



TOWN OF BENNINGTON

Americans with Disabilities Plan

Adopted: October 10, 2022

Upcoming Annual Reviews Due:

- June 1, 2023
- June 2, 2024
- June 3, 2025
- June 4, 2026

Formal Audit, Update, and Re-Adoption: No Later than July 31, 2027

PURPOSE

The Town of Bennington adopted an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan on July 11, 1995. Significant changes and improvements were completed since the adoption of the Transition Plan; therefore, the Town of Bennington began the process of updating the Transition Plan. This updated ADA Plan is intended to address accessibilities in all Town of Bennington programs and facilities.

An initial audit of the Town of Bennington Facilities was completed with the assistance of the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) on June 29, 2022. The VCIL Report dated July 13, 2022 (See Appendix A) as well as the Town of Bennington Notes prepared June 29, 2022 (See Appendix B) are incorporated into the Updated ADA Transition Plan.

The Town of Bennington ADA Plan will be reviewed annually and updated every five years to ensure it remains relevant as Town of Bennington programs, activities, and facilities change. The overarching goal is the continual improvement and upgrade to enable compliance with and when practical exceeding 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

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DEFINITIONS

Disabled Individual – Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment.

Facility – All or any portion of a building structure, parking lot, road, walk, equipment, or other real or personal property or interests therein.

Major Life Activities – Functions such as (but not limited to) caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Program or Activity – the operations of the agency or organizational unit of a recipient government or of a secondary recipient funded with entitlement funds.

Reasonable Accommodation – The act of making facilities useable and accessible; restructuring jobs, modifying work schedules, modifying equipment, providing interpreters, or similar acts. **

Undue Hardship – A determination, case-by-case, that the cost of reasonable accommodation is too high in relation to budget size and number of employees (persons) served by a particular program or activity.

** Special Note: Reasonable accommodation, in general, refers to employment, not facilities. With facilities, governments are not necessarily required to make each existing facility, or every part thereof accessible to and useable by persons with disabilities. It is expected that governments will ensure that their programs and activities, when viewed in their entirety, are accessible and useable by persons with disabilities.

ELECTIONS

The Town of Bennington election polling place is the Bennington Fire Station. The accessible entrance is located at the Lincoln Street public entrance adjacent to the parking lot. Accessible voting machines are available during State and Federal elections:

OMNIBALLOT TABLET

TABLET FEATURES:

- Enables voters with disabilities to vote independently
- Accessibility Devices Supported
- Lightweight
- Portable
- Simple Setup



Additionally, for all elections curbside voting assistance is available to individuals where an election official will meet an individual in the parking lot and provide a ballot to enable the person to vote from their vehicle location.

Individuals are welcome to contact the Town of Bennington ADA Coordinator and/or the Town Clerk's Office at least 3 weeks prior to any election to identify any specific needs or requirements to enable them to be able to exercise their right to vote in person.

During elections poll workers will be informed on the various voting machines available to meet an individual's needs.

As voting technology improvements continue the Town of Bennington will implement and adapt its polling station accordingly.

MEETINGS

In general, any Town of Bennington meeting are open to the public and must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The Town of Bennington and its Boards of Commissions shall strive to meet in accessible facilities.

Warnings for meetings shall be physically posted at the Town Office, published in local media, published via Town of Bennington social media sites, and Town of Bennington web site announcements.

Agendas and minutes for meetings shall be kept on file and accessible through the Town of Bennington offices and web site. Agendas for Town Select Board, and Boards and Commissions, include the following statement for those seeking accommodations:

We endeavor to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage and participate fully. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact Paul Dansereau: pdansereau@benningtonvt.org or call 802-447-9715.

The primary Town of Bennington meeting location is the Bennington Fire House Multi-Use Room. The accessible entrance is located at the Lincoln Street public entrance and an elevator is available to access the 3rd floor Multi-Use Room.

