

**Town of**  
**Topsfield**

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**Transition Plan**

**In Compliance with Title II of  
The Americans with Disabilities Act**

**2017 Edition**



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**8 West Common Street, Topsfield, MA 01983 Tel: 978-887-1500 Fax: 978-887-1502  
Temporarily located at 461 Boston Street, Unit E-6**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Town of Topsfield is very much aware of the legal, service and program, and physical requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Over the past ten years, the Town has been working to meet these requirements. Because of staffing constraint, reliance on volunteer boards, and financial constraints, issues are being addressed serially. Some issues are being addressed more aggressively than others. Over the past twenty years, due to the constraints placed on Town finances relative to levy capacity, lack of new growth, the economy, the Town's infrastructure has suffered from a condition of deferred maintenance. See Evaluation Plan Section 1.3 for Topsfield's Standing, and Section 6 Physical Access for further details.

The Town is continuing on its program to address the physical access problems to the Town's infrastructure. At the May 2016 Annual Town Meeting, a warrant article was approved and passed on the override ballot that asked the voters to raise an appropriation of \$9,859,000 for the total renovation of the Town Hall's original structure, the building of an addition and associated costs. This project will include an elevator for accessibility and an entrance at grade level with an appropriate number of disable parking spaces since the building will house Council on Aging's offices and program space.

The Topsfield Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee are committed to incorporating the cost estimates developed by Drummey Rosane Anderson Inc., Waltham, MA relative to physical accessibility for all town facilities into the Town's Capital Master Plan on a rolling schedule based on an annual fiscal review of the Town's finances.

The Town also plans to use the Transition Plan as its tool to improve access to services, programs and practices. Town officials will endeavor to implement the proposed transition plan.

### **Transition Plan Highlights**

Topsfield's Transition Plan covers four areas:

1. Government Policies and Practices (including Employment Practices)
2. Services and Programs
3. Communications
4. Municipal Buildings
5. Sidewalks, Parking and Other Public Works

People with disabilities and seniors were involved with the development of this transition plan, including being involved in the planning process for the Council On Aging's space.

As mentioned above, the Town is aware of its obligations to bring its services and facilities into compliance with building codes and the ADA, and will continue its commitment to its building – renovations program. The commitment is present and funding sources are being investigated. The Town realizes that this is an ongoing commitment and process and intends to use this Transition Plan to move toward full accessibility.

The Transition Plan is summarized in the following five tables.

Government Policies and Practices:

Description	Plan	Schedule	Estimated Costs
Government Practices	Develop guidelines and list of resources for public accommodation	2018	Insignificant
	Improve information to public on program accommodation	2018	Insignificant
	Disseminate information on new programs to public	On-going	Insignificant
	Development of ADA webpage on Town's website	December 2017	Insignificant
	Formation of local Commission on Discrimination (COD)	May 2018 ATM	Insignificant

Description	Plan	Schedule	Estimated Costs
Town Employment Practices	ADA training to all personnel on legal requirements	June 2018	\$700
	ADA training to all personnel on reasonable accommodation	June 2018	\$700
	ADA training to supervisory personnel on interviewing techniques	June 2018	\$350
	Document policy for reasonable accommodation for employees	June 2018	Insignificant

Services and Programs:

Description	Plan	Schedule	Estimated Costs
Public Safety Services	Provide information to public concerning the implementation of "reverse 911" and how to add mobile numbers (use of web, Senior Scoop & newspaper)	December 2017	Insignificant
Veterans Services	Develop Veteran's webpage with information on how to obtain services and accommodation	December 2017	Insignificant
Senior Services	Update disability and at risk list and integrate with police and fire disable lists	November-December 2017	Insignificant
	Information to seniors relative to permanent	Ongoing in 2017-2018	Insignificant

	handicapped accessible program space in renovated Town Hall with easy access and parking		
Public Health	Continue program practices and dissemination of public health alerts	On-going	Insignificant
Building Safety	Continue program practice of non-discriminatory permitting process	On-going	Insignificant
Road Safety Maintenance	Continue practice of snow & ice removal for disabled and seniors	On-going	Insignificant
Educational, Cultural & Recreational	No significant needs; Continue services for disabled and shut-ins	On-going	Insignificant

