

**Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 11, 2023**

Meeting Via Zoom

In Attendance: Maureen Culhane, Michael Londrigan, Dave Choplinski, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota

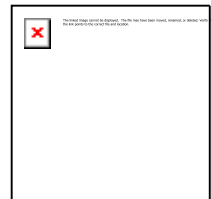
Call to Order: 5:00 PM

Public Comment:

Michael began this part of the meeting with what has become a regular concern for the community, parking. As background information, the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) has 5 sections or titles. Title II, simply put, refers to town or government-owned facilities and programs; Title III, Public Access, refers to privately owned properties. Michael called to the Commission attention the parking lot of a series of strip stores, a Title III property, that appears to have only a single handicapped designated spot without adjacent stripped areas, which allow for wheel chair side access.

The following is a publication of ADA requirements and a working formula for determining the number of spots required.

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section



Accessible Parking Spaces

When a business or State or local government restripes parking spaces in a parking lot or parking structure (parking facilities), it must provide accessible parking spaces as required by the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards).

In addition, businesses or privately-owned facilities that provide goods or services to the public have a continuing ADA obligation to remove barriers to access in existing parking facilities when it is readily achievable to do so. Because restriping is relatively inexpensive, it is readily achievable in most cases. State and local government facilities also have an ongoing ADA obligation to make their programs accessible, which can require providing accessible parking.

This compliance brief provides information about the features of accessible car and van parking spaces and how many accessible spaces are required when parking facilities are restriped.

**One of six accessible parking spaces,
but always at least one, must be van-accessible.**

The required number of accessible parking spaces must be calculated separately for each parking facility, not calculated based on the total number of parking spaces provided on a site. One of six (or fraction of six) accessible parking spaces, but always at least one, must be van accessible.

Parking for hospital outpatient facilities, rehabilitation facilities, outpatient physical therapy facilities or residential facilities have substantially different requirements for accessibility (see 2010 Standards 208.2).

Minimum Number of Accessible Parking Spaces

2010 Standards (208.2)

Total Number of Parking Spaces Provided in Parking Facility (per facility)	(Column A) Minimum Number of Accessible Parking Spaces (car and van)	Minimum Number of Van- Accessible Parking Spaces (1 of six accessible spaces)
1 to 25	1	1

26 to 50	2	1
51 to 75	3	1
76 to 100	4	1
101 to 150	5	1
151 to 200	6	1
201 to 300	7	2
301 to 400	8	2
401 to 500	9	2
500 to 1000	2% of total parking provided in each lot or structure	1/6 of Column A*
1001 and over	20 plus 1 for each 100 over 1000	1/6 of Column A*
*one out of every 6 accessible spaces		

Location

Accessible parking spaces must be located on the shortest accessible route of travel to an accessible facility entrance. Where buildings have multiple accessible entrances with adjacent parking, the accessible parking spaces must be dispersed and located closest to the accessible entrances.

When accessible parking spaces are added in an existing parking lot or structure, locate the spaces on the most level ground close to the accessible entrance. An accessible route must always be provided from the accessible parking to the accessible entrance. An accessible route never has curbs or stairs, must be at least 3 feet wide, and has a firm, stable, slip-resistant surface. The slope along the accessible route should not be greater than 1:12 in the direction of travel.

Accessible parking spaces may be clustered in one or more facilities if equivalent or greater accessibility is provided in terms of distance from the accessible entrance, parking fees, and convenience. Van-accessible parking spaces located in parking

garages may be clustered on one floor (to accommodate the 98-inch minimum vertical height requirement).

Features of Accessible Parking Spaces



Accessible Parking Spaces with 60-inch Minimum Width Access Aisle for Cars

Notes:

1. Parking space identification sign with the international symbol of accessibility complying with 703.7.2.1 mounted 60 inches minimum above the ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign.
2. If the accessible route is located in front of the parking space, install wheel stops to keep vehicles from reducing the clear width of the accessible route below 36 inches.
3. Two parking spaces may share an access aisle except for angled parking spaces (see below).
Access aisle width is at least 60 inches, must be at the same level and the same length as the adjacent parking space(s) it serves, maximum slope in all directions is 1:48, and access aisle must connect to an accessible route to the building. Ramps must not extend into the access aisle.
4. Parking space shall be 96 inches wide minimum, marked to define the width, and maximum slope in all directions is 1:48.
5. Boundary of the access aisle must be clearly marked so as to discourage parking in it. (State or local laws may address the color and manner that parking spaces and access aisles are marked.)

Additional Notes:

Where parking spaces are marked with lines, width measurements of parking spaces and access aisles are to centerlines, except for the end space which may include the full width of the line.

Access aisles may be located on either side of the parking space except for angled van parking spaces which must have access aisles located on the passenger side of the parking spaces.

