



City of Long Beach

Physical Accessibility to Programs and Services

S9-24-36 | February 2025

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Report Highlights

City of Long Beach

Audit Objective

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

Key Findings

Of the 500 applicable physical accessibility components (components) we reviewed, we identified 86 components (17 percent) where City officials could consider taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility at the selected facilities. Specifically:

- 61 at the City Hall, such as at least one van accessible parking space, accessible parking spaces with marked access aisles, a main entrance with at least 18 inches of maneuvering clearance on the latch side of the door and interior signs with raised lettering and Braille mounted on the latch side of office doors.
- 25 at the Community Center, such as curb ramps with accessible slopes, a main entrance with a door closing speed of at least five seconds and properly secured carpets and restroom mirrors, soap dispensers and hand dryers mounted at an accessible height.

Recommendations

City officials should assess the feasibility of taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility for the 86 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 Nassau County and is governed by an elected five-member City Council (Council) and operates with a council-manager form of government. The City Manager is responsible for the overall administration of the City's government.

The City provides programs and services at the City Hall, such as:

- The City Clerk's Office (various licenses and permits, freedom of information act requests, etc.),
- The Tax Department (collection of property taxes),
- Water and Sewer Administration (billing and collection of water and sewer charges),
- Police Department (separate entrance),
- The City Court, and
- Public meetings of the Council and Zoning Board of Appeals, among others.

The Community Center (consisting of the Recreation Department and Senior Center) is also accessible to the public.

Quick Facts

City	
Population	35,029
2023 General Fund Expenditures	\$80.6 Million
Number of Employees	304

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 and the Community Center, including access to City department offices, public meeting spaces and restrooms located within these buildings.

We also 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 500 applicable physical accessibility components at the selected facilities and identified 86 components (17 percent) where City officials could consider taking additional steps to increase physical accessibility, including 61 components at City Hall and 25 components at the Community Center (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Potential Physical Accessibility Improvements Identified at Selected City Facilities



City Hall: 61 potential improvements, such as at least one van accessible parking space, accessible parking spaces with marked access aisles, a main entrance with at least 18 inches of maneuvering clearance on the latch side of the door, interior signs with raised lettering and Braille mounted on the latch side of office doors, interior office doors with accessible door handles that require no more than five pounds of force to open and with a closing speed of no more than five seconds, a portion of public service counters at an accessible height and at least one wheelchair accessible seating space in the courtroom.



Community Center: 25 potential improvements, such as at least one van accessible parking space, curb ramps with accessible slopes, a main entrance with a door closing speed of at least five seconds and properly secured carpets, interior doors with at least 18 inches of maneuvering clearance on the latch side of the door and accessible thresholds, a portion of public service counters at an accessible height, restroom mirrors, soap dispensers and hand dryers mounted at an accessible height, and pipes under lavatories covered to prevent injury from contact.

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 86 components identified in this report.

Appendix A: Response From City Officials



CITY OF LONG BEACH

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DANIEL CREIGHTON
CITY MANAGER

To: Statewide Audit Unit
Office of the NY State Comptroller
Muni-Statewide@osc.ny.gov

Date: February 12, 2025

Re: Response to OSC Audit Report

Title II of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local governments, meaning a public entity may not deny the benefits of its programs, activities, and services to individuals with disabilities because its facilities are inaccessible. It is not required that each existing facility of such public entity be accessible, but when viewed in its entirety, public entities must operate each service, program, or activity so that it is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Although the standard used by OSC in this report is based on the 2010 ADA Standard for accessible design, which sets minimum scoping and technical requirements for newly designed and constructed or altered state and local government facilities constructed or altered after March 15, 2012, the City Hall building and Community Center of the City of Long Beach were both constructed many years prior to March 2012 and since then, we have consistently taken steps to stay in compliance with the general ADA standards and promote the inclusion and accessibility for those with disabilities who seek to enter and use our facilities. We generally agree with the findings based on the standards used by OSC and understand that improvements can be made in various parts of City Hall and the Community Center.