Access by Communications must be implemented or installed as follows:

Description	Place	Schedule	Estimated Costs
Visual Materials	1. Police, Fire & EMS 2. Town Hall 3. Library	July 2018	\$1,000
Aural Equipment	1. Town Hall 2. Library	FY2019	\$10,000
Emergency Warnings & Evacuations	Town Hall, Police & Fire Stations, Park & Cemetery Bldg.	In Renovation Schedules	N/A

#### Municipal Buildings:

Between 1996 and 2000, the Town completed major renovations/and or new construction on four of its buildings; the Proctor School, the Seward School, Department of Public Works Building, and the Public Library. The Public Works Facility and Public Library have no accessibility issues including designated disable parking spaces. Although major renovations were done at both Schools, there are still accessibility issues found in the 2013 assessment which total approximately \$1 million dollars.

The Police Station and Fire Station need significant modifications in order to make them compliant. The Cemetery Building requires modifications to bathrooms, designated disabled parking space, grading to building and signage, all of which are currently under construction.

The Grove Street Tennis Courts/Tot Lot needs minor work, mostly designation and posting of accessible parking locations which are currently being addressed by the Park Department.

Description	Estimated Costs
Town Hall	\$1,005,017
Police Station	\$2,801,362
Fire Station	\$584,112
Park & Cemetery	\$37,155
Steward School	\$468,581
Proctor School	\$563,923
Tot lot & Tennis Courts	Insignificant

**Chapter 1 Revision of Government Policies and Practices**

The Board of Selectmen has established a grievance policy and notice that are published and posted for the general public. There are also specific policies and notices included in the Personnel Rules, Regulations and Procedures for town employees and this document is regularly reviewed and updated. Each department has a copy of this document.

**1.1 Government Practices**

There will be notices published in all Town reports, Senior Scoop and on Town’s website relative to information for reasonable accommodation.

Further study will be done as time allows identifying and modifying practices that may be less than universally inclusive.

**1.2 Town Employment Practices**

The Department Heads, Committee and Board Chairpersons and all Town employees need to be trained on ADA legal and accommodation requirements as well as other types of nondiscriminatory conduct and practices. These training sessions will be arranged in 2018 and given as often as necessary in order to educate everyone involved.

Supervisory personnel need to be trained in interviewing techniques.

A reasonable accommodations policy will be documented in 2018.

**Chapter 2 Action Plan for Services and Programs**

The following sections describe some of the actions that will be taken concerning universal accessibility in Topsfield’s services and programs.

**2.1 Public Safety Services**

Provide information to the public concerning the implementation of “reverse 911” and how to add mobile numbers by posting said information on the Town’s website and on Police website, publish information in the Senior Scoop newsletter and public information notice in local newspapers. Other programs for both Police and Fire that provide assistance to the public should also be disseminated as above.

## **2.2 Veteran Services**

Develop a Veteran's webpage on the Town website with information on how to obtain services and accommodation.

## **2.3 Senior Services**

The Council on Aging will update its disability, home shut-in and seniors at risk list and integrate with police and fire disable lists.

Information will also be distributed to seniors relative to new permanent handicapped accessible program space in renovated Town Hall with easy access and parking.

## **2.4 Public Health**

The Board will continue its program practices and dissemination of public health alerts.

## **2.5 Building Safety**

The Inspectional Services department will continue its program practice of a non-discriminatory permitting process.

## **2.6 Road Safety and Maintenance**

The Highway department will continue its practice of snow & ice removal for disabled and seniors. The department will continue ADA improvements with its annual maintenance and improvement projects.

## **2.7 Educational, Cultural and Recreational**

There are no significant need and will continue services for disabled and shut-ins with its home delivery program and purchasing of large print books.

