



City of Auburn

Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services

S9-24-31 | February 2025

Contents

- Report Highlights 1**

- Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services 2**
 - Steps Identified to Potentially Increase Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services at Selected City Facilities 2
 - What Do We Recommend? 3

- Appendix A – Response From City Officials 4**

- Appendix B – Potential Physical Accessibility Improvements 5**

- Appendix C – Audit Methodology and Standards 7**

- Appendix D – Resources and Services 8**

Report Highlights

Audit Objective

Assess whether City of Auburn (City) officials could take additional steps to increase physical accessibility to programs and services provided at selected City facilities.

Key Findings

Of the 538 applicable physical accessibility components (components) we reviewed, we identified 70 components (13 percent) where City officials could consider taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility at selected City facilities. Specifically:

- 31 components at the City Hall, such as thresholds no more than one half inch in height and secured mats at the main entrance.
- 25 components at the City Court, such as service counters at an accessible height.
- Seven components at the Fire Station, such as accessible signs identifying restrooms.
- Seven components at the Police Station, such as van accessible parking spaces and signs at accessible parking spaces.

Recommendation

City officials should assess the feasibility of taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility for the 70 components identified in this report. City officials agreed with our findings and indicated they plan to initiate corrective action.

Audit Period

January 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Background

The City is located in Cayuga County and is governed by an elected City Council (Council) composed of a Mayor and four Council members. The City Manager is responsible for the overall administration of the City government.

The City provides various services located in the City Hall, such as:

- The City Clerk’s Office (various licenses and permits, freedom of information act requests, etc.),
- The City Treasurer’s Office (collection of taxes, water and sewer bills, parking tickets, etc.),
- The Code Enforcement Office (building permits, code complaints, etc.) among others, and
- Public meetings of the Council along with other Boards, Committees and Commissions.

The Fire Station, City Court (owned by Cayuga County) and Police Station are also accessible to the public.

Quick Facts

	City
Population	26,866
2023 General Fund Expenditures	\$44.1 million
Number of Employees	375

Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one in four adults in the United States have some type of disability and more than one in 10 have a mobility disability with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.¹ It is important that someone with a disability can participate in their local government's decision-making process and be provided the same services and program opportunities as everyone else.

Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local governments. Generally, under the ADA's implementing regulations, a public entity may not deny the benefits of its programs, activities, and services to individuals with disabilities because its facilities are inaccessible. While not required to make each existing facility accessible, public entities must operate each service, program, or activity so that, when viewed in its entirety, it is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

The 2010 ADA Standard for Accessible Design (Standards) set minimum scoping and technical requirements for newly designed and constructed or altered state and local government facilities, public accommodations and commercial facilities. For any new construction or alteration that began on or after March 15, 2012, the project must comply with the Standards. An alteration is defined as a change to a building or facility that affects or could affect the usability of the entire building or facility or a portion thereof.

Although the Standards apply to new construction and alterations that began on or after March 15, 2012, we used the Standards as a tool to help identify where City officials could consider taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility to programs and services at selected existing structures within the City, whether built before or after March 2012. The potential improvements to physical accessibility identified in this report, however, are intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) opining as to the legality of the City's compliance with ADA requirements.

Steps Identified to Potentially Increase Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services at Selected City Facilities

