

MINUTES OF MEETING OF July 15, 2024

Hampton Beach State Park Accessibility Feasibility Study
Focus Group – Disabilities

DATE PREPARED: July 16, 2024

LOCATION: Virtual

ATTENDEES: Jennifer Crowell Granite State Independent Living
Stephanie Hurd Future In Sight
Melissa LaRocque Future In Sight
Katharine Harake ACLU
Chase Eagleson NH Council on Developmental Disabilities
Travis Pryor GEI
Nicole Rogers GPI

PURPOSE: Focus Group Meeting - Disabilities

GPI led the discussion following a detailed Agenda. The meeting started with introductions followed by a project debrief and an open discussion period. The following topics were raised:

Discussion Topics:

1. Identifying Accessibility Barriers:

- **Jennifer Crowell:**
 - Major barriers: Beach chairs and parking.
 - Frustration with the US's lag in beach accessibility compared to other countries.
 - Importance of proper platforms and rollout mats to protect and improve accessibility.
- **Stephanie Hurd:**
 - Need for tactile maps at key locations.
 - Suggested audible beeps or markers in water for orientation for the blind.

2. Parking Solutions:

- Discussed the need for more accessible parking, especially at North Beach and 12th and 18th St access points.
- Proposal for paid accessible parking after a free period to encourage turnover.
- Suggestions for shuttle services from off-site parking to the beach.
 - Would provide greater accessibility to entire area
- Jennifer noted issues with access aisles being too narrow and on the wrong side for van accessibility.

3. Access Points and Pathways:

- **Stephanie Hurd:**
 - Emphasized the importance of signage and wayfinding.
- **Chase:**
 - Recommended mobility mats at South Beach to extend accessibility.

4. Event Accessibility:

- Need for viewing platforms and ASL interpreters at events.
- Suggestions for making accessibility plans mandatory for event organizers.

5. Adaptive Equipment and Staff Training:

- Interest in beach wheelchairs that can be used independently.
- Importance of transfer equipment for moving from regular wheelchairs to beach wheelchairs.
- **Jennifer Crowell:**
 - Highlighted the need for staff to understand and manage conditions like autonomic dysreflexia for individuals with spinal cord injuries.
- **Chase:**
 - Suggested cooling areas or shade structures.

6. Communication and Information Transparency:

- Noted the lack of accessible information about services at Hampton Beach.
- Suggestions for creating a dedicated website and improving signage with plain language, larger fonts, and better contrast.
- **Stephanie Hurd:**
 - Proposed tactile maps with shapes and Braille for orientation.(Camp Exciting Adventures- New Durham)
- **Melissa LaRocque**
 - Proposed color contrast and appropriate font size
- **Chase Eagleson**
 - Emphasized the importance of plain language

7. Future Partnerships and Outreach:

- Proposal for partnering with third parties to manage accessibility programs and bridge gaps between various stakeholders.
- Need for active social media engagement to disseminate information widely.

Upcoming Events:

- **Beachability Event:** July 25th
- **Beach Pop-up Event:** July 27th (with tables at Main Beach, South Beach, and North Beach)

Recommendations Summarized:

- **Parking**
 - Add more accessible parking (12th street and 18th street)
 - Ensure access aisles have adequate widths and are correctly positioned for van accessibility (usually out of passenger side, some have ramps out the back)
- **Transportation**
 - Introduce shuttle service from off-site parking to the beach to ease access
- **Access Points / Pathways**
 - Extend mobility mats to more areas, particularly at South Beach
- **Event Accessibility**
 - Install designated viewing platforms
 - Ensure availability of ASL interpreters

- Require event organizers to implement comprehensive accessibility plans
- **Adaptive Equipment / Training**
 - Provide a variety of beach wheelchairs that cater to different needs, including models that allow for indepent use
 - Make transfer equipment available to assist individuals in moving from regular wheelchairs to beach wheelchairs
 - Train staff on managing conditions like autonomic dysreflexia and other disability-specific needs
 - Implement disability awareness training
 - Establish cooling areas or shade structures to help prevent heat-related conditions
- **Communication and Information**
 - Create a dedicated accessibility tab on the website with comprehensive information about available services and features
 - Use plan language, larger fonts, and better contrast on all signage to improve readability
 - Consider tactile maps with shapes and Braille to aid navigation for individuals who are blind or have low vision
 - Research opportunities for wayfinding devices for water use
- **Future Partnerships and Outreach**
 - Partner with third party to help manage accessibility program and bridge gaps between various stakeholders
 - Actively use social media to disseminate information about accessibility improvements and available resources
 - Collaborate with local organizations to promote events and gather broader community feedback

Action Items:

- Nicole to follow up with email containing the meeting transcript and notes.
- Participants encouraged to take and share the survey within their networks.
- Suggestions for further groups to contact for more diverse input.

These minutes constitute our understanding of the discussions and conclusions reached. Please advise us within ten (10) days, in writing, of any exceptions or corrections.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Rogers
Project Manager

cc: Robert White, GPI
Travis Pryor, GEI
Alison Brady, GEI