

# Centennial Park Accessibility Report/ Onsite Review 6-8-19

## Introduction

Chassell Township requested a formal site review of their premier Centennial Park along the shoreline of Lake Superior. SAIL had earlier in the year supported the Township's efforts to have their updated five year Parks and Recreation Plan accepted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). At that time, SAIL recommended the Township consider a formal site review of Centennial Park for ADA compliance. Lynn Gierke, the Township Clerk managed arrangements for a formal site review in June after the Township voted to pay for a site review conducted by the Superior Alliance for Independent Living, a member of the Disability Network of Michigan(SAIL) to evaluate the site, and report the findings.

SAIL is the non-profit Center for Independent Living (CIL) which is charged with assisting individuals with disabilities and community partners in the fifteen counties of the Upper Peninsula. The CILs are responsible for facilitating the local achievement of compliance with the standards developed through the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act of 1980 as amended in 2010. SAIL has been serving the UP for the last 20 years.

## How to Use This Report

The review and Transition Plan provide a snapshot in time of the facility. This report provides a foundation on which to build. The evaluation of facilities is understood to be an ongoing process.

This report is in not intended to certify compliance or non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Many of the factors which can affect whether or not a facility is ADA compliant are outside the scope of the evaluation performed by SAIL and may include:

- What date the original construction and any previous renovations?
- What is the cost of accessibility improvements in relation to the overall budget of the facility or its parent organization?

In addition, compliance with ADA technical Guidelines does not guarantee that a facility is accessible to the maximum extent possible. The ADA is intended as a baseline standard that will result in minimum accessibility at a majority of facilities. Additions or improvements to a facility may be desired to improve facility functionality for the maximum number of users.

For the purpose of this report, SAIL focused on specific elements of the park measuring the current accessibility of the parking areas and the toilet rooms. This involved evaluating the physical approach to the Pavilion Building and the parking in the boat launching area and determining whether the toilet rooms in the Pavilion and the two toilet rooms near the fish cleaning station were accessible. Less formal assessments were conducted of the fishing pier and boat launch area; the Boardwalk adjacent to the pier; and the picnic area that is part of the playground and courts for volleyball and basketball.

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## Recommendations are divided into three levels:

- **Level 1** modifications include moving furniture, staff training, minor modifications to existing equipment, etc.
- **Level 2** modifications include purchasing equipment, significant modifications to existing equipment, or significant research or planning.
- **Level 3** modifications likely require construction and/or significant expense.

## Terminology:

Unless otherwise specified, the term “slope” is used to denote a continuous change of level in the direction of travel and the term “cross slope” is used to denote a continuous change of level perpendicular to the direction of travel.

## Process:

On June 8, 2019, SAIL evaluated Centennial Park. The evaluation was performed by Lucy Wilcox, a certified ADA Coordinator, and Allen and Joan Beauchamp, members of the Ambassador Accessibility Team. The team was joined by the Township Clerk, Lynn Gierke and a member of the Planning Committee of Chassell Township, Brian Waters.

The Accessibility Team collected measurements on the elements related to the parking and approach to the Pavilion and the approach to the area with toilets near the fish cleaning station and the boat launch. We focused on the accessible routes connecting public elements and spaces, entry points to structures, and the presence of clear floor spaces in restrooms, and specifications of restroom fixtures. Measurements were recorded and compared to the ADA Guidelines.

Recommendations for each fixture were determined based primarily on elements with a score indicating that it does not meet or exceeds the ADA Guidelines. In some instances, no recommendations for elements which do not meet ADA Guidelines were provided because it was judged likely that alterations were technically unfeasible at this time or not worth the financial investment for a small gain. In other instances, Universal Design recommendations may be included. The reviewers are informed by the principles of Universal Design. Universal Design involves designing products and spaces so that they can be used by the widest range of people possible. Universal design evolved from Accessible Design, a design process that addresses the needs of people with disabilities. Universal Design goes further by recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities. Everyone, even the most able-bodied person, passes through childhood, periods of temporary illness, injury and old age. By designing for this human diversity, we can create things that will be easier for **all people** to use.

