

Senior Center Overview

April 2014

Parking, sidewalk and entrance

While physically appealing, the current Senior Center facility lacks parking and sufficient space while also having long-standing problems with air quality due to ventilation issues and mold due to water leaks. The heating and cooling is provided by electric units which are original to 1982. Not only is this costly, but there is no fresh air intake and the zones do not match the functions of the space. Many people confuse the roles of the Senior Center and the Weldon House, and the COA often receives inquiries about apartment rentals as well as complaints from newer tenants regarding apartment-related issues. Moreover, there remains confusion about “who” we are – many think we are exclusively for Weldon tenants, or that clients must meet the same income qualifications as the subsidized housing.

Union St Signage: Damaged over several years by snow removal activities. Director repaired in 2005 with glue and white duct tape which held until 2013. Now some of the sign pieces are missing. Weldon requests Town replace sign at our expense.

Parking lot: 88 parking spaces total for the property. 14 are disability. None are reserved for COA. The “suggested” Senior Center parking is the farthest from the entrance door. During peak usage times, the parking lot is full. The COA entrance door is too far from the closest drop-off point (from car or bus) for frail elders. When a delivery vehicle is parked at Weldon entrance, it can be difficult for other vehicles to pass. During snow removal the facility must close or delay opening because the tenant vehicles must be moved to the “suggested” area for COA parking. No shelter for bus stop. Curb cuts poorly placed. Dumpster at entrance gives poor impression. Sign on fence lacks sufficient overall visibility.

Loading area: Used by tenants moving in and out as well as Weldon House contractor trucks. Sidewalk to COA often blocked during these times, with no advance notice given.

Sidewalk: drainage issues. Standing water on sidewalk during periods of rain / icy sidewalk during thaw periods. Poorly done concrete repairs done in 2013 are crumbling creating several fall risks. Icicles forming on Weldon roof over sidewalk create risk. Lack of sufficient lighting at COA entrance. And on walkway.

Entrance too narrow with fall risk at edge of sidewalk. Holly bushes at front door cause skin tears on elderly hands.

SENIOR CENTER FACILITY

Area 1. Entrance/Lobby

Function: Primary point of service. Lounge area, social drop-in activity, general information, scan-in attendance tracking, COA program bulletin boards, newsletter distribution, staff mailboxes, Recorder payment box, newspapers, magazines, reading area, books and cards for sale, program registration, waiting area for appointments, coffee machine. Display cases for crafts.

3 egresses: High St (emergency only – stairs), Weldon Tenant entrance (need tenant key), Main entrance from parking lot.

Improvements: Automatic door openers installed in 2012. Vestibule enlarged late 90s, wood door replaced. Glass in outer door replaced after Weldon House failed to secure sun umbrella on a windy day and it became a projectile, breaking the glass and entering vestibule (no personal injuries). New carpet installed throughout common areas after water damage from fire at the Weldon in 2013.

Problems: Reception desk staffed by 15 different volunteers sharing one FT position. The desk is physically isolated from the staff offices. Congestion, physical obstacles such as pillars, noise from Main Room (no doors), front desk needs service counter and more privacy. Bus stop issues: Seniors waiting for the bus cannot see the bus stop and must wait outside or risk missing their ride. If bus pulls up far enough to be seen from door, then they need to back up into traffic. Stairs at Weldon entrance a fall risk. Chair lift is confusing and awkward to operate without assistance. Weldon entrance door is very heavy. Concern regarding potential risk of bedbug infestation at Weldon House migrating to Senior Center space.

Area 2. Hallway

Function: Pass through to offices, rear program rooms, disability restroom, and computer lab. Community bulletin boards, pamphlet/info kiosk, water bubbler (plumbed), staff bulletin board (required postings), large lateral file cabinet, scale, cabinet for office supplies, “decorative” sewing machine and tea service.

Improvements: upgraded lighting 1993-4, removal of storage cabinets in 2013 to improve traffic flow and safety.

Problems: Insufficient passing space in narrow areas. Painting and repairs needed.

Area 3. Wellness / Guest Office

Function: Former staff office currently used by Footcare nurse, guest Attorney, Ophthalmologist, Benefits Counselor, SHINE Counselor. Contains sink, recliner (for footcare service), desk, storage cabinets and counter.

Improvements: upgraded lighting in 1993-4, cabinets and office furnishings updated in 1999 when Wellness Center re-opened.