## **Chapter 3 Communications Action Plan**

### **Primary Consideration**

The Town will give each individual with communications impairment an opportunity to request the auxiliary aid or service of his or her choice. That choice will be given primary consideration and will be honored unless the Town finds that another equally effective means of communication is significantly less expensive or burdensome.

A procedure will be developed to address reasonable accommodation requests made by job applicants, residents, program participants and employees. To identify the specific requests and explore equally effective alternatives, if any, to enable participation in the application process and/or performance of the essential functions of the job. The procedure will include:

- How requests are made, arranged and paid for
- How accommodations are identified
- How to determine if a request would create an undue burden, a fundamental alteration of a program or a direct threat to safety
- How the process and decisions are to be documented

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### **Aural Communications**

*Topsfield has one service program, the Regional Essex Communications Center which uses TDD/TTYs and/or updated 711 technologies. Dispatchers and other police personnel are trained to use this equipment.*

711 for Telecommunications Relay Services permit persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without disabilities.

The Town will implement the TRS 711 dialing service and train personnel in the following public facilities: Town Hall, Library, Public Works, Park & Cemetery, Fire Station and Police Stations. These facilities have providers of interconnected Voice and Internet Protocol (VOIP) services. If a TTY needs to be installed in any facility the Town would purchase said equipment, if 711 services cannot be implemented.

The Town will also purchase a “personal listening device”, loop that would be plugged into the sound system at the newly renovated Town Hall for public hearing.

The Town will investigate and purchase equipment for the Annual Town Meeting.

Some resources for training are: *Mass. Office On Disability, the Mass. Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing; the local independent Living Center, and consultants.*

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### **Emergency Warning Systems**

*There are no Audio-visual alarms in the hallways of the Town Hall. In buildings used by the public, like the Library and the Town Hall, the rest rooms are the place a person who is Deaf is most likely to be alone and therefore are the highest priority areas in which to install audio-visual alarms.*

*Audio-visual alarms will be installed at the Town Hall as part of the current renovation/addition project.*

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### **Access Information**

The following list highlights how the Town will get access information to the public and employees:

- *Add a statement to all printed hand-outs, job notices, applications program registrations and newspaper ads notifying people that reasonable accommodations will be made upon request (in advance) and that written materials are available in alternate formats.*
- *Use symbols on notices to strengthen the message that reasonable accommodations may be requested.*



- *When TRS is implemented in program facilities, future letterhead, business cards and phone listings should include reference to 711 TRS dialing after the main number. Same for Library and Public Works Facility.*
- *Post notices regarding reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities on bulletin boards in each building and department.*
- *Enhance the ability of people with disabilities to use the Town facilities and services by installing directional signage to accessible entrances, parking, rest rooms and other facilities.*
- *Publish the grievance procedure to be used if a resident has a complaint related to disability. Formation of a local Commission of Discrimination (COD) and get other suggestions for increasing awareness of necessary access information.*

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## **Fundamental Alteration and Undue Burdens**

At this time, there are no auxiliary aids or services for effective communications that would be denied on the basis of undue financial or administrative burden.

### **Schedule**

#### *FY 2018 for May 2018 ATM*

- *Identify communications devices and materials to be installed or implemented*
- *Determine optimal services and facilities for use*
- *Obtain price estimates and include in budget requests for fiscal 2019*

#### *FY 2019*

- *Publish use of communications materials*
- *Install all devices that are not part of large renovation projects*

#### *FY 2020 and future*

- *Ensure installation of all communications devices in renovation projects*

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Transition Plan for Municipal Buildings and Parks</b>
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The Town of Topsfield has prepared a list of the costs associated with the necessary modifications highlighted in the Evaluation Plan, Chapter 6, Evaluation of Physical Access, for each building. Without providing actual design solutions to each problem an estimated/probable cost is provided to assist in prioritizing the actual corrective work in implementing the transition plan.

The work on the different buildings has been ranked for priority. It is the intention of the Town of Topsfield to provide fully accessible service to all its citizens and to seek to remove any physical barriers as quickly as possible.