As for City Hall, there are 61 potential improvements recommended by OSC, which include, generally, providing accessible parking spaces, adequate clearance space for the main entrance, braille letterings for interior signs, accessible door handles, accessible height dimensions for public service counters, and a wheelchair accessible seating space in the courtroom. We will take all of these recommendations into consideration and will work diligently to make improvements. As we renovate the City buildings, we shall keep in mind the structural recommended improvements such as the public service counter dimensions and parking accessibility based on our budget/construction schedule.

In regards to the Community Center, there are 25 recommendations for potential improvements, which are similar to the recommendations for City Hall, in addition to the inclusions of restroom mirrors, soap dispensers, hand dryers, and a covering of pipes under lavatories to prevent injury from contact. As to the recommendations involving the restrooms and similar non-structural improvements to be made similar to those recommended for City Hall, we will work to abide by those recommendations as soon as possible. As for the structural recommendations, such as the building of accessible parking spaces, curb ramps, interior doors with adequate clearance, and accessible height dimensions for public service counters, we will seek to make such changes as we reconstruct and renovate the City.

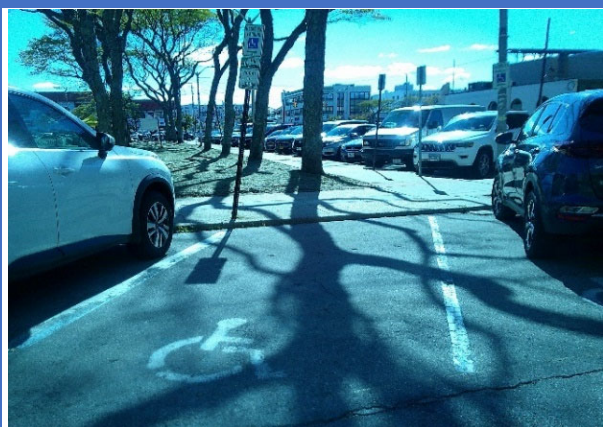
Very truly yours,


Daniel Creighton
City Manager

Appendix B: Potential Physical Accessibility Improvements

FIGURE 2

Potential Physical Accessibility Improvement Examples^a



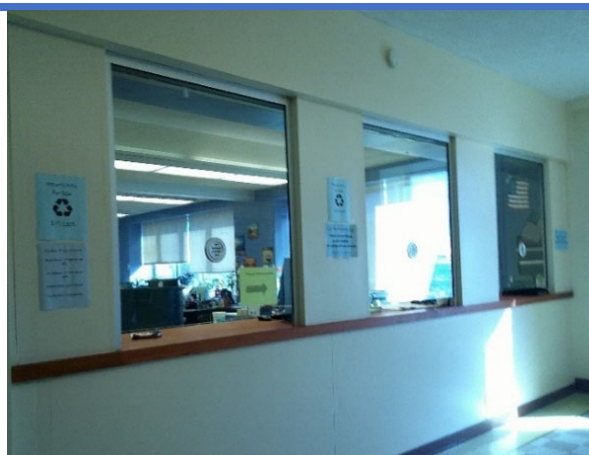
Parking spaces at the City Hall marked accessible with no access aisles.



Signs in the City Hall without raised lettering or Braille and not mounted on the latch side of the door.



Office doors at City Hall have doorknobs instead of accessible handles such as latches or levers.



Tax Department payment window counter with no accessible portion.

a) Photos taken by OSC auditors in October 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	30	0	0%
Curb Ramps	11	1	9%
Drinking Fountains	6	1	17%
Elevators	14	2	14%
Entrance	61	4	7%
Interior Doors	98	18	18%
Lavatories	42	5	12%
Parking	18	3	17%
Ramps	11	1	9%
Rooms and Spaces	30	0	0%
Sales and Service Counters	18	8	44%
Seating	11	1	9%
Signs	19	15	79%
Soap Dispensers and Hand Dryers	12	6	50%
Toilet Compartments (Stalls)	26	0	0%
Toilet Rooms (Bathrooms)	27	4	15%
Water Closets (Toilets)	66	17	26%
Totals	500	86	17%

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 officials and 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

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

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