

Notes From First Advisory Council
SUGGESTIONS

PROBLEMS

COMMENTS

ACCESSIBILITY FROM OUTSIDE

From subway:

Difficult to find.	Clear subway or telex directions.
Corner is dangerous.	Stoplight.
	Policeman at peak hours.

Parking:

Spaces drop off suddenly.	Permanent spaces needed.
No clear parking signs.	

Gate to parking area:

Difficult for person alone in wheelchair to open.	
Sign says "handicapped".	Wheelchair symbol at gate.

Ramp:

Wood slats not best surface; slippery.
No railing.
No lights on ramp.
No ramp to milk bottle.

Doors:

Difficulty finding correct door.	Explanation beforehand on telephone, telex or What's Up Line which describes layout.
	Security guard on alert to assist.
	Automatic doors.

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ACCESSIBILITY INSIDE

Front desk:

Way from door to desk confusing.

Explanation beforehand on telephone, telex or What's Up Line which describes layout and guide ropes leading to front desk.
Security guard on alert to assist.

Floor surface:

A few spots where wooden floor projects (near vocational exhibit).
Slippery in a few places.
Attic floor slightly crooked and wheelchair rolled a little, but just a minor hitch.
Suggestions for the unescorted blind:

Floor surface should be consistent, like a trail to follow.

Stairs:

Suggestions for unescorted blind:

Stairs hazardous and confusing.

Floor surface should be consistent, matching at top and bottom.
Explanation or warning before using stairs.
Different railing arrangement.
Different stairs.

Elevators:

Difficult to find.

Give handout at desk which describes location.

Marked with international symbol for elevator, with which many are unfamiliar.
Access to the fourth floor confusing.
Segregates the handicapped.
Makes you feel like you're "sneaking around" in back.

Have separate elevator for freight.
Explain beforehand.
Mark appropriately.
Have sound system.

Crowded on busy days.
Difficult for the unescorted blind to find.
Difficult for the unescorted blind to know what floor they are on.

<u>PROBLEMS</u>	<u>SUGGESTIONS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Inside Accessibility, cont'd.		
<u>Restrooms:</u>		
Mirrors and soap too high in restrooms near MacDonald's. Serve to segregate the handicapped. Signs perhaps not large enough. For blind unescorted: Map at desk does not mark restrooms.	Mark appropriately.	
<u>Telephone booths:</u>		
Hard to hear at, when museum is noisy. Find out if these telephones will interfere with hearing aids-- some do.	Make booths closed, easier to hear in. Put in volume control.	
<u>Rest areas:</u>		
Area downstairs not comfortable. Area downstairs not quiet. For sensitive eyes: forbid smoking, or limit to these areas?		
<u>Layout:</u>		
Is confusing. Exhibits are difficult to reach, so spread out. Special mention of difficulty in finding the wigwam.	Explanantion beforehand by staff. by raised line maps. by 3-D map. by telephone or telex. by audio cassette tape tours, esp. for the blind, that in addition to giving a tour, also explain how to get to next exhibit.	
Rerouting for handicapped not possible when museum is crowded.		

PROBLEMSSUGGESTIONSCOMMENTSPROGRAMMATIC SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING AROUND
IN THE EXHIBITSSigns, graphics, print:

Computers inaccessible to the blind.
Computer print very small, not easy to read.
Type-out in TTY (in the What If You Couldn't?
exhibit) too high for person in wheelchair to
read.

For marking the exhibits more clearly:

More signs needed in some places.
Many graphics too high and not big enough
for younger children.
More kinesthetic descriptions for severely
disabled.

Maneuverability:

Activity aimed primarily at fine motor
skills. Need more activity for generalized
motor function.
Maneuverability difficult in store, health
center and work exhibits.
Manhole and wigwam have no warning about
their limited headspace.
Adult wheelchair won't fit in wigwam
(although child's and adult reclining will).
Floor of wigwam not soft for crawling.
Tables are the right height for children but
not for adults.
Wheelchair in What If You Couldn't? too big
for small children.
Grandmother's house confusing.
Grandmother's house, computer, and manhole
not accessible to physically impaired children.
Person in wheelchair would have trouble looking
in upper drawers of Living Things.

Have a verbal readout for computers.

Put signs and pictures in 3-D; esp.
in the Indian exhibit, put the wood
frames of father and son in 3-D.

Widen and raise height of doorway.
Mark with warning.

Explain about the levels beforehand.

PROBLEMS

Gettting Around, cont'd.

Enjoyment:

Overemphasis on appeal to vision.