The Town Hall is currently undergoing an extensive renovation/addition project to provide additional space for accessibility in respective offices and address all the modifications listed in Section 6.01 in the Evaluation Plan and under this Chapter of this Transition Plan.

We have grouped the buildings by priority, those with the most public interaction and the most out of compliance are highest.

High Priority

Town Hall  
Police Station  
Fire Station

Moderate

Proctor School  
Steward School

Low

Cemetery Building  
Tennis Courts and Tot Lot

**CHAPTER 4 FACILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS TRANSITION PLANS**

**PREAMBLE**

The Town is committed to an access program for its facilities; however, in the case of the Police Station and Fire Station any modifications would be tied to the rehabilitation of the facilities. The Town currently has a permanent debt payment for Fiscal Year 2018 in the amount of \$13,687,000. The Treasurer is currently in the process of temporary borrowing for the Town Hall Renovation/Addition Project \$9,859,000, the Elementary Schools Roof Replacement Project \$7,651,757 and a Water Treatment Plant \$10,400,000 which will be permanently bonded by the end of fiscal 2019. As current debt is paid off, the Town can reassess its financial status and update the Transition Plan accordingly.

**SECTION 4.01 FACILITIES**

**TOWN HALL, built in 1873 \*\***

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
Ramp Modifications with new guardrails and handrails	\$16, 103	2017/18/19
Add elevator	\$208,800	2017/18/19
Replace Vault for wheel chair access	\$398,771	2017/18/19
Modify/Rearrange furnishings in Town Clerk & COA	\$5,274	2017/18/19
Add low counters for second floor offices	\$27,104	2017/18/19
New/Modify toilet rooms	\$50,518	2017/18/19
Replace sink and modify counters	\$6,776	2017/18/19
Correct stair nosings interior; Replace/Add hand/Guardrails on stairs; Add Guard around low ceiling areas	\$38,427	2017/18/19
Correct Door Sizes	\$29,110	2017/18/19
Add lift to stage	\$72,701	2017/18/19
Replace steps to stage	\$4,016	2017/18/19
Replace Existing Stairs/Steps from stage to first floor	\$16,966	2017/18/19
Replace Fire Alarm System	\$130,451	2017/18/19
Balcony not accessible *requires major renovations-do not use.		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,005,017</b>	2017/18/19
<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$533,000</b>		

**\*\*Note:** Due to the deteriorated condition of the building; the costs of modification for ADA accessibility which require additional space, the Town appropriated \$9,859,000 for a total renovation of the original 1873 structure and for an addition; elevator; at grade entrance. The project commenced in June 2017 and scheduled for completion in November 2018.

**POLICE STATION, built in 1930\*\***

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
New entrance for Building	\$664,791	2025
Add Accessible Parking	\$201,310	2025
Correct Nosing Interior; Replace/Add Hand/Guardrails on Stairs	\$53,625	2025
Remove Non-Complaint Stair	\$9,279	2025
Add Elevator/Remove & Replace Non-Complaint Stair	\$1,341,426	2025
Correct Door Hardware	\$99,046	2025
Correct Door Size(s)	\$397,913	2025
New/Modified Toilet Room(s)	\$33,972	2025
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,801,362</b>	2025
<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$698,200</b>		

**\*\*Note:** The Police Station was built as a State Police Barracks in 1930 and was re-commissioned in 1989 as the Town's Police Station with some modifications in the late 1980's. Accessibility issues need to be addressed; however these projects will require override ballot approval. Modification costs and four times more than the assessed valuation of the current structure.

**FIRE STATION, built in 1969\*\***

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
Remove & Replace Non-Complaint Stair	\$62,989	2023
Replace Sinks & Modify Counters	\$6,776	2023
Correct Door Hardware	\$55,562	2023
Correct Door Size(s)	\$32,430	2023
Correct Space Between Doors	\$21,618	2023
New/Modified Toilet Room(s)	\$16,986	2023
Modify Vestibule	\$11,660	2023
Add Elevator	\$298,506	2023
Replace Steps with Ramp	\$77,585	2023
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$584,112</b>	2023
<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$657,200</b>		

**\*\*Note:** The Fire Station was built in 1969. Accessibility issues will need to be addressed; however, the Station also needs an addition due to space requirements for equipment and other infrastructure needs, all of which will require override ballot approval. These modifications need to be implemented as part of a major renovation project.