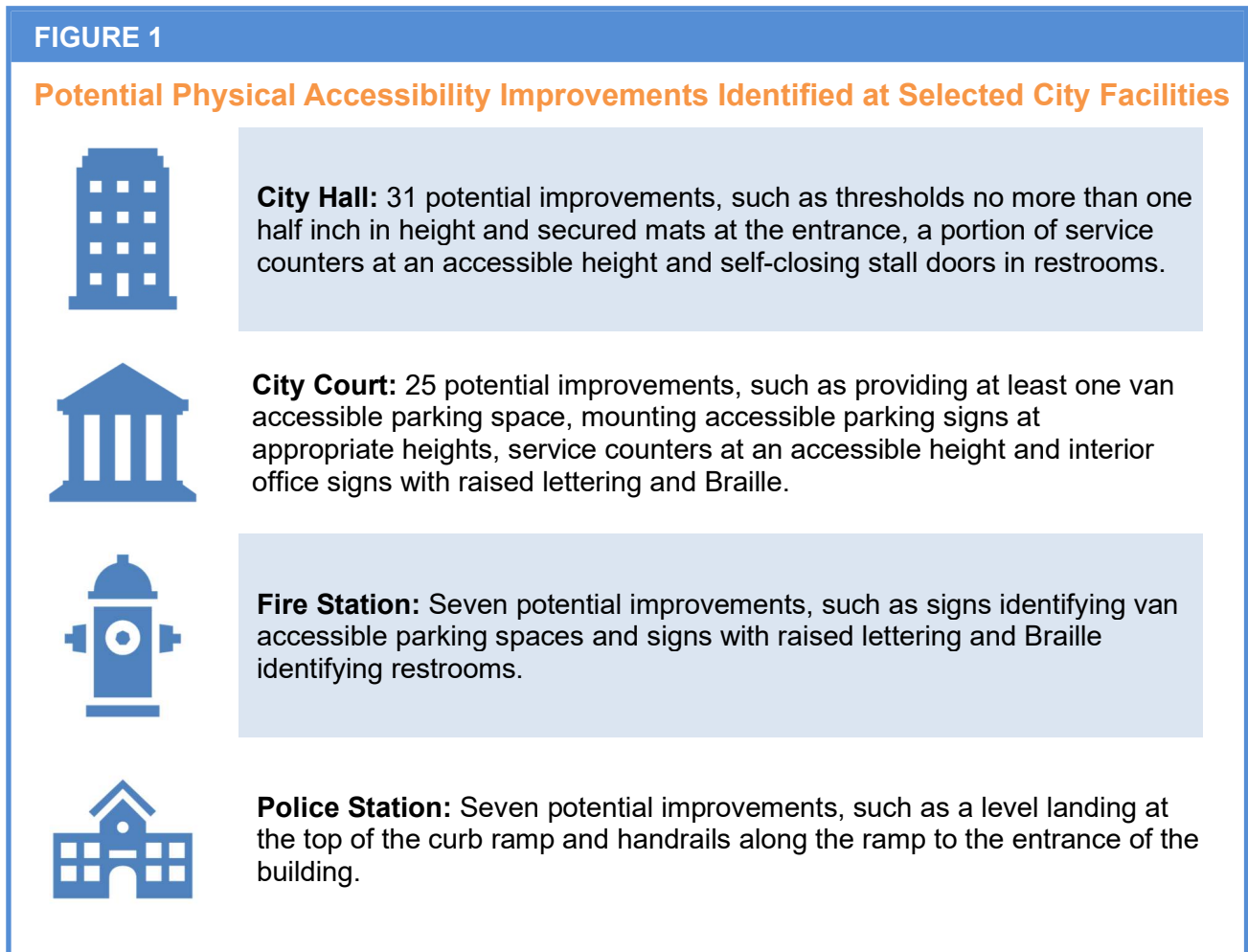
We reviewed physical accessibility to programs and services provided at the City Hall, City Court, Fire Station and the Police Station, including access to City department offices, public meetings spaces and restrooms located within these buildings.

We performed site visits at each of these buildings and their respective parking lots (together "facilities") and used the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities² (ADA Checklist), which incorporates the Standards, as a tool to assess the accessibility of the sampled facilities.

1 https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/articles-documents/disability-impacts-all-of-us-infographic.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html

2 Produced by the New England ADA Center, the checklist was created to review existing facilities using the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design: <https://www.adachecklist.org/checklist.html>. Similar to the use of the Standards, the checklist was used as a tool to identify potential improvements to physical accessibility. The use of the checklist, however, is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as OSC opining on the legality of the City's compliance with ADA requirements.

We reviewed 538 applicable physical accessibility components at the selected facilities and identified 70 components (13 percent) where City officials could consider taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility, including 31 components at the City Hall, 25 components at the City Court, seven components at the Fire Station and seven components at the Police Station (Figure 1).



Examples of the potential improvements we identified and photographed at the facilities, along with a complete table of potential accessibility improvements, are included in Appendix B.

What Do We Recommend?

1. City officials should assess the feasibility of taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility for the 70 components identified in this report.

Appendix A: Response From City Officials



"History's Hometown"

CITY OF AUBURN

Jeff Dygert
City Manager

December 22, 2025

Office of the New York State Comptroller
110 State St.
Albany, NY 12236

Dear [REDACTED],

We have received the ADA Audit report and have no dispute over the findings.

In our effort to correct the findings the City plans to do the following:

1. **Compliant signage (Braille):** Installation is in progress to meet all areas identified in the report.
2. **Handicap parking:** Planning for compliant parking spaces at city-owned buildings with compliant signage is underway, with work set to begin in the spring.
3. **City Hall entrance threshold:** Work will commence in the spring to address threshold issues.
4. **Carpet and mat safety:** Collaborating with a vendor to find safe solutions for carpets and mats.
5. **Counter heights in restrooms:** City Hall is a historic building and we will make adjustments as part of a remodel to include ADA features while preserving the historic elements.
6. **City Court:** City Court is located in a county building and we are working with the county to address these issues. The city is engaged in the process of designing a new city court facility.
7. **Police Department:** Sidewalks will be addressed during the next construction season and the city is currently working through the process to construct a new facility.
8. **Fire station restroom grab bar height:** The contractor for the new building will address the grab bar height in the restrooms.

This plan reflects a thoughtful approach to achieving compliance with ADA standards while considering historical preservation and future facility improvements.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at (315) 406-4345.