SOURCE: <http://www.universaldesign.com/about-universal-design.html>

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## I. Aerial View of the Centennial Pavilion



## II. Approach and Entrance/Egress at the Pavilion- Parking available in far side of the Pavilion



**A. The Parking Lot:** The parking lot surface is in good condition and there is more than adequate handicapped parking provided. Currently there is no standing signage to mark the Handicap accessible spaces as required by the ADA. The parking spaces are marked by paint markings on the pavement and there is no Van accessible parking designated. **Level 1 Recommendations: 1.** Purchase signage that can be posted at a minimum of 60 inches above the ground and designate 2 Van accessible parking spaces at the edge of the

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parking lot close to Lake Superior. Given the space available designating the two spaces 8 feet each and sharing an access aisle of 8 feet would utilize spaces already in place. **Level 1 Recommendations:** 1. Purchase signage that can be posted at a minimum of 60 inches above the ground and designate 2 Van accessible parking spaces at the edge of the parking lot close to Lake Superior. Given the spaces are already designated handicapped parking--the main change is the designation as Van Accessible and these spaces do provide the easiest access route into the Pavilion.



2. The five accessible parking spaces of 8 ft wide positioned next to the Pavilion as you reach the west side of the parking lot actually exceed the required number by ADA guidelines and Chassell is commended for their planning. **Level 1 modification-** There is the need to meet ADA signage standards for the five spaces with each space marked with handicap signage at least 60 inches above the parking lot. Painted signage is optional and during winters in the UP not effective. We recommend the new signage that shows the wheelchair in motion, the Go Logo. It is essential to preserve the access lanes of at least 5 feet wide shared by 2 autos.

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### B. Accessible Entrance to the Pavilion—



From the parking lot, there is an accessible ramp up to the main entrance to the Pavilion. Slope does not exceed allowable 1:20, i.e. for every inch of height change there is at least 20 inches of route run.

The entrance door on the west side of the building is accessible. The threshold into the building is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch which is the outside limit of height allowed. The interior threshold is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch beveled with rubber adhesive. The door can be opened with less than 5lbs of pressure and the door handle is 35 inches above ground—within the limit of a maximum height of 48 inches above ground. The door

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opening exceeds the minimum of at least 32 inches between the face of the door and the stop when the door is opened 90 degrees.

**III. Pavilion Restrooms**---Both the men and women's restrooms are identical and neither is accessible. There are serious issues with the doors, the placement of the toilets, the lack of hand bars and the inability to modify the existing restrooms to become accessible without significant remodeling. The particle board used to separate the stalls make it impossible modify with mandatory hand bars. The conversation among the SAIL team and Chassell representatives was that for the Pavilion to have accessible restrooms is a long term project and we moved to a focus on the restrooms that were built recently with the intention to be accessible. It was noted by the Township Clerk that for their large events like the upcoming Strawberry Festival, they rent a handicap accessible porta-john for the event and placed at the edge of the Pavilion parking lot. This modification is a good step toward creating an accessible event at the Pavilion and the Township is commended for that.



**IV. Accessible Egress from the Pavilion:** We moved to exiting the Pavilion building and found that the route to leave the building on the pathway to the playground and fishing pier was raised above the  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch allowed. To become compliant will be a **Level I modification**.

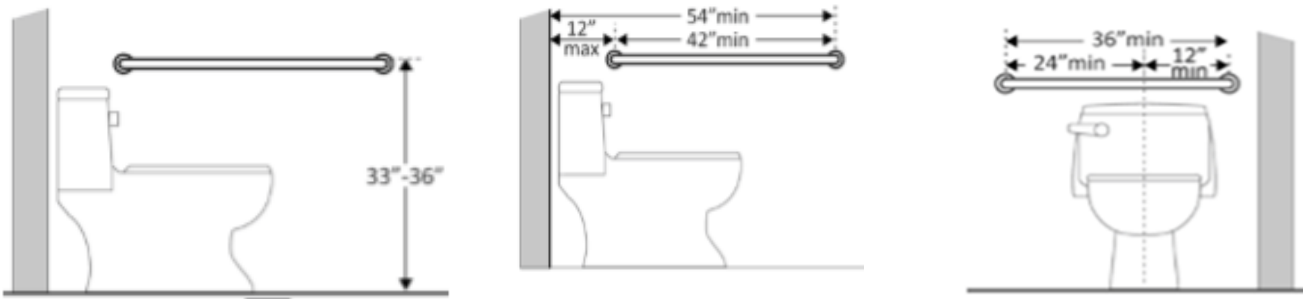
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It is not an option to leave by the door on this side of the Pavilion near the Playground parking lot due to the step down from the door. This could be remediated with a simple ramp to achieve the threshold of a maximum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  an inch and a slope of no more than 1:20 inches. This is also a **Level 1 modification**.