**PARK/CEMETERY, built in 1978\*\***

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
Add Accessible Parking	\$646	2018
New/Modified Toilet Room (s)	\$36,509	2018
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$37,155</b>	2018

<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$ 48,200</b>		
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**\*\*Note:** This building was built as a garage with retrofitted office space and bathrooms. It is currently being renovated by the Park & Cemetery Commissioners to meet ADA requirements. However, for the department to have functional space the 2013 Assessment recommended a major renovation project.

**STEWARD SCHOOL, built in 1963, addition 1999**

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
Replace Sinks & Modify Counters	\$141,471	Open
Add Side Protection for Water Coolers	\$3,197	Open
New/Modified Toilet Room(s)	\$100,601	Open
Add Lift	\$71,352	Open
Modify Playground	\$34,276	Open
Expand Stage	\$117,684	Open
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$468,581</b>	Open
<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$5,237,700</b>		

**\*\*Note:** The School Department needs to assess and prioritize these modifications and incorporated respective projects within its annual operating budget.

**PROCTOR SCHOOL, built in 1932, additions 1972 and 1994**

<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
Replace/Add hand/Guardrails on stairs	\$83,469	Open
Add Guard around low ceiling areas	\$23,417	Open
Replace Sinks & Modify Counters	\$148,212	Open
Add Side Protection for Water Coolers	\$8,658	Open
Correct Door Size(s)	\$12,511	Open
New/Modified Toilet Room(s)	\$145,688	Open
Add Lift	\$68,487	Open
Replace Existing Stairs/Steps	\$56,768	Open
Ramp Modifications	\$10,976	Open
Increase Serving Line Width	\$5,737	Open
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$563,923</b>	Open
<b>FY2017 Building Assessed Valuation: \$4,439,300</b>		

**\*\*Note:** The School Department needs to assess and prioritize these modifications and incorporated respective projects within its annual operating budget.

**SECTION 4.02 PUBLIC WORKS PLAN**

<b>Project Modifications</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>
South Main Street Safety Improvements (part of larger project)	\$556,000	2018
Main Street Safety Improvements	\$98,000	2018
Rail Trail Advanced Signage Upgrades	\$5,000	2018
Washington Street / Parsonage Lane Intersection / Rail Trail Crossing	\$146,000	2018
Main Street/Grove Street/Trail Crossing/pedestrian Improvements	\$116,000	2019
Summer Street / Park Street Rail Trail Crossing Improvements	\$42,000	2019
Town Wide Speed Control/Traffic Calming Device Installation	\$78,000	2020
School Avenue / Main Street pedestrian crossing Improvements	\$65,000	2020
Haverhill Rd. /Rowley Rd. Intersection Pedestrian Safety Improvements	\$25,000	2020

Haverhill Road Pedestrian Crossing Improvements	\$7,000	2020
Grove Street Pedestrian Safety Improvements	\$141,000	2021
High Street Rail Trail /Canoe Launch Connection	\$55,000	2021
Borders for Boston Rail Trail (North End) (extensive project)	\$2,281,000	2021
Asbury Street Bike accommodation	\$4,000	2022
Hill Street Roadway Reconstruction.	\$17,000	2022
Washington Street Sidewalk Extension to Main Street	\$101,000	2022
High Street Sidewalk Extension	\$28,000	2022
South Main Street/Main Street Sidewalk Extension Project	\$84,000	2023
Haverhill Road ADA/Intersection upgrades	\$21,000	2023
Grove Street Branch Sidewalk Extension	\$21,000	2023

**\*\*Note:** Funding from State grant, Chapter 90 and other fund