Additional Features of Van-Accessible Parking Spaces

Van-accessible parking spaces incorporate the features of accessible parking spaces on the previous page and require the following additional features: a "van accessible" designation on the sign; different widths for the van parking space or the access aisle; and at least 98 inches of vertical clearance for the van parking space, access aisle, and vehicular route to and from the van-accessible space. The first image below shows a van-accessible space with a 60-inch minimum width access aisle. The second image shows a van-accessible space with a 96-inch minimum width access aisle. Both configurations are permitted and requirements for van-accessible signage and vertical clearance apply to both configurations.



**Van-Accessible Parking Space with
60-inch Minimum Width Access Aisle**

Notes (for illustrations above and below):

1. Parking space identification sign with the international symbol of accessibility and designation, "van accessible." Note, where four or fewer parking spaces are provided on a site, a sign identifying the accessible space, which must be van-accessible, is not required.
2. Vertical clearance of 98 inches minimum to accommodate van height at the vehicle parking space, the adjacent access aisle, and on the vehicular route to and from the van-accessible space.
3. Van parking space must be 132 inches wide minimum with an adjacent 60-inch wide minimum access aisle. A van parking space of 96 inches wide minimum width an adjacent 96-inch wide minimum access aisle is also permitted (see below).



Van-Accessible Parking Space with 96-inch Minimum Width Access Aisle

**Where four or fewer parking spaces are provided on a site,
signage identifying the van-accessible parking space is not required.**

Resources

For more information about the ADA, please visit our website or call our toll-free number.

ADA Website

www.ADA.gov

To receive e-mail notifications when new ADA information is available, visit the ADA Website's home page and click the link near the bottom of the right-hand column.

ADA Information Line

800-514-0301 (Voice)

and

800-514-0383 (TTY)

Call Monday – Wednesday, Friday 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Thursday 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) to speak with an ADA Specialist. Calls are confidential.

24 hours a day to order publications by mail.

Since the subject property is privately owned, Michael has decided to personally write a letter of concern to the landlord requesting attention to this matter. He will keep the Commission informed as to the result of that outreach.

The ADA is a powerful law that mandates access for persons with disabilities. It is, however, a complaint-based law. Earlier this year the U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Connecticut announced an agreement with a restaurant on Main Street:

ADA Settlement Will Make Ridgefield Restaurant More Accessible

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Connecticut

Vanessa Roberts Avery, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, today announced that Baja Cocina, a restaurant located at 426 Main Street in Ridgefield, has agreed to make changes to become more accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. The changes are required under a settlement agreement signed by Ridgefield Taco LLC, the owner of Baja Cocina, and the United States under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The settlement resolves a complaint made with the U.S. Department of Justice that claims that Baja Cocina is not physically accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. Under the agreement, Baja Cocina must work with its landlord to provide an accessible parking space for the restaurant. It must also continue to provide curbside service to persons with mobility disabilities and ensure that it provides accessible dining surfaces in its outdoor dining area. Inside the restaurant, Baja Cocina must install ADA-compliant signage and make changes to its accessible bathroom, including relocating the toilet flush controls, relocating a grab bar, and relocating a soap dispenser.

Under federal law, private entities that own or operate places of “public accommodation,” including restaurants, are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of disability. The ADA authorizes the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate complaints and undertake periodic compliance reviews of covered entities. The Justice Department is also authorized to commence a civil lawsuit in federal court in any case that involves a pattern or practice of discrimination or that raises issues of general public importance, and to seek injunctive relief, monetary damages, and civil penalties.

U.S. Attorney Avery noted the cooperation of Baja Cocina’s owner in resolving this matter without litigation.

Notable is the DOJ's notice at the end encouraging the public to contact them for information or to make a complaint. This Commission also offers to provide assistance to persons with questions about access.

Other issues were also discussed, such as a curb that prevents wheelchair access at the Rec Center. Maureen told us of the positive support from the Ridgefield Police Department in following up with handicapped access enforcement at Tiger Hollow.

Questions were raised about the status of the Transition Plan, which was created from our town-wide assessment. It was announced an upcoming meeting with the First Selectman has been scheduled. The outcome of that meeting will follow in future minutes.

MOTION: To allow the chairman to speak on topics related to Accessibility with the First Selectman and BOS. **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Discussion on Ridgefield Schools Transition Plan

Jessica DiValentino, Transition Plan Coordinator Special Education Teacher, Ridgefield Schools has requested our participation in this event.

Transition planning for special needs students is a critical component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law in the United States that ensures students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education. Transition planning is specifically addressed in IDEA's Part B, which pertains to the education of children with disabilities from ages 3 to 21.

The following pamphlet, whose aim is to encourage family participation in this program. has been prepared by the Commission to aid in this worthy endeavor.



Commission for Accessibility

INTRODUCTION to TRANSITION PLANNING

This paper has been prepared by the Commission for Accessibility (CfA) as an introduction to the Transition Plan, an important resource which aims to maximize the individualized educational and social plans for your student. The Commission encourages you to take a part in the planning of this worthy endeavor knowing you and your child will be working with a dedicated and professional Ridgefield Schools staff, who share your interests in optimizing this experience.