During Town of Bennington meetings, a podium with a microphone will be made available for the public that is located in an accessible location in the Multi-Use Room. A sound system is installed in the Multi-Use Room and shall be used during Select Board meetings as well as large audience meetings.

During Select Board Meetings and special meetings Public Access Television (ie CAT TV) streams the meeting for public access as well as record the meetings to be accessed from the CAT TV web site.

Coordination to provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is conducted for annual Town Meeting.

To improve the accessibility of Town of Bennington Select Board and Special Meetings research shall be conducted on implementing an assisted listening device system. The system may be headphones that are integrated with the Community Room Sound System; or it may be a loop system that would provide coverage for the entire community room space. A goal of implementing this capability is to do so in the next 12 months.

As the Town of Bennington continues to improve and adapt its facilities future public meeting venues shall be developed with technologies to become fully accessible and inclusive.

EMPLOYMENT

All Town of Bennington employment announcements shall be published in local media, published via Town of Bennington social media sites, and published on the Town of Bennington web site.

All employment announcements contain the following statement “Bennington is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE). The Town of Bennington does not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability in the admission or access to, or treatment, or employment in, its programs or activities. We provide reasonable accommodations in the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities.”

All Town of Bennington Job Descriptions include the following statements:

“Physical Requirements. The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.”

“Work Environment. The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.”

The grievance procedure (included in this document) shall be available to all employees and prospective employees to provide for full participation in the employment practices of the Town.

The Town Manager’s Office is directly responsible for all hiring and employment practices. The Town of Bennington encourages an inclusive hiring practice for all open employment announcements.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

This section is intended to provide a general outline of programs available, and measures taken to comply with ADA regulations and inclusive principles. As the Town of Bennington continues to conduct capital project improvements and/or acquire new facilities for its Programs and Activities promoting inclusiveness will be a key design criteria or principle.

Town Manager's Office/Human Resources/Finance Department

Currently located on the 2nd floor of the Town Office. Providing an accessible access to the locations is not feasible due to the scope of work, expenses, and historic nature of the Town Office. However, all departments make provisions to use the first floor Conference Room #1 or Conference Room #2 to conduct any business associated with their respective departments. Both Conference Room #1 and Conference Room #2 are fully accessible. By implementing these provisions then individuals are able to achieve reasonable accommodations and receive the services requested.

Communication Coordinator/Community Development/Buildings & Grounds

Currently located on the 3rd floor of the Town Office. Providing an accessible access to the locations is not feasible due to the scope of work, expenses, and historic nature of the Town Office. However, all departments make provisions to use the first floor Conference Room #1 or Conference Room #2 to conduct any business associated with their respective departments. Both Conference Room #1 and Conference Room #2 are fully accessible. By implementing these provisions then individuals are able to achieve reasonable accommodations and receive the services requested.

Town Clerk

Currently located on the 1st floor of the Town Office. All facets of the Town Clerk's Office are available to all individuals. Upon request arrangements may be made to provide information in alternative formats.

Reception/Collections/Assessors/Planning, Permitting, & Code Enforcement

Currently all are located on the 1st floor of the Town Office. All facets of each of these offices are available to all individuals. Upon request arrangements may be made to provide information in alternative formats.

Police

The Police Station is a stand-alone facility. An accessible entrance is in the rear of the Police Station and is clearly designated. An elevator is inside the building to enable full access within the facility. The Police Department has implemented provisions and procedures to address all facets of service accessibility for the public as well as arrest procedures for individuals with disabilities.

Senior Center

The Town of Bennington Senior Center is located on the 2nd floor of a building shared with the Meals on Wheels Program. An accessible entrance provides access to the building elevator and provides full access to the Senior Center.

Recreation Center

The Town of Bennington Recreation Center Programs are contracted through the YMCA. All programs and/or activities conducted are open to everyone. Lifeguard staff are trained in the use of lift chairs to enable full access to the pool as well as life saving techniques required in the event of any emergencies.

