

Based on "Checklist for Existing Facilities version 2.1; The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal, August 1995"

Survey conducted at Jones Library on April 25, 2006 with help from Deb Waldron, Chair of the Amherst Disability Access Advisory Committee

Summarized June 23, 2006 by Bonnie Isman, Library Director

Priority 1. Accessible approach and entrance

A. The ramped library entrance allows the public to enter without requiring use of stairs, and the doorways are 34" wide. The door with ramp has 18" clearance on the side next to the handle. Exterior and inside doors have motorized door openers. Ramp access is level with the driveway. The ramp is more than 3 feet wide, is sloped at the appropriate angle, and there is a 5 foot long level landing at top and bottom. A sturdy metal railing is provided along one side of the ramp. The entrance door and thresholds meet handicapped access requirements.

B. The staff parking area in the driveway includes 2 parking places posted with the international symbol for handicapped access, though the spaces are somewhat narrower than regulation. These spaces are located near the entry ramp. The public parking lot across the street offers 2 spaces for handicapped parking, including space for lift-equipped vans. Library maintenance personnel monitor the driveway parking area and alert the Amherst Police Department for enforcement.

Needed:

- Sign at the center entrance directing people to accessible ramped entry.
- Hand railings at center entrance.
- Non-slip flooring at center entrance.

Priority 2. Access to goods and services

A. All inside public spaces are on an accessible route of travel, and five-foot circles or T-spaces are provided for wheelchairs to reverse direction. Doorways have at least 32" clear openings. Most aisles and pathways to materials and services are at least 36" wide. Carpeting is low pile and secured to the floors.

B. Two elevators provide access to all public floors in the library. Elevator controls meet access requirements. An emergency intercom automatically dials 911 for assistance. An interior ramp connects two levels on the ground floor for access to non-fiction book stacks and meeting rooms.

C. There are seven sets of stairs in the library. All but the emergency stairs are carpeted. Non-slip treads are located at the top of three stairs in the new addition to alert people with low vision of the change in floor level. Handrails are provided.

D. Emergency alarm systems include both flashing lights and audible signals. Permanent signs are mounted 60" or higher from the floors, next to doorways, and at the tops of doorways. Signs mounted over 80" are in letters at least 3" high.

E. Seating space for wheelchairs is available in all reading rooms. Reading tables and service counters, including Check out Desks, are between 28” and 36” high. One wide study carrel is available in the AV Department for fully motorized wheelchairs needing extra clearance.

Exceptions: A waiver has been granted by the Architectural Access Board for narrower aisles in the fiction/mystery book stacks, due to the support pillars used in the original construction of the building in 1928. Also, one of the two public elevators was granted a waiver due to the historic nature of the main entry into the library building. It is narrower than required for new construction.

Needed:

- Pathways in the children’s rooms must be cleared to create 36” aisles, keeping the area free of chairs and toys blocking the way.
- The reading chairs in fiction to must be monitored to provide 36” aisle access.
- Floor coverings on all stairs must be changed to a non-slip surface. Consider second handrail for stairs in the 1928 portion of the building, especially on the stairs to staff bathrooms.
- Permanent floor plan signs for the building are needed, as well as improved room signage with Braille text and raised characters. Signs at ends of book stacks should be larger (see below).
- Adjustable tables for wheelchairs are needed at computer stations to accommodate newer, fully motorized chairs.
- Study chairs must be on wheels if positioned in front of magnifiers or computers that are provided for people with special needs.
- Replace carpet in traffic aisles with hard floor surfaces to accommodate wheelchair users, baby carriages, and book carts.

Priority 3. Access to rest rooms

Accessible rest rooms for both men and women are provided on the ground floor marked with appropriate signage. An accessible rest room in the Children’s Library on the first floor is open for use by all family members. Doorways are at least 32” wide with doors that open easily. Stall space is provided for wheelchair users.

Needed:

- Tactile sign for the Children’s rest room needs to be mounted on the side wall next to the door handle. (Done July 2006)
- Toilet handle in the Children’s rest room should be on the side away from the wall.

Priority 4. Other measures

A. An accessible drinking fountain is located in the entry lounge, with a spout 33” from the floor and controls located on the front edge. Clear floor space is in front of the fountain and it is outside of foot traffic in the hallway.

B. An accessible pay phone is provided by Verizon on the outdoor landing next to the ramped entry. There is clear floor space in front of the phone, and the push buttons are 48" from the floor. The phone has volume control.

Priority 5. Library Facilities, Resources, and Staffing

A. Public Access Catalog and Internet Computers can be used in a seated position. Both standing and seated catalogs are provided.

B. Periodical Display shelving is no more than 50" from the floor. The highest display shelf is 46" from the floor.

C. Book stack signage is located on ends of book stacks. Lettering size varies, but most stack signs are more than 1" but less than 3" high.

D. Copy machine access is slightly above the recommended 36" height for the copy plate. The vendor was only able to provide a copier with the plate 39" from the floor. Staff assistance is available.

E. Meeting Rooms offer a microphone available for meetings of 25 people or more and a hearing amplification system on request. Signing service is available for library sponsored events, if requested two weeks in advance.

Needed:

- Larger signage on book stacks. Easy to read floor plans to find library services.
- Improved air quality in the library meeting rooms. Recommend removal of carpeting to improve air quality in the large meeting room downstairs.

Collections and Services:

F. The Library provides materials in alternative formats, e.g. Large Print books for adults and children, Audio Books on tape and CD, Videos/DVDs with subtitles; specialized equipment to assist readers, such as lighted magnifiers, telephone devices for the deaf, and closed circuit TV magnifiers. The Library provides homebound delivery service by volunteers and information on the federally funded Talking Book program from the Reference Librarians. The Library website is designed and reviewed for accessibility.

G. The Library does not provide Braille Books or Tactile Picture Books, designated computers equipped with screen reading programs, enlargement, and synthetic speech or computers with screen adapters and adaptive keyboards. Outreach service is not available to residential institutions.

Needed:

- Adaptive computer hardware and software to meet basic needs of computer users with physical disabilities.

- The Library needs to produce and distribute promotional information in alternative formats, e.g. brochures in Large Print and information on services for readers with disabilities on its accessible website.

Service Protocols:

H. Librarians and support staff participate in on-going training to provide service to people with physical and mental disabilities. All new employees receive training in customer service guidelines which require that all library patrons be treated with maximum courtesy regardless of ability. Training is given yearly on how to assist patrons in case of medical, fire, and weather related emergencies at the Library. Office and Reference personnel receive training on operation of Telephone Devices for the Deaf.

Needed:

- On-going cooperation with the Amherst Disability Access Advisory Committee and other community groups to design and present staff training programs.