

MINUTES

Subject:	Existing Conditions Review Meeting Hampton Beach State Park Accessibility Feasibility Study GEI Project No. 2403202
Date/Time:	Wednesday, June 5, 2024; 1:00pm to 3:00pm
Location:	Microsoft Teams Videoconference – GEI / GPI: HBSP Seashell Building Conference Room – Committee / HBSP Staff / Public
Attendees:	<i>Travis Pryor, PLA– GEI Consultants, Inc., Project Manager</i>
<i>Consultant</i>	<i>Alison Brady, EI – GEI Consultants, Inc.</i>
<i>Team</i>	<i>Nicole Rogers, P.E. – Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.</i> <i>Robert White, R.L.A. – Greenman-Pedersen, Inc., Senior Landscape Architect</i>
<i>Committee / HBSP Staff</i>	<i>Johanna Lyons – NH DNCR, State Park Planning & Development Specialist</i> <i>Meredith Collins – NH DNCR, State Park Seacoast Regional Supervisor</i> <i>Brian Wilson – NH DNCR State Parks Director</i> <i>Paul Kelley – NH Governor’s Commission on Disability, Commissioner</i> <i>Thomas Manning – NH Governor’s Commission on Disability, Commissioner</i> <i>Chuck Saia – NH Governor’s Commission on Disability</i> <i>Pat Bushway – Hampton Beach Area Commission</i> <i>Bob Preston – Hampton Beach Area Commission</i> <i>Julia Callahan – NE Passage, Accessibility Specialist</i> <i>Jen Kennedy – Blue Ocean Society, Executive Director</i> <i>Kirsten Howard – NH DES Coastal Program Resilience Program Coordinator</i> <i>Laura Morrissey – NH DNCR State Park Administrative Staff</i>
<i>Public</i>	<i>Katherine Harake – ACLU-NH</i> <i>Rebecca Geekie – Birdability</i> <i>Chase Eagleson – NH Council on Development Disabilities</i>

** Italicized text denotes minutes recorded*

Presentation

GEI and GPI gave a presentation report of the existing conditions assessment findings from:

- *The April 22nd site visit*
- *Public input received to-date*
- *Relevant reference research data and documents reviewed to-date, with key findings from those materials as they pertain to the Accessibility Assessment.*

General Discussion

Following the report presentation, the following general discussion items were noted:

- *Pay attention to using terms like “accessible” and try and stay away from using “handicapped” and “disabled” terms. Understanding that there are legal definitions for parking spaces but we want to make sure it is understood that this study’s goal is to consider universal accessibility for a variety of user needs.*
- *Try and use person first language. For example instead of saying “Julia is autistic” you could say “Julia has autism”.*
- *Compliant, creative and proactive discussions about parking. There are minimal accessible parking spaces available.*
- *A creative approach might be for HBSP to consider time limits and/or fees for accessible parking spaces to support services.*
- *A proactive approach to timed accessible parking and fares looks at associated accessibility revenue needs, which could be generated from fee based accessible parking spaces in a break even approach that supports general public education and outreach on accessibility.*
- *General discussion about fee-based parking, time limits and revenue that serves HBSP needs.*
- *The fact that people with “Handicap” placards are allowed to park anywhere for free does not mean that there is an accessible route from all parking spaces to HBSP facilities. More dispersal of designated accessible parking spaces at all three beaches would be beneficial.*
- *State law requires one hour of free parking for accessible parking spaces and then HBSP can charge a fee for additional time. Legal requirements need to be confirmed in association with this type of improvement option.*
- *Time limits could vary depending on level of demand. For example high use areas could have shorter time limits than other areas with less demand.*
- *Parking passes for accessible spaces could be reserved (on-line) which could be particularly beneficial for pre-visit planning by visitors to the area with accessibility needs. Some senior citizens who would be eligible for free parking as available when they arrive at the South Beach Campground area are interested in paying for reserved spaces to make planning for their visit easier.*
- *Governor’s Commission on Disabilities is happy to discuss parking policy ideas further.*
- *The building improvements at the South Beach campground planned for the fall of 2024 only include repairs to the restrooms.*
- *Parking per the latest NH DOT concept plans is staying in the middle of the Ocean Boulevard right-of-way between north and south bound lanes at Main Beach near Boars Head.*
- *Universal signage is important to consider throughout all HBSP facilities.*

Existing Conditions Review Meeting

- *Are “Van Accessible” spaces required to be used by vans only? No. NH State law allows any “Handicap” license plate vehicle to use these spaces. Educational / signage improvements opportunity?*
- *HBSP is considering additional temporary mats at Main Beach that extend further seaward, as well as adding new ones at locations other than the Seashell Building. May also be considered at South Beach. Not feasible at North Beach. Can't place them below the high tide line.*
- *Some ramp and stair access points at North Beach have large boulders at the shoreline and most are underwater every 12 hours between tide cycles. These issues may come down to a need for improved communication to inform the public about what to expect ahead of their visit to the HBSP facilities.*
- *How can accessibility by wheelchairs to the water be improved? Most people with accessibility needs are interested in access to the beach and water, and not just viewing access. HBSP staff hear this often. Should consider equipment improvements to make physical access improvements to the beach and water. Temporary or permanent access routes across the beach to the intertidal zone are challenging.*
- *Might consider other alternatives like a pier or elevated boardwalks on piles that can be removed and re-installed seasonally.*
- *Improved equipment like heavier beach wheelchairs with flotation on the arm rests so people can roll into the water. Current beach wheelchairs at HBSP have air filled tires which float.*
- *Consider examples from beaches elsewhere like in Rhode Island, which have enhanced accessibility and fishing amenities.*
- *A new study has begun looking at dune crossings in Seabrook.*
- *UNH has done a dune walkover study and developed some conceptual designs.*
- *Locals are interested in volunteering during the assessment to help with public outreach.*
- *NH Disabilities and NH Business Review are holding a presentation on hiring people with accessibility needs this fall.*
- *The NH Business Review would be interested in covering the HBSP Accessibility Feasibility Study.*
- *The Chamber of Commerce is distributing the Accessibility Assessment public outreach info to the Hampton Beach business community. The public input survey may be posted currently in the Chamber of Commerce window?*
- *HBSP is posting the project on their Facebook page.*
- *Ask the Village District to post on their Facebook page.*
- *Consider posting public outreach info on the Town of Hampton's cable channel 22.*
- *Many Canadians are interested in Hampton Beach and information in French would be beneficial.*

- *The Northeast Independent Living Group has been sent the public input survey.*

Next Steps / Action Items

- HBSP staff and public input surveys (*End of August*)
- *Focus Group meetings (July)*
- Improvement Options Brainstorming and Site Tour Committee Meeting (*June 27th*)
- Beach Area Pop-Up public input event to present draft improvement options. (*July 27-28*)
- Draft Improvement Options Committee Review Meeting (*First week of August?*)
- Draft Report Committee Review Meeting (*Last week of August?*)
- Final Report Presentation Committee Meeting (*First week of October?*)
- Final Report submission (October 31, 2024)

The foregoing reflects the writer's understanding of items discussed and conclusions reached. Any discrepancies or misunderstandings should be brought to the attention of the writer immediately. Please forward any comments, errors, or omissions to these meeting notes to Travis Pryor at tpryor@geiconsultants.com.

TJP/ACB (GEI)

Nicole Rogers (GPI)