The weight room has deficiencies in providing adequate clear space in vicinity of the free weights bench press and two exercise stations for someone in a wheelchair to approach and transfer from the wheelchair.

Coordination shall be conducted with the YMCA Director to identify means to improve the current weight room accessibility. Initial review shall be completed in the next six months.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works is a stand-alone facility. Entry to the facility is by appointment. An accessible entrance provides access to the reception area and all offices, breaks rooms, restrooms, and conference rooms are fully accessible.

Outdoor Recreation Areas

The Town of Bennington has multiple outdoor recreation areas. All future outdoor recreation area projects, and upgrades to existing outdoor recreation areas, shall include Inclusive Play Design Principles.

Recently completed new projects, and/or upgrades to existing outdoor recreation areas, included improvements ensure accessibility and greater inclusiveness:

- Stark Street Playground
- Merchant Park/Splashpad
- Willow Park Large and Small Playground: this project is currently ongoing and is anticipated to be complete this year. The scope of work ensured the play structures are fully ADA compliant as well as incorporated Inclusive Play Design Principles.
- Rail Trail Project

Additional outdoor recreation areas which are fully accessible include:

- Willow Park Upper Pavilion: this includes ADA compliant restroom facilities co-located with the pavilion
- Putnam Wetlands

ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Town of Bennington has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the United States Department of Justice regulations implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Title II states, in part, that “no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination” in programs or activities sponsored by a public entity.

Complaints should be addressed to the Town Manager who has been designated to coordinate ADA compliance efforts.

- A complaint should be filed in writing or verbally. It should contain the name, address, and contact information for the person filing the complaint as well as a brief description of the alleged violation of the regulations.
- A complaint should be filed within sixty (60) days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation.
- An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow a filing of a complaint. The investigation shall be conducted by the Town Manager, or his/her designee such as the Town of Bennington ADA Coordinator. These rules contemplate informal but thorough investigations, affording all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to a complaint.
- A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the Town Manager and a copy forwarded to the complainant no later than (60) days after filing.
- The ADA coordinator shall maintain the files and records of the Town of Bennington relating to the complaints filed.
- The complainant may request a reconsideration of the case in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request for reconsideration should be made within thirty (30) days to the Town Manager.
- The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person’s pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of an ADA complaint with the responsible federal department or agency. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
- These rules shall be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards and to assure that the Town of Bennington complies with ADA and implementing regulations.

FACILITY UPGRADES AND/OR IMPROVEMENTS

The following sections identify specific goals and implementation timelines for Town of Bennington Facility Upgrades and/or Improvements. The goals and implementation guidelines shall be used to assist in annual budget preparations. Due to the extreme volatility of construction costs as well as vendor availability specific costs and execution timelines are not feasible. The implementation guidelines do identify the budget year to implement the goals.

Town Office:

- Accessible Ramp Access: The current accessible ramp provides direct route from the public sidewalk to the Town Office Main Entrance. However, if the Town Office parking lot is used then a person would have a lengthy route from the parking lot designated accessible parking spaces to the ramp.
 - Goal – Conduct a feasibility analysis to develop an additional accessible ramp that may be accessed more directly from the parking lot.
 - Action Person: Director of Facilities.
 - Implementation Guideline: Current Budget Year (FY2023) determine a feasible design, determine any specific historical requirements, and develop rough order magnitude costs for the project. Identify the project as part of FY2024 Budget Development priorities.

- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations Access:
 - Goal – Implement the 7/21/2022 US Access Board Design Recommendations for Accessible Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.
 - Action Person: Director of Facilities.
 - Implementation Timeline: Current Budget Year (FY2023) assess the impacts of implementing the design requirements and as soon as feasible implement required modifications for the existing Town of Bennington installed EV charging stations.

Recreation Center:

- Free Weights (bench press) and Exercise Stations (two each) Access: The weight room does not provide adequate clear space to enable an individual to approach in a wheelchair and transfer to the equipment.
 - Goal – Meet with the YMCA Director to re-assess the current weight room layout to identify how to improve the approach access and transfer capabilities to the existing equipment.
 - Action Persons: YMCA Director and Director of Facilities
 - Implementation Guideline: Current Budget Year (FY2023) complete the assessment and modify existing layouts.

