



MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office

DATE: October 3, 2019

TO: Human Relations Commission

FROM: Melvin E. Gaines, Principal Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Update on the City of Mountain View ADA Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

The Fiscal Year 2019-20 Human Relations Commission (HRC) Work Plan includes a work item to research, draft, and recommend a City policy to improve access at City Council meetings and public hearings for people with disabilities (e.g., American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for deaf and hard-of-hearing residents). This interest may be met in part or in full by an established City Manager's Office goal to conduct an updated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation and transition plan. This memorandum provides an informational update on the City of Mountain View's existing ADA policy and procedures and the scope and tentative timeline for the update process. In addition, staff will seek the appointment of an HRC subcommittee to provide input on potential ADA improvements the City can make related to the accessibility of City Council meetings and public hearings during the self-evaluation process.

BACKGROUND

The ADA became law in 1990 and requires that state and local governments make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes physical access at government facilities (including parks and sidewalks) and events as well as policy changes to ensure accessibility. The ADA required public entities with 50 or more employees to develop a transition plan detailing any structural changes that would be undertaken to achieve program access and specifying a time frame for their completion. Public entities were also required to provide an opportunity for interested individuals to participate in the self-evaluation and transition planning processes by submitting comments.

The City of Mountain View conducted an ADA self-evaluation and prepared a transition plan in 1992. An update of the City's actions is included as Attachment 1 to this memo and summarized below. While the ADA does not specifically require public entities to conduct a new self-evaluation or develop a new transition plan, they are encouraged to do so. Thus, the City Manager's Office plans to lead an updated ADA self-evaluation and transition plan during the current Fiscal Year 2019-20.

City of Mountain View ADA Policies

Since the ADA was enacted, the City has worked diligently to remove access barriers to City facilities and programs and ensure its ADA compliance. In 1992, the City conducted a self-evaluation and developed an 11-point implementation plan for reaching ADA Title I (employment) and Title II (Public Service) compliance. This plan identified outstanding compliance-related issues and led to the development of an ADA Transition Plan, ahead of the deadlines included in the 1990 ADA.

In Fiscal Year 1999-00, the City conducted another self-evaluation process to determine if the priorities and projects identified adequately and accurately reflected the efforts the City had undertaken and to reprioritize efforts accordingly. Ultimately, all of the items identified in the plans have been completed and incorporated into the City's administrative guidelines, including: designating an ADA Coordinator; creating a complaint process; posting of notices; adding signage about accessible entries; providing ADA sensitivity training to employees; and updating employment practices and job descriptions. For more detail, see Attachment 1.

Upgrade of City Facilities

In April 2002, the City hired a consultant to conduct a survey of City facilities and parks, identify facilities with access barriers that required improvement, and to provide a prioritized list of improvements. Thirty-three (33) facilities and 26 parks were surveyed, and a database of 600 entries was provided to the City for prioritization. A working team of City staff reviewed the data and developed a long-term implementation plan that prioritized and scheduled improvements. Improvements to City facilities that have been completed since 2001 include: a variety of accommodations in the Council Chambers, including making assistive listening devices available; improvements to five City parking lots, the Teen Center, and park playground equipment and surfaces; modernization of City elevators; and installation of Braille signage throughout City Hall and accessible door operators in various locations. For more detail, see Attachment 1.

Upgrade of City Sidewalks

The ADA requires that new streets or sidewalks be built in accordance with ADA standards, which includes installation of curb ramps. The requirement for curb ramp compliance of pre-ADA streets and sidewalks may also be triggered when streets or sidewalks are altered. The City periodically surveys streets and sidewalks to assess each curb for ADA compliance. The City ensures that all new curbs are ADA-compliant and improves existing noncompliant curbs through the Capital Improvement Program.

DISCUSSION

ADA compliance is an ongoing effort and requires periodic review of City facilities and programs. The City Council allocated funding in the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Budget for consultant services to help staff conduct an ADA self-evaluation and develop a transition plan.

The self-evaluation process will include a review of City facilities (including the Council Chambers), sidewalks, programs, signage, and the municipal website. Public input is an essential component to the self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation process will include community engagement activities that could include public meetings, surveys, and focus group discussions.

Staff recommends the formation of an HRC subcommittee related to potential ADA improvements to accessibility at City Council meetings and public hearings for people with disabilities. The subcommittee could provide input or facilitate the collection of input from stakeholders on this topic during the self-evaluation process, which could include hosting meetings, leading focus group discussions, conducting outreach to disabled persons and their advocates, and conducting surveys. Any input the subcommittee provides could be included in the self-evaluation, which would inform the City's new transition plan.

The timeline for the self-evaluation process will be determined once a consultant is selected. Staff anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services in late 2019 and selecting a consultant by February 2020. The consultant's proposal will include a timeline for activities throughout the self-evaluation process. Staff will return to the HRC with an update on the process and a project timeline once a consultant is selected. An HRC subcommittee could be appointed at this time.

MEG/6/MGR

612-10-03-19M

- Attachment:
1. Summary of Completed ADA Programs, Policies and Facilities Improvements
 2. Administrative Instruction No. 9-1