People do not always realize the drawers in Living Things can be opened.

Assembly line is confusing.

Things in exhibits get moved and the blind can't find them. Ex., corn, American Indian exhibit; paper in the brailler, What If You Couldn't? exhibit; wood in primitive tools.

Problem: how to make them stay in one place?

Different handicaps are limited by different exhibits.

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Appeal to other senses: touch, smell.
More audio aids, for ex. American Indian chants or music.
Put up signs, and otherwise appropriately mark (braille, other).

Let the handicapped know before they go into the exhibits, which exhibits they will find the easiest to appreciate and which they will find frustrating. Ex., let them know some of the Living Things drawers are very high; let them know the juke box is brailled; let them know where they will have trouble moving around or what they can't see.

Reinforce this information at the front desk with the same information at each exhibit.

Have a code at each exhibit, coded with graphics, with a rating system.

PROBLEMS

PROGRAMMATIC SUGGESTIONS FOR RECEIVING FULLER INSTRUCTIONAL BENEFITS FROM THE EXHIBITS

Resource Center unavailable to the blind.
Some aids for making the disabled more
independent in the museum:

Only 4% blind read braille. How heavily to
rely on braille and how heavily on parents,
staff? Will kids come with parents? Should
they be encouraged not to? Will staff get too
busy sometimes to be able to help everyone?
To help parents with their children:

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Go through exhibit profile sheets, make
lists of what each exhibit is supposed
to teach, and check off which disabili-
ties will or will not learn and how much;
make improvement suggestions, by
disability.

Have speaking books.
TTY, telex, telephone that describes
public services (as described earlier).
Audio cassette tours (as described
earlier).
Raised line maps, 3-D, models (as
described earlier).
Explanation by telephone at each
exhibit, with a recording in it.
Have a qualified interpreter at all
times, or available by appointment.
Braille and largeprint handouts for
adults.
Braille explanation at each exhibit.

Have orientation for parents about
sharing exhibits with kids; up to now
there is this only for groups but not
for general public.

COMMENTS

PROBLEMSSUGGESTIONSCOMMENTSSTAFF

Qualities in good staff:

Sympathetic but not condescending.
Knowledgeable in the basics in how to help.

Not over-protective; visitors have shown their independence simply by coming. Staff should, however, always be prepared to help, and approach voluntarily when they see someone.

Should go slower than they do.

How to explain the exhibits to each kind of disability.

How well-oriented a person is and how much help they will or will not need, for example, to ask the blind how much they can see.

This staff may need more knowledge of the range of disability/ability that is present in any disability category.

How much to rely on staff, on parents, on guides, on cassettes, on explanations, on self?

Staff orientation:

Have workshops taught by disabled.
Hire handicapped staff.
Program for kids to be trained as guides, interns, and assistants to the handicapped.

The younger interns the museum has now appeared reticent about approaching disabled visitors.

PROBLEMS

EDUCATING THE ABLE-BODIED PUBLIC

How to make the general public aware of the hidden problems the handicapped encounter everywhere.

How to make the general public aware of all the devices and aids the handicapped use.

How to make the general public mix naturally with the disabled.

TO FIND A WIDER PUBLIC

To get into the handicapped grapevine:

Special services and projects:

For more suggestions:

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Have museum staff point out devices and aids.

Blind: Mass. Radio Reading Station
(let them know the specifics of the program, and why the blind would want to come and how they are to get there, etc.)

Deaf: Mass. State Assoc. for the Deaf.
(They will help send out flyers, but it is suggested we help donate postage.)

Parents of the deaf in public schools:
Mass. Office of Deafness 727-5106, for mailing list.

Publicize in agency newsletters, schools.
Advertise accessibility of museum and new location in self-help and professional organizations.

Publicize each special service.
Suggest times when the museum is less crowded.

Encourage the disabled to come alone.
Publicize this is a "fun" museum, as people think of museums as boring.

Give puppet shows and performances about handicaps and by handicapped persons.
Plan a special program for 1980, International Year of the Disabled.

Hand out questionnaire to general public.

COMMENTS

PROBLEMSSUGGESTIONSCOMMENTSWHAT IF YOU COULDN'T? EXHIBIT

kurzweil broken.
needs more staff.
needs a handout for the public.
wheelchair too big for younger children.
wheelchair should be able to travel the
entire exhibit.
need another wheelchair.
travel too difficult.
hearing impairment equipment broken.
information about what happens for a deaf
person if equipment breaks.
learning disabilities and emotional problems
sections difficult to understand.
mental retardation unit a disappointment.