- Goal – Incorporate approach access and transfer capabilities in all new designs or expanded Exercise Room facilities.
- Action Persons: YMCA Director and Director of Facilities
- Implementation Guideline: As required incorporate the design and layouts.

Bennington Fire House:

- Automatic Door Openers at Accessible Entrance: The current rear accessible entrance exterior doors are compliant with 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design Section 404. However, the door closers require continual maintenance and adjustment to ensure the doors remain in compliance.
 - Goal: Develop rough order of magnitude costs for the installation of automatic door opener at the accessible rear entrance.
 - Action Person: Director of Facilities
 - Implementation Guideline: Current Budget Year (FY2023) solicit proposals and cost estimate to install the automatic door opener. Identify the project as part of FY2024 Budget Development priorities.

 - Multi-Use Room Public Meetings: Assisted listening devices such as headphones that tie into the existing sound system, or a loop system that is able to cover the entire meeting space, are required.
 - Goal: Conduct research and analysis to identify the most effective and feasible systems available to provide assisted listening devices and looping.
 - Action Person: Communications Coordinator
 - Implementation Guideline: Current Budget Year (FY2023) complete the analysis and provide recommendations to build into the FY 2024 Budget cycle.

 - Goal: Currently the CAT-TV YouTube feed has an option to provide captioning for during public meeting broadcasts, however the CAT-TV live filming is unable to provide captioning.
 - Action Person: Communications Coordinator
 - Implementation Guideline: Provide updates as CAT-TV live broadcast captioning capabilities change.
-
- Voting: Continue to use and promote the availability of accessible voting machines and curbside voting assistance.
 - Action Person: Town Clerk

Police Station:

- Approach & Entrance: Required signage has been emplaced at the rear entrance accessible parking space and entrance. Ensure the designated space remains clear of obstructions.
 - Action Persons: Director of Facilities & Chief of Police
- Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities: Currently there are excellent procedures in place to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. Continue to adapt procedures as required.
 - Action Person: Chief of Police

Senior Center:

- Approach & Entrance: Required signage has been emplaced at the Senior Center accessible parking spaces. Ensure the designated space remains clear of obstructions.
 - Action Persons: Director of Facilities & Senior Center Program Director
- Future Facilities: As studies and assessments are completed on potential new and/or expanded Senior Center Facilities ensure the new spaces are fully compliant and/or exceed access to the programs and activities provided.
 - Action Persons: Director of Facilities & Senior Center Program Director

Sidewalks: Annual sidewalk maintenance is incorporated in the Department of Public Works Budget to be completed during the Summer construction season. This current Budget Year (FY2023) the paver brick sidewalks along North Street to include the sections at the corner of North Street and Main Street were repaired and reset to mitigate trip hazards.

- Goal: Continue to conduct annual sidewalk repair and maintenance.
- Action Person: Director of Public Works
- Implementation Guideline: Continue to assess, prioritize, and commit Budget Resources during each Budget Development Cycle.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations Access:

- Goal – Implement the 7/21/2022 US Access Board Design Recommendations for Accessible Electric Vehicle Charging Stations into all new Town of Bennington installed EV charging stations.
- Action Person: Director of Facilities
- Implementation Timeline: As required as new EV charging stations are built into future Budget Years.

Appendix A – Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) Report 7/13/2022

*People with disabilities working together for dignity, independence, and civil rights
Making Vermont accessible by removing one step at a time!*

July 13, 2022

Jeannie Jenkins, Chair Town of Bennington Select Board
PO Box 469
Bennington, VT 05201

Dear Select Board Members and Paul Dansereau

It was truly a pleasure to meet with all of you (and my VCIL colleagues and peers), on June 29, 2022, to do an assessment of town buildings so that the town's ADA Transition Plan can be updated. From our preliminary video conference meeting it was clear to me that Select Board members are committed to making Bennington as accessible as possible.

