



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Disabilities Commission

July 14, 2016

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: Columbia Disabilities Commission

Subject: Columbia Regional Airport Accessibility Services

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

The Columbia Disabilities Commission has examined the ADA Accessibility at the Columbia Regional Airport and has significant concerns with accessibility at the existing facility.

A survey was conducted in 2012 by Jim de Jong, Executive Director of the Great Plains ADA Center and Aimee Wehmeier and Scout Merry of Services for Independent Living. There are a multitude of issues ranging from accessible parking to the path of travel to the restrooms and beyond. Those problems remain today. Please see the attached report.

Perhaps the most concerning item is the fact that wheelchair users have to transfer in all kinds of weather on the tarmac into a small metal aisle chair and then pulled or pushed by airport staff up a very skinny and steep metal ramp to be able to board the planes. It's not just dangerous and a liability risk, it's also demeaning and dehumanizing.

The Columbia Disabilities Commission has reviewed the preliminary designs prepared by Parsons – Brinkerhoff for a new airport facility and finds it would meet ADA requirements. The Commission is excited about the opportunity to improve the airport facility and remains ready to assist in any way to improve the accessibility of the Columbia Regional Airport.

Chuck Graham, Chair
Columbia Disabilities Commission

Attachment: 2012 Accessibility Survey of Columbia Regional Airport
By Great Plains ADA Center & Services for Independent Living

Below is a 2012 Survey Conducted at COU.

**Overview of Accessibility Issues with
The Columbia Regional Airport**

Conducting survey:

Jim DeYoung-Great Plains ADA
Aimee Wehemeier-Services for Independent Living
Scout Merry-Services for Independent Living

- The concrete, all around the building, does not constitute a smooth and level surface. In some places this makes travel difficult, in other places it is out of compliance and a very real hazard.
- Accessible parking signs are too low, they are out of code.
- The truncated domes are not to code.
- Ramp from parking area going toward front entrance needs handrails due to slope (rise?)
- The front doors are out of compliance due to lack of backup power supply. This is critical.
- The doorway to the smoking area is not accessible due to threshold rise; it must be less than ¼ inch
- Fixed seating leaves no emergency wall space for people using wheelchairs. The only wall space has trash and recycling receptacles. They could be moved as part of emergency procedures.
- All fixed seating leaves no seating options for passengers traveling together with a wheelchair user in the group.

Bathrooms: Men's

- Pipes need to be wrapped
- Trash can needs to be in different location.
- Hooks need to be lowered. (second set, like in Women's restroom is suggested)
- Signage should be beside door for code.

(Following items are not out of code, but changes can be made for greater accessibility)

- Back of toilet should have a flat surface for stabilization.
- Automatic door opener would be very helpful.
- Toilet paper dispenser that is easier and more continuous.

Bathroom: Women's

- Pipes need to be wrapped
- Trashcan needs to be moved
- Door does not meet code. Door opener would solve this, otherwise it would require moving walls or entrance to bathroom.
- Second grab bar is needed behind toilet.
- Signage should be beside door for code.

(Following items are not out of code, but changes can be made for greater accessibility)

- The paper towel dispenser is in the line of travel for a person with a visual impairment. It also takes travel to get to dispenser, so for a manual wheelchair user, this requires pushing the chair with wet hands to get to towels to dry their hands. Could be moved to sink area and be more convenient for all users.
- Back of toilet should have a flat surface for stabilization.
- Toilet paper dispenser that is easier and more continuous.

General Comments:

- The restaurant is inaccessible. The sign for "accessible use" is not accurate, convenient or very helpful.
- Ramp to the waiting area needs to have less than 5% slope. The handrail for this ramp is narrow.
- The trashcan in the waiting area is inaccessible.
- The exterior ramp has appropriate slope but the handrail is too high. Code is 34-38 inches and this handrail is at 44 inches.
- The plane lift, although it may be legal and provide you with the ability to say that planes are accessible, is not a lift that gives confidence to wheelchair users. It makes a 2 hour drive look good. (I know that statement is inappropriate for me to say, but I don't know what to say about that lift-a little help?)
- The lift to the plane requires transfers and loading to be done with exposure to all types of weather. Without a covered jetway to make this transfer, the time required to use the lift places an undue burden on the passenger.