and DMV would have to work together to identify ways to verify the information.

Window Stickers

Another suggestion was to issue window stickers, rather than placards. This would help in those cases where a police officer issues a citation, only to discard it when the officer learns that the individual had a valid placard that he

or she failed to display properly. But the DMV study notes that stickers could be a problem for residents driving out of state, because other states use placards.

Increased Fines

Although PA 09-197 increased fines for violations of state handicapped parking laws, the DMV study noted that more than half the tickets issued for these violations are issued under municipal parking ordinances. The study recommended increasing the penalties under these ordinances.

1. [Home](#)

Illegal Use of Handicapped Parking Space - CT Law Updated

Illegal Use of Handicapped Parking Space - CT Law Updated

The Simsbury Board of Selectmen has declared June 2014 Handicapped Parking Awareness Month. The Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission continue promoting the rules for properly using handicapped parking spaces to individuals and companies. Persons with disabilities continue to voice their concerns to the Aging and Disability Commission about difficulties in parking their vehicles in designated handicapped spaces around our town.

State of Connecticut Senate Bill No. 1040 Rev A and corresponding new law Public Act 13-282 enacted October 1, 2013 addressed the illegal use of handicapped parking spaces as follows:

Any municipal police officer who observes a motor vehicle parked in violation of this subsection shall issue a written warning or a summons for such violation.

Mike Jennings, a person with disabilities and member of the Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission was a driving force in support of the change in PA 13-282.

New signs posted and parking spaces painted to clearly mark the handicapped parking space have been updated around town. A handicapped parking space is for people with disabilities. The handicapped parking placard is issued to an Individual who must be in the vehicle when the placard is used in order

to park in this 'reserved' space. Commission members observe cars even with a handicapped license plate or a placard not following proper parking rules.

An **access aisle** is the striped area next to the parking space and is strictly off limits for parking to anyone, regardless of whether or not they have a handicapped license plate or placard. The access aisle must be in place in order to ensure that people who use wheelchairs have room to transfer in and out of their vehicles. Only the handicapped parking space itself is reserved for those individuals who have proper identification on their vehicles (i.e. placards, tag, or plate) indicating that they are authorized to park in these designated areas. The access aisle next to the parking space is NOT a parking area.

Parking in a handicapped parking space ...is 60 seconds too long, if you are not a person with disabilities!

Citizens may report violations of handicapped parking space to the Simsbury Police Department by calling the routine number (860) 658-3100. The Simsbury Police Department supports the efforts of Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission in educating the public. Fines can be imposed in the range of \$50 to \$150 for violation of handicapped parking regulations as well as cars being towed.

If you own a parking lot, you're probably aware the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has requirements to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same rights to access private and public spaces as anyone else. Title III (public accommodations and commercial facilities) and Title II (state and local governments) of the ADA specifically cover rules and guidelines for accessible parking spaces.

WHO ENFORCES ADA PARKING?

[ADA compliance](#) is enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). In addition to the DOJ, states and local governments may have their requirements for accessible parking, and local authorities may be responsible for inspection of construction and vehicle code offenses.

Federal law allows fines of up to \$75,000 for the first violation and \$150,000 for additional ADA violations.

States may impose additional penalties for ADA violations. In California, [a violation of the ADA](#) is considered a civil rights violation and comes with a minimum penalty of \$4,000 plus attorney fees.

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) enforces state disability laws.

There is another enforcer to worry about when it comes to ADA parking lot violations. Although an "unofficial" enforcer, this entity may be more problematic for a business owner than the State and Federal agencies.

The public.

CA AWARDS DAMAGES IN ADA LAWSUITS

While Federal law prohibits plaintiffs from profiting in an ADA discrimination lawsuit, CA does allow for the payout of damages to plaintiffs. And that can lead to "serial plaintiffs" who repeatedly file for damages.

What if accessible parking spaces are in disrepair or not maintained properly (i.e. snow is dumped into the spaces)?

Accessible parking spaces, like other accessible features, must be maintained in good working order so they can be used by individuals with disabilities. Access to parking spaces includes the access aisles, and routes serving these parking spaces must be maintained in good repair and kept clear of snow, ice, and fallen leaves.

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Anthony Phillips is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89849746946?pwd=am1LeU11REdmU1U1N2lBakJ2QWU3UT09>

Meeting ID: 898 4974 6946

Passcode: 924263

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