Special kudos to Paul Dansereau whose took excellent notes. My reports typically contain very similar content, so not to be redundant, his notes will be included as part of this formal report. Items below should be considered clarifications/addendums to Paul's excellent notes.

I have attached the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities (all four priorities), the Checklist of Swimming Pools, Wading Pools and Spas and one for Sports Activities, as a resource.

Recreation Center

Priority 1: Approach & Entrance

- ✓ I am delighted (and amazed) that the issue of accessible parking has already been addressed.

Priority 2: Access to Goods & Services

- The free weights (bench press) and two exercise stations do not have enough clear space for someone in a wheelchair to approach and transfer from their wheelchair. [See checklist of Sports Activities – pg. 7]

Recommendations: This is something that can go in the transition plan as you look to expand the facility.

Bennington Fire House

Priority 2: Access to Goods & Services

Suggestion: It is good to know that the accessible voting machines are being used. I would suggest that the Town Clerk post this sign near the polling stations (see attached picture of sign). The Secretary of State sent these to all Towns several years ago.

- Community Room (public meetings) is required to have assisted listening devices. This could be headphones that tie into the PA system, or a loop system that would cover the whole space. Someone who is Deaf would still require an ASL interpreter.

Recommendations: Research options and include in the updated transition plan. There are no companies in Vermont, but here are two resources I got from the Vermont Assistive Technology Project. [Hearing Loop Systems - an assistive listening technology for hearing loss \(newenglandhearingloop.com\)](#) – these folks have installed loops in Vermont. [Hearing Loops Unlimited | Looping System Installers](#) – these folks have done many churches.

Note: Today captioning is generally referred to simply as captioning. It can be 'closed' or 'open'. Open captioning is generally easier to implement, often with an 'on' or 'off' option.

From the discussion it was clear that during voting, traffic flow and parking are creating safety issues. I agree with Paul's recommendation to develop a traffic control plan, but to be clear, this is not ADA compliance issue.

Police Station

The welcoming and candor of Lieutenant Cam Grande was greatly appreciated. A thorough assessment was efficiently completed.

Priority 1: Approach & Entrance

- As Paul noted, there needs to be a sign at the accessible parking space at the police station, as well a a sign designating the accessible entrance.

Priority 2: Access to Goods & Services

- ✓ Accessibility was excellent. The Bennington Police Department has great alternative for making accessible restrooms available to people in holding cells. It is my understanding that there are special handrails made specifically for holding cells (where a person could not harm themselves). When I find more specific information, I'll send it along.

Town Offices

It was great to see that the town had a *free* EV charging station that was *accessible* (minor improvements would make it more accessible).

Although the United States Access Board has an initiative to develop accessibility standards for EV charging stations, in partnership with the Department of Transportation, there is no timeline at present.

- Recommendation: Where possible create a parking space using the specifications for an “accessible space” including a 5ft wide access aisle [see Priority 1, page 4]. But do NOT mark it as accessible. This would allow anyone to use it, but it would also be accessible for someone using a wheelchair.

Sidewalks

- ✓ As a person who does not drive, I do a lot of walking and the sidewalks in town were in very good to excellent condition. The only minor issue I saw was at the corner of Main and North streets there is an area of brick (instead of cement). A few of these were missing. This would create hazards for people using canes and if hit the wrong way could break the wheel of a wheelchair.

Town Garage

This facility was not visited, but I want to point out that if there are services to the public – such as picking up sand and salt in the winter – then the ADA guidelines would apply here as well.

Updating the Transition Plan

In developing an updated plan, I would recommend that you make it more comprehensive than the previous one. I would also include long range ‘visionary’ ideas too. There was discussion of using the old school building to house the Senior Center (with an accessible kitchen), Meals Program and offices for the Council on Aging all under one roof. The timeline could be 3-5 years. The text of the document wouldn’t necessarily have to be lengthy. The plan could include a table specifying the specific elements to

be improved, the estimated cost, the time line and who is responsible, and finally a date completed.