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**V. Toilet rooms near the fish cleaning station-** The review team directed their consideration of accessible toilets to the separate toilet rooms near the fish cleaning station. The Chassell participants believed the two restrooms there are accessible. We will review accessible routes to the building in the next section. The two restrooms are identical and both are accessible with one readily resolved barrier. To be accessible there must be a turning radius once inside the toilet room of 60 inches. That standard is met. There must be hand bars placed with specific requirements of the length of the hand bars and the alignment with the toilet. The diagrams above show the required measurements for the hand bars in an accessible bathroom. The standards were met for the hand bars behind the toilet and on the wall beside the toilet.



However, adding the vertical bar (which is definitely not an ADA standard) created an error in the location of the toilet paper holder so it is inaccessible to the user and the space between the bar and toilet holder is not sufficient. There were holes in the cement block that indicated the holder had been moved when the vertical bar was added. **The Level 1 recommendation** is to revert to the original set up without the vertical bar.



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The Lavatory(sink) meets all the standards in terms of the maneuverability of a wheelchair user in approaching the sink and the pipes wrapped in plastic to protect against direct contact. Also, the placement of the soap and towel dispenser meet the standards for accessibility. Under the ADA Design Standards, the operable parts of paper towel dispensers must not be more than 48-inches above the finished floor.

As both restrooms are identical, it is a **Level 1 recommendation** the signage be changed from Men and Women to unisex or all gender and both toilets could be used by any person. This could make the toilets available for whomever comes next regardless of sex/gender. Also signage needs to meet the standards to be accessible for low vision or blind users. The reviewers can provide information about purchasing signage that meets ADA standards for all signage standards and the placement of the signage on the doors or to the side opposite of the door opening.

### VI. Approach to Restrooms near the Fish Cleaning Station



A. Route to the new restrooms—at this time there is not an accessible route with the required slope. The surface of an accessible route needs to be firm and stable and slip resistant. The route must meet the requirements for maximum slope of 1:20 inches and the cross slope requirement of 1:48 per inch. The access to the restrooms from the Pavilion could be a pathway down the grassy slope to the restroom building (see Attachment 1\_Drawing of Centennial Park). The drawing provides detail on the entire park and is helpful in considering other options for an accessible route. One possibility is to come out of the Pavilion by the parking lot for the playground and down to the boat launch and pier on a partially existing pathway. It could be that a combination for the two would be needed in terms of an accessible route to the restrooms from the playground area. It is in the ADA Guidelines to

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attempt the easiest (i.e. shortest) accessible route for the individual with disability.

**This is a Level 3 recommendation** in that it will require exploring different options and will require some new construction.

## VII. Consideration of Access to the Boat Launch and Pier and Repair of the Boardwalk

A. The team moved down to the parking at the Boat Launch area and measured the slope down to the lake and there is a varying degree of slope down to the boat launch and pier with one accessible parking space near the water. While the general change in slope is minimal for most walkers to slope measurements taken by the reviewers varied from 2 to 6 % going down from the Boat Launch Parking lot toward the restrooms and the boat launch and pier. The slope for access to the Pier by wheelchair is not within ADA guidelines with the slope being greater than 6% before reaching the level portion of the pier. To create an accessible route down to the pier and boat launch and Boardwalk would be a Level 3 recommendation. Options for the project could be:

1. Wrap the accessible route into a single project focused on rebuilding the Boardwalk and creating an accessible route from the paved parking lot to the restrooms and down to the pier and boat launch and Boardwalk There would be a connection between the Boardwalk and the pier to reduce the level of slope up to the pier to the maximum of 1:20 inches. The route could then connect with the current path that circulates the playground and ball court areas.

2. Another possible option is to create a continuous pathway from the already existing pathway from the parking lot near the playground and extend the pathway along the Lake and go up to the accessible restrooms. This would require some re-work of the existing pathway to the playground as the slope is greater in parts than ADA guidelines allow. Also this is not the easiest route for access to the restrooms from the parking lot.