Problems: Adjacent to disability restroom with access door from restroom to office (locked), privacy issues (can hear through door), ventilation, ongoing water leak issue in summer. This office is often either too warm (winter) or too cool (summer) due to thermostat zones.

Area 4. Disability (unisex) Restroom

Function: The **only** disability access restroom in the building! One toilet. Used as staff changing area in summer and winter (no heating/cooling in “locker room” which is converted storage room off kitchen).

Improvements: Door swing changed from swing-out into hallway (risk of injury to passers-by), to in-swing in 2003.

Problems: Privacy, passive ventilation barely meets standards, odor drifts into hallway and beyond, occasional theft of paper goods stored there. Often used by participants in back of building as it is the closest restroom.

Area 5. Offices

Function: Staff desks, workstations, private meeting space with clients, storage of office and activity supplies, file cabinets, Director office has table w/ chairs for small meetings. Fiscal / Office Manager office has network server, modem, router, copy machine, safe. Activity Director office has networked color printer, program supplies.

Improvements: Some painting has been done.

Problems: Too far away from the reception desk. Little space for wheelchairs to maneuver, privacy issues between computer lab and Director office wall, many water leaks in business office seasonally from AC condensate – damaged walls, Rose Kennedy print, and other items. Ventilation and temperature issues. The offices are in the same temp zone as the fitness room. The temperature at which it is comfortable to exercise is too cold for office temp. Original 1982 carpet in all staff offices. Over time, the majority of staff who have worked in the building have reported itchy, burning red eyes, fatigue, and headaches. These symptoms are correlated to ventilation problems, high CO2 levels. Lack of fresh air.

Area 6. Art Room, Conference room, Computer Lab.

Functions: Programming. Art room has sink. Storage closets for craft supplies, art supplies, program materials, holiday decorations, archived paper files.

1 emergency egress in the hallway that houses computer lab.

Improvements: Computer lab created in 2007, used to be in lobby (2 workstations only). Kilns removed from art room in 2013.

Problems: Ventilation and ability to maintain comfortable ambient temp. None of these rooms is easily accessed by a W/C.

Conf. room space heater often needed. Max occupancy 8-10.

Computer lab is in a corridor without adequate ventilation. Max occupancy 6. Too small. So cold the seniors wear their coats in winter.

Art Room has pillar which is a physical barrier as well as blocking sight lines during a presentation. Max 10-12 depending on program.

Area 7. Cloak room area and public restrooms.

Function: coat storage, fitness equipment storage, card table storage, lost & found,

Improvements: Ladies room painted in 2011. Chair height toilets in 2012.

Problems: Passive ventilation barely meets code requirements. Odors linger. Not enough toilet stalls in ladies room. Lack of privacy between stalls. Accessibility an issue. Clearances, barriers. Toilets frequently need repair.

Area 9. Main Room

Function: Wood floor for Fitness classes held daily, total 10 classes per week. Other programs: contract & Duplicate bridges, pitch, pool table, Large meeting space, programs, performance space, PA system, AV equipment, storage of stacking chairs, mix of round and square tables. Food service at social events.

1 emergency egress to outside Ramp shifts on floor, creates fall risk.

1 emergency egress through kitchen area.

Improvements: Congregate Meal site asked to move in 2006 because it had outgrown the facility. Removal of two large desks and telephone, for meal-site operation – less disruption to programs.

Problems: Ventilation. Having a fitness room and dining room be one in the same is not OK. Room capacity for social events is 80 insufficient to meet current needs. Capacity for fitness is 20 per class. Pillars create access barriers and sight-line issues. Level change in floor between wood and carpet is fall risk during fitness classes. No doors between main room and lobby. Noise from lobby interferes with Tai Chi, Yoga, and workshop speakers, etc. To access the kitchen one must walk through the Main room – disruptive (better now without meal site activity)

Area 10. Kitchen

Function: Not a functional kitchen at this time Was used to re-heat MOW and congregated meals which were trucked in frozen. Has 3-bay stainless steel sink. Kitchen is now used only by caterers to serve food which is prepared off site.

Former storage closet was converted to a staff locker room (two of the staff teach COA fitness classes) in 2012 in order to free up the disability restroom and to give the staff a more hygienic place to change. No HVAC or ventilation. Not usable year round.

Problems: Much of the kitchen equipment is non-functional, outdated, or both. Does not meet current code requirements.