This is a good way to keep track of the 'smaller' items, such as automatic door openers. Once an inventory is taken of which door should have them, then they can be prioritized, based on foot traffic or other criteria. This will also become a tool for the Select Board in yearly budget planning.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions

Sincerely,

Peter Johnke (he/him)

Deputy Director

Vermont Center For Independent Living
11 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-224-1815 (Direct)
800-639-1522 (Toll Free)
802-229-0503 (Fax)
www.vcil.org

This information is provided with support from New England ADA Center from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), and is for technical assistance purposes and should not be interpreted as legal advice.



Appendix B – Americans with Disabilities Act Facilities Audit Visit Notes 6/29/2022

Americans with Disabilities Act Facilities Audit Visit Notes

Prepared By: Paul T. Dansereau 6/29/2022

1. Purpose: The Town of Bennington is conducting an audit and update to its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan that was adopted on July 11, 1995. As part of this audit assistance was requested from the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) to review the previous plan, visit the Town Facilities, identify any facilities that are non-complaint, and provide recommendations on additional improvements to the Town of Bennington Public Facilities.
2. On Wednesday June 29, 2022 a site visit was conducted at the following Town of Bennington Facilities:
 - a. Town of Bennington Recreation Center
 - b. Town of Bennington Fire Station
 - c. Town of Bennington Police Department
 - d. Town of Bennington Town Office
 - e. Town of Bennington Senior Center
3. Participants in the site visit included:
 - a. Peter Johnke, Deputy Director VCIL
 - b. Colleen Arcodia, VCIL
 - c. Harrie Hyatt
 - d. Jeannie Jenkins, Chair Town of Bennington Select Board
 - e. Jean Connor, Town of Bennington Select Board Member
 - f. Tom Haley, Town of Bennington Select Board Member
 - g. Paul Dansereau, Director of Facilities/Building Inspector/Fire Marshal, Town of Bennington
4. Specific Notes from each location:
 - a. Recreation Center:
 - i. Accessible Parking spots currently are not located at the shortest distance to the newly constructed main entrance.
Action Item – Designate new Accessible Parking spots at the shortest/most direct route from the parking lot to the new main accessible entrance. The Van Accessible and other Accessible Parking spots may also remain where they are located.

- ii. The concrete ramp at the newly constructed main entrance from the parking lot curb cut to the entrance door is 7% grade. If a ramp is greater than 5% grade then a railing is required to be placed on both sides of the ramp.

Action Item – Confirm with Architects to identify the specifications for this ramp and follow-up on Courses of Action options to remediate either the ramp grade or install compliant handrails.

- iii. Entrance vestibule and hallway floor mats are compliant with ADA specifications.

Recommendation – Consider purchase additional mats or different sized mats to provide area coverage that is equivalent in width to the double doors to further reduce potential of trip hazards.

- iv. The water bottle filling station & fountain in the Weight Room protrudes more than 4 inches from the wall. A sight impaired person would not have an indicator the fountain was there.

Action Item – Place a decorative item (ie potted plant (real or artificial or similar item) on the floor just prior to the base of the fountain to provide an indicator there is an obstruction.

- v. The free weights and two stations on the nautilus machines are accessible.

Recommendation: As the Town of Bennington develops long range plans for additional facility improvements research and develop plans to expand accessible fitness equipment.

- vi. The pool area has a transfer lift station as well as 36-inch-wide entry steps with railings at the shallow end of the pool. During the visit a lifeguard mentioned the lift was not working.

Action Item – Later in the day the Bennington Branch Director of the YMCA was contacted and stated that monthly checks are performed by the YMCA Staff on the Transfer Lift, and it would be investigated. Follow-up on the status of the Transfer Lift.

b. Bennington Fire House

- i. The entrance doors to firehouse from the parking lot side close in 3 to 3.5 seconds. The door swing should close no faster than 5 seconds.