Sincerely,

Jeff Dygert,
City Manager

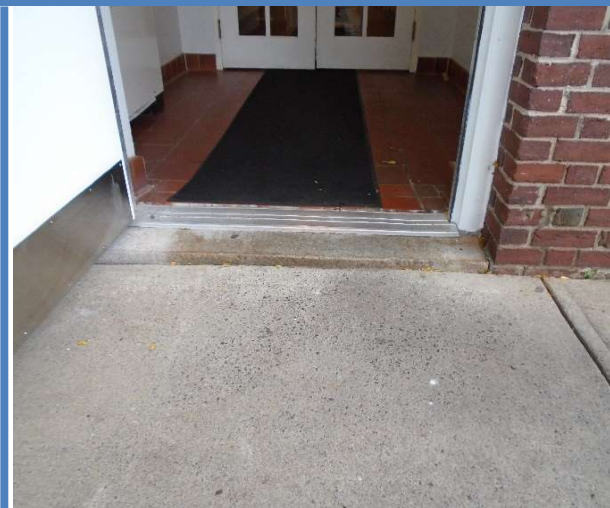
Cc: Corporation Counsel
City Clerk

Memorial City Hall • 24 South Street • Auburn, New York 13021 • (315) 255-4146 • Fax (315) 255-4735
jdygert@auburnny.gov • www.auburnNY.gov

Appendix B: Potential Physical Accessibility Improvements

FIGURE 2

Potential Physical Accessibility Improvement Examples^a



Vertical threshold too high and the mat not securely attached at the City Hall entrance.



Signs at department offices lacked raised lettering and Braille and were not mounted on the latch side of the door.



Service counter without an accessible portion no higher than 36 inches at the City Court.



No van accessible parking, accessible aisle too narrow and sign is too low at the Police Station.

a) Photos taken by OSC auditors in September 2024 with permission from local officials.

Figure 3: Potential Physical Accessibility Improvements by Component

Accessibility Checklist Component Category	Applicable Checklist Components Reviewed	Potential Improvements Identified	Percentage With Potential Improvements Identified
Accessible Route	53	1	2%
Curb Ramps	10	1	10%
Drinking Fountains	36	0	0%
Elevators	14	1	7%
Entrance	86	9	10%
Interior Doors	55	0	0%
Lavatories	49	3	6%
Parking	39	7	18%
Sales and Service Counters	15	5	33%
Seating	7	0	0%
Signs	21	18	86%
Soap Dispensers and Hand Dryers	14	4	29%
Toilet Compartments (Stalls)	33	6	18%
Toilet Rooms (Bathrooms)	31	1	3%
Water Closets (Toilets)	75	14	19%
Totals	538	70	13%

Appendix C: Audit Methodology and Standards

We conducted this audit pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law. We obtained an understanding of internal controls that we deemed significant within the context of the audit objective and assessed those controls. Information related to the scope of our work on internal controls, as well as the work performed in our audit procedures to achieve the audit objective and obtain valid audit evidence, included the following:

- We selected the City from a list of all cities, towns and villages (excluding NYC) not currently in OSC's audit process at the time of selection. We divided the list into seven regions and used expenditure data reported in the 2023 fiscal year to judgmentally select cities, towns and villages from these regions for an even representation across the State for this multi-unit audit.
- We reviewed applicable laws and regulations, as well as any policies and procedures the City had regarding accessibility. The potential improvements to physical accessibility identified in the report, however, are intended for informational purposes only and should not be construed as OSC opining as to the legality of the City's compliance with ADA requirements.
- We interviewed City staff and reviewed Council meeting minutes to gain an understanding of accessibility for the City's programs and services.
- We reviewed accessibility to programs and services provided at City facilities, excluding recreational programs and services provided by third parties. We used the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities, which uses the 2010 ADA Standards, as a tool to review accessibility at the facilities. We reviewed the accessibility components applicable at each sampled facility including accessible parking, approaches to buildings, building entrances, accessibility within buildings including to meeting rooms, offices providing programs and services, restrooms, and water fountains.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

The Council has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report should be prepared and provided to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of General Municipal Law. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. We encourage the Council to make the CAP available for public review in the City Clerk's office.

Appendix D: Resources and Services

Regional Office Directory

www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/pdf/regional-directory.pdf

Cost-Saving Ideas – Resources, advice and assistance on cost-saving ideas

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications

Fiscal Stress Monitoring – Resources for local government officials experiencing fiscal problems

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/fiscal-monitoring

Local Government Management Guides – Series of publications that include technical information and suggested practices for local government management

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications

Planning and Budgeting Guides – Resources for developing multiyear financial, capital, strategic and other plans

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/resources/planning-resources

Protecting Sensitive Data and Other Local Government Assets – A non-technical cybersecurity guide for local government leaders

www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/publications/pdf/cyber-security-guide.pdf

Required Reporting – Information and resources for reports and forms that are filed with the Office of the State Comptroller

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/required-reporting

Research Reports/Publications – Reports on major policy issues facing local governments and State policy-makers

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/publications

Training – Resources for local government officials on in-person and online training opportunities on a wide range of topics

www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/academy

Contact

Office of the New York State Comptroller
Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor, Albany, New York 12236

Tel: (518) 474-4037 • Fax: (518) 486-6479 • Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government>

Local Government and School Accountability Help Line: (866) 321-8503

STATEWIDE AUDITS – Dina M.L. Thompson, Chief of Municipal Audits

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