

Gautho, Julia

From: Janet Edwards <bsjedwards@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:31 PM
To: City Council
Subject: City council meeting 4-25-24
Attachments: Sidewalk project.docx

Please include my report on parking in and around the city building for handicap people in reference to adding a sidewalk in the parking lot on the end away from City Hall. It also includes some comments about finding and using the elevator.

Thank you

Janet Edwards

part of the E&D TAC (Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee) part of the county Regional Transportation Commission

1. The proposed sidewalk is on a section of land that is very steep. It would be helpful if the sidewalk would have less slope than the current driveway. I was able to get up the driveway in my electric wheelchair but I am not sure if a person in a manual wheelchair would be able to get up the driveway without assistance.
2. The upper lot has no handicapped parking at all. There currently are two spaces for electric vehicle charging. How did this happen, NO handicap parking at all. Just so you know when a person uses their own car they have to choose which side of the car to get in and out of. There is no switching between driver or passenger sides, I use a ramp, but when I had my two door car, it was almost impossible to change sides and then only if someone came with me. What this means is that I have to find a parking space where I can get out of the correct side. I can only use about one-half of all handicap parking spaces. You must have handicap parking spaces in pairs giving people the option of which way they can get out of their vehicle. Backing a large van or other vehicle into a space is difficult, think about how a regular person backs up, you put one arm across the seat and one hand on the wheel. I cannot do that, I must have one hand on the wheel and one hand on the hand controls that control the gas and brake. I rely mostly on my mirrors to see behind me. Also if I want to get into my "trunk" there has to be space for my chair to get between the trunk and any obstruction to the back, like a pole or a wall. Parking backwards is not a good thing for me.
3. Driving up the lot entrance from behind the city hall building is very steep and a wheelchair would have a difficult time going up that even in an electric wheelchair. I did go up the sidewalk on the right side but it was difficult. When I got there, no curb cut was at the top and only a very small space was available to turn around. A person in a manual chair would have a difficult time going up or down that sidewalk as it is very steep. With my electric chair it was fairly easy but still scary as it is narrow. I suggest that you put up a sign near that sidewalk on the lower end telling people in a wheelchair where to go to get to the upper lot.

If I parked in the upper lot and wanted to go down to city hall building for the first time choosing the driveway is bad and the sidewalk is also inaccessible. There are no signs that point to the ramp that goes down to the back of the city hall building. When I was there several cars covered the entrance and I could not find the way down, except for the help of a great city staffer who showed me the way. She had come out of a meeting for a break so one could not expect a person to be on duty all the time to direct people. A sign needs to be there to show the way down to the base of the city hall building. (Maybe two signs, one by the ramp and one near the roadway entrance.)
4. If a person wanted to go to the upper lot from the city hall building there are no signs telling anyone that you need to take the elevator or a map directing them to go that way. A map would be a good idea for everyone as it might help people who pull into the parking area in front of city hall and get directions for more parking if that lot was full. It should include Parking this way and walking and handicap this way with an arrow.
5. The elevator is also a problem, it is easy to get into it, but I cannot turn around in it. So that means that I might have a problem reaching the buttons to press. The elevator might go to the next floor automatically but maybe not. I am fairly able to reach buttons but sometimes not. I did not go in the elevator by myself so I do not know. If I was a person with more limited mobility, like a quadriplegic

person went in they would almost definitely not be able to reach the buttons. Oh so I should go in backwards into the elevator, that may or may not work, it depends on how fast the door closes. The night I was there it tried to close on me when I was getting out of the elevator so that I got hit by the door. In addition I might not be able to reach the buttons facing forward and a quadriplegic person might not as well.

6. Just so you know the lower lot does have 5 handicap spaces and they are all on asphalt but sometimes if I can find the right spot I might park in regular space if the handicap spaces are full. But almost all the parking spaces in that lot are on some sort of metal with plant debris in them, I would not park in one of these spaces for fear of getting stuck and/or tearing up my wheels.

Thank you so much for asking and receiving this information, it is so much better to do some handicap changes when you are doing another project. I am always willing to come out and see any project and show you my special issues when it comes to a wheelchair.

Janet Edwards

From E&D TAC(Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee of the Santa Cruz Country Regional Transportation Commission)