It is evident there are multiple aspects of the Park that need to be reviewed probably by a landscape architect to determine the most effective options in terms of meeting accessibility standards and the most efficient construction costs.

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## B. Accessible Parking at the Parking near the Pier



Almost hidden from sight is the handicap signage that is above ground but barely visible due to the overgrowth of plants and bushes. **Level 1 Recommendation** to use new signage and consider Van accessible space 8ft wide with access lane of 8 ft to assure larger vehicle could be accommodated at this site by the waterfront.

**VIII. Findings regarding the Playground Area**—The SAIL review of the playground area and the picnic pavilion in that area was not as detailed as the accessible parking and restrooms. Key observations include:

- A. The picnic pavilion is accessible with the need to mend the juncture from the pathway into the pavilion so it is no higher than  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". (Level 1 modification)
- B. The pathway from the parking lot down to the playground area has a slope that exceeds the maximum of 1:20. If this is to be considered an accessible pathway, there will need to be reworking of the pathway down from the parking lot. As mentioned above, this could be done as part of an accessibility route to the accessible toilets.

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Pathway down to Playground



**C.** The pathway that surrounds the playground and ball courts is generally in good condition. Brian Waters made the conjecture that the pathway is 60 inches wide across the entire course of the playground area but the edge may be overgrown at different parts of the pathway. If this is the case, then given the width and existing slope the pathway would be accessible. **A Level 1 Recommendation** is to edge the pathway and be sure of the 60" width before any additional work is done in that area.

**D. The existing playground equipment** does not meet the standards for new playground construction for children with two different areas for children between 2 to 5 years old and 5-12 yrs old (See Attachment 2 Playground –Accessible Play Areas). There is no mandatory requirement to change an existing playground but the Township may decide to investigate how other communities in the UP are using DNR grants and local fundraising to add an enhancement to their park with an accessible playground.

## IX. Summary of Accessibility findings at Centennial Park:

It was an honor and a privilege to be requested to provide an accessibility study at Centennial Park with a focus on accessible parking and restrooms and accessible routes to various aspects of the Park. The Township Clerk was of great assistance in this project from its beginning in March and the current review on 6-8-19. Brian Waters' participation was invaluable in our discussions of current issues and ideas for the future. The team from SAIL included Allen and Joan Beauchamp and their involvement in the review was crucial for accurate reporting and invaluable experience of a wheelchair user.

SAIL has prepared a **Transition Plan** that summarizes the findings of the report. It is important to state this is the Township's Transition Plan—not SAIL's. The format is

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recommended by SAIL as a tool to move forward on the modifications that are an easy win and then move on to the more challenging items. You may change the format or use any program you would like and it is the Township's responsibility to review the Plan and make any changes based on your future discussions and plans. It is the Township who will complete the final two columns. Legally a transition plan is required by the amendment to the ADA in 2010. Maintaining the Plan and updating it regularly will meet the requirement to be moving toward accessibility in your existing park facility. The Township staff is referred to the Transition Plan for the list of all the recommendations.

For the purpose of this summary, the key finding is there are two accessible toilets on the Park grounds once the easily accomplished **Level 1 Recommendations** are met. The more challenging issues are the lack of accessible routes to the restroom building near the fish cleaning station. There are no accessible routes from the accessible parking areas near the playground or near the pier or the Pavilion. The lack of accessible routes to the accessible toilets creates an important **Level 3 Recommendation** that an accessible route to the toilet rooms be created either from the Pavilion or from the accessible parking near the Playground (or both?). The township does provide a handicap accessible porta-John for various larger public events held at the Pavilion and that is a reasonable temporary solution until further permanent solutions are developed.

**Included in the Transition Plan** are suggestions outlined by the review team that do not require immediate resolution but would help Centennial Park to reach the premier status that it is evident the Township is seeking for their community members and visitors to the area.

SAIL hopes that the report, transition plan, and the attachments and guides attached as reference material are helpful in the Chassell Township efforts to become more inclusive. SAIL welcomes any future opportunities to work with the Township to accomplish the specific recommendations in this report as well other projects that may accomplish greater access for all throughout their community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Wilcox, Certified ADA Coordinator and SAIL Accessibility Services Coordinator

Cc: SAIL CEO, Sarah Peurakoski