The CfA is an advisory body to the Ridgefield Board of Selectman. The Commission advocates for accessibility and inclusion for all persons with disabilities, and seeks to educate the community to the rights and responsibilities memorializing such rights in civil rights and other legislation. The CfA applauds both families and school staff for the dedication, concern, and love that goes into a many years-long process that seeks to help the student develop and achieve all of which they are capable.

This introduction to *Transition Planning* was prepared for parents and family members of students with disabilities by the Town of Ridgefield Commission for Accessibility (CfA). Families new to this Transition Plan program may question what the future may hold for their child as graduation day approaches. As a child progresses through the school system it is natural to contemplate what comes next. Rest assured there are powerfully laid plans to continue the progress of preparing your child for that day.



INTRODUCTION to TRANSITION PLANNING

All the information contained herein comes from Connecticut sources. The descriptions of the programs listed are based upon what is listed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The specifics on how all this is made a part of your child's individual program can be explained by staff.

You will read about federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that mandate these programs. This and other legislation addressing the needs of the disabled are civil rights laws passed by Congress and thought of by this Commission as being laws of decency and acceptance, which reflect positively on our society.

There are many online listings of resources for these topics that go into additional detail. The Ridgefield school staff professionals are an invaluable source in guiding new families through this system.

The CfA can be contacted through the office of the Town ADA Coordinator, Tony Philips. We welcome the opportunity to be of your assistance.

Don Ciota, Chairman
Commission for Accessibility

Christine Santori, Commissioner
Commission for Accessibility

Commission for Accessibility

Connecticut Transition Task Force

Dear Parents and Family Members,

One of our most important and precious roles is to raise our children to become responsible adults. We all have many questions about their future regarding self-advocacy, employment, college, training, independent living, and community participation. We want the transition from high school to young adult life to go well. We need to plan early.

The following pages contain information that will help you play a meaningful role in guiding your child for the future. Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA 2004), transition planning is required as part of your child's IEP (Individualized Education Program). Transition planning begins when a child turns 14* or earlier, if determined appropriate by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). Be proactive to insure goals for self-advocacy, college, training, employment, and/or independent living are included in the IEP.

You are a key player in your child's transition planning. We urge you to actively participate in these PPT meetings during the high school years. You bring a wealth of information about your child's abilities at home that only you can share. It is very important that you communicate with teachers anything that you feel may be essential to your child's future.

Please read this handbook thoughtfully and encourage your teenager to do the same. With your commitment, guidance, and support, your child will be given the educational foundation and tools needed to confidently transition into the adult world. As a parent, promoting self-advocacy and empowering your child to speak up is critical for the road ahead.

Sincerely,

Parent Dissemination and Training Subcommittee, Connecticut Transition Task Force

Connecticut State Department of Education

This document outlines the Connecticut State Department of Education's guidelines and requirements for secondary transition planning for students with disabilities. Here are the key points:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligibility:

- Students remain eligible for special education services under IDEA until the end of the school year they turn 22 or until they graduate with a regular diploma, whichever comes first.

Transition Services Requirements:

- Transition services are required from the first Individualized Education Program (IEP) when the child turns 14, or earlier if deemed appropriate by the planning and placement team (PPT).
- IEP should include measurable postsecondary goals and transition services tailored to the child's needs, covering education, employment, and independent living.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Membership for Secondary Transition Services:

- PPT meetings discussing postsecondary goals and transition services should invite the student with a disability and, with parental consent, a representative from agencies providing transition services.

Student Success Plan (SSP) Implementation:

- SSP is created annually for each student from grade six, focusing on academic and career choices.
- Goals include fostering mentor/advisor interactions, monitoring progress, developing 21st-century skills, and engaging students in academic, career, and social/emotional activities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP):

- IEP includes present academic and functional levels, measurable annual goals, progress measurement, special education and related services, and accommodations.
- Secondary Transition requirements include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and transition services.

Summary of Performance (SOP):

- A public agency must provide a summary of a student's academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations for meeting postsecondary goals.

Addressing Gaps and Purpose of SOP:

- Students address skill gaps through instruction, work experiences, and accommodations.
- SOP aims to improve post-high school outcomes, document disabilities, assess the current impact of disabilities, justify accommodations, and enhance self-advocacy skills.

Developing the SSP:

- Involves various personnel, including special education, school nurses, counselors, and related services personnel.
- Encourages active involvement of students in writing the SOP, enhancing self-determination, and using the SOP as a lifelong learning process.

Implementation and Collaboration:

- Encourages collaboration between different plans (SSP, IEP, SOP) and emphasizes the role of adult mentor/advisors in making appropriate referrals.

This comprehensive approach aims to ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary support to transition successfully from school to post-school activities, including education, employment, and independent living.

End.

MOTION: To accept the following Commission meeting dates for 2024 to be held via Zoom until further notice.

Proposed Meeting Dates for 2024:

January 8	February 12	March 11
April 8	May 6	June 10
July (none)	August (none)	September 9
October 7	November 18	December 9

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Adjourn: 6:30 PM

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota, Chairman