Action Item: Adjust the door closers so the doors swing is no faster than 5 seconds to close per door.

- ii. A review of the Community Room Space used for public meetings was reviewed. Discussion included assisted listening devices were not used during public meetings, Annual Town Meetings a sign language interpreter is used, if requested a sign language interpreter may be made available at public meetings, CAT TV broadcast of public meetings does not provide a closed captioning capability, and there is a Facebook feed option to view public meeting coverage that does provide closed captioning and the Town of Bennington Communication Director is able to provide description on how to access this capability.

Recommendations: Continue to review processes and procedures and technology capabilities available.

- iii. Discussion on voting processes and procedures included if voting stations and signage for visually impaired were available and used during elections. The answer was not known at the time of the audit visit.

Recommendation: Following the audit visit it was confirmed with the Town Clerk that voting stations for the visually impaired were on hand and used during all State and Federal Elections.

- iv. The 2nd floor conference room used by the Select Board for interviews was reviewed and the conference room table does not have adequate clearance under the table to enable wheel chair access.

Recommendation: Be prepared to make accommodations to raise the conference room table height by placing blocks under the table. Additionally review Town of Bennington Public Interview announcements regarding requests for accommodations.

- v. Traffic flow into the Firehouse Parking Lot was discussed by Board Members.

Action Item: Develop traffic control plan to improve safety.

- c. Police Station: Lieutenant Cam Grande Facilitated the Police Station portion of the visit. His thoroughness and professionalism were greatly appreciated.

- i. The Accessible Parking Space at the rear of the Police Station is marked on the pavement, however it lacks a designated parking sign.

Action Item: Install a designated accessible parking sign.

- ii. The rear exterior accessible entrance door to the police station lacks an Accessible Entrance sign.

Action Item: Install a designated accessible entrance sign.

- iii. Discussion during the visit included if the front of the police station had signage directing people to the rear accessible entrance. After the visit it was verified the front of the Police Station does have a large sign indicating the accessible entrance was at the rear of the police station.

No Additional Action required.



d. Town Office

- i. Conference Room #2 table does not provide adequate clearance for wheelchair access.

Action Item: Be prepared to make accommodations to raise the conference room table height by placing blocks under the table and consider. Pursue options to modify the conference room table.

- ii. Conference Room #1 table does provide adequate clearance for wheelchair access.

No additional action required.

- iii. Providing accessible access to Electric Vehicle Charging stations was discussed. Specific standards are still in development. The Town of Bennington EV charging station located at the Town Office is accessible.

Recommendation: Provide small extension of the parking lot pavement up to the wood guard rail at the Town Office EV charging station.

Additionally, as the Town of Bennington continues to install EV charging stations on Town owned facilities ensure to design the stations with accessible access.

e. Senior Center:

- i. The Accessible Parking Spaces at the Senior Center are marked on the pavement, however they lack a designated parking signs.

Action Item: Install a designated accessible parking signs.

- ii. The meals on wheel public restrooms are ADA compliant, however the restroom doors lack appropriate signage to identify the restrooms.

Action Item: Install appropriate signage on the restrooms.

- iii. The Senior Center large room/kitchen area does enable accessible access countertops and appliances.

Recommendation: As the Town of Bennington develops plans for Senior Center improvements and/or developments, incorporate accessible access kitchen areas in designs.

5. General Notes and/or Observations:

- a. All accessible access doors were checked for compliance with ADA standards and unless noted above were found in compliance. Additionally continue to identify and build into facility budgets the installations of automatic door openers.

- b. Peter Johnke commented the Town of Bennington sidewalks were in excellent condition.
- 6. Next Steps:
 - a. Update the Town of Bennington ADA self-audit and Transition Plan
 - b. Review the VCIL prepared report/notes from the visit when they are available.
 - c. Initiate action items and recommendations identified above.