

**Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department Policy-  
Trail and Facility Accessibility for Mobility Devices  
Updated July 25, 2011**

The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department strives to serve all citizens of Bowling Green. For those with mobility issues, the use of wheelchairs, manually-powered mobility aids and other power-driven mobility devices (OPDMDs) may be required in order to enjoy park facilities and trails.

But not all mobility devices may be used due to the type, size, weight, dimensions and speed of the device, the volume of pedestrian traffic, park facility design and operational characteristics, and the substantial risk of serious harm to the environment or natural or cultural resources. The Parks and Recreation Department provides an assessment of our trails and facilities below for public information.

**Mobility devices greater than the minimum width, length and turn radius or weight limit provided below are not permitted to use a park facility, trail or pathway. Speed limits must also be observed for safety, especially in congested areas.**

**We invite persons with mobility disabilities to contact us about the use of devices that are currently prohibited to other park visitors at 419-353-6223 or [bgparks@bgohio.org](mailto:bgparks@bgohio.org).** You will not be asked about the nature of your disability but, rather, the nature of your mobility device. The Parks and Recreation Department may issue a permit to use an OPDMD in prohibited areas if it determines that a unique situation applies and special conditions can be placed on the use that would make it safe to operate or prevent serious harm to the environmental, natural or cultural resources. In these situations, please request permission 7 days in advance of your arrival date to provide time to assess and issue the permit.

**Permission to utilize OPDMDs is limited to those who can provide credible assurance that the mobility device is required because of the person's disability.** The Bowling Green Parks and Recreation Department will accept the presentation of a valid, State-issued, disability parking placard or card, or other State-issued proof of disability as credible assurance. In lieu of one of the above, the Department will accept a verbal representation, not contradicted by observable fact, that the OPDMD is being used for a mobility issue. Only the mobility-impaired person(s) may use the OPDMD or wheelchair in the facilities or on the trails and walkways.

Definitions for the mobility devices addressed in this policy are:

A **wheelchair** is: a manually-operated or power-driven device designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of indoor or of both indoor and outdoor locomotion.

**Other power-driven mobility devices (OPDMDs)** are: any mobility device powered by batteries, fuel, or other engines—whether or not designed primarily for use by individuals with mobility disabilities—that is used by individuals with mobility disabilities for the purpose of locomotion.

**Electronic personal assistance mobility devices (EPAMDs)** are included under OPDMDs, but operate on electricity, not on a combustion engine. A Segway is a type of EPAMD.

## **FACILITIES**

Wheelchairs are permitted in all facilities; please check the width and turn radius limitations as they may limit your ability to enter a facility or use the restroom. Mobility devices with internal combustion engines are NOT permitted in any enclosed facility. Electronic personal assistance mobility devices, like Segways, may be used in park facilities that have sufficient clearance for entry, passage and turns. Our assessment of existing facilities is as follows:

Bowling Green Training and Community Center- minimum width of passageways is 32.5 inches, which is the main entry and restroom doorways. The main entry doors can be automatically opened. The service counter is lower on one side to accommodate those in a wheel chair. A turn radius of 35 inches exists in restroom stalls. Weight limit for mobility devices is 500 pounds. Congestion in the building is possible at all hours, but especially November through March. The speed limit for mobility devices is 2 miles per hour. The elevator to the second floor is 52 inches deep. Fitness Technicians and Personal Trainers on the second floor can create a fitness exercise program for you and show you the use of fitness equipment; some equipment is designed for access and use by those with disabilities. There is handicap parking and sidewalks are 58 inches wide.

Carter Park – The sidewalk to the restroom and Bartlett Shelter is 60 inches wide and handicap parking is available. There is slight slope of .03% to the restroom from the parking lot. Restroom door width is 32 inches and the turn radius is 41 inches. The weight limit throughout the park is 1,000 pounds. Facility congestion occurs regularly on weekends and during baseball and softball tournaments from Spring to Fall. The

restroom is closed as soon as the threat of freezing temperatures occurs. The maximum speed on walkways and in facilities is 2 miles per hour for safety. There are no automatic door openers on the restroom. There are no exercise or walking trails and no paved walkway to three of the four picnic shelters and the playground can only be accessed by crossing a lawn area. There are currently no modified picnic tables in the shelters, but a mobility device may be able to reach a table from the end.

Carter Park Playground: There is a grass and dirt pathway into the playground, which lies west of the public restroom. The entry to the playground is 70 inches wide, there is a 72 inch turn radius and there is crushed mulch under the equipment. None of the equipment has ramps and therefore is considered NOT ACCESSIBLE. A maximum speed limit of 2 mph exists for safety reasons.

City Park: Needle Hall – This is an old fair building that has been modified with a 33 inch wide ramp entry and doorway. There is a 58 inch turn radius on the ramp into the building entrance. A maximum weight of 500 pounds and 2 miles per hour speed limit exist for any mobility device in the building or on the ramp. There is a 48 inch sidewalk to the entry from handicap parking. This building may be rented like our picnic shelters, so entry is restricted when renters are present.

City Park: Playground – There is a 48 inch wide sidewalk to the play area, but ground mulch under the play equipment. A sand digger at the sidewalk can accommodate a wheelchair under the operating levers. The entry ramps on the 6 to 12 yr old climbing structure is 34 inches in width. Turning radii on the three platforms on this structure are 66, 80 and 50 inches. The weight limit is 500 pounds. There is maximum speed limit of 2 mph leading up to the play area and 1 mph inside the mulched area and on the play equipment. The play structure can be congested from Spring through Fall. The pre-school climbing structure is not accessible because it lacks a ramp.

City Park: Swing Sets – The eastern set of swings has a 62 inch wide grass and dirt path; there is crushed mulch beneath the swings. The western set of swings has a 46 inch wide grass and dirt entryway and crushed mulch beneath the swing set. None of the swings is modified for handicapped use—they feature a belt-style seat and metal chains. Maximum speed limit in both areas is 2 mph. Swing sets can be congested from Spring through Fall.

City Park: Scout Building – NOT ACCESSIBLE. The sidewalk to the building is 48 inches, the doorway is only 29 inches wide and there is a threshold that may obstruct mobility devices. Restrooms are NOT accessible because there is a narrow turn

radius into the restrooms. There is also a 500 pound weight limit on the threshold and building flooring.

City Park: Shelter Houses (all) – There is handicap parking and 48 inch wide concrete sidewalks leading to all shelterhouses in City Park. The turn radius is 72 inches. Shelter houses are first come, first served unless rented ahead of time. Check the rental board on each shelter to see if it is free for use. City Park can be extremely congested on summer weekends and during special events. The maximum speed limit for any mobility device is 2 miles per hour. All types of mobility devices that are 500 pounds or less and less than 48 inches wide may be used to access the shelter houses with special care needed on busy walkways. There are currently no modified picnic tables in the shelters, but a mobility device may be able to reach a table from the end.

City Park: Restrooms (2) – There is handicap parking and 48 inch wide concrete walks to the two public restrooms in City Park. Doors are NOT automatically opened; door width is 33 inches with a length restriction of 54 inches and a 50 inch turn radius for mobility devices. The weight limit is 500 pounds and maximum speed limit is 2 miles per hour. Expect congested walkways and restrooms from noon to 8 p.m. Spring, Summer and Fall. Grab bars are in both restrooms. The restroom near the in-line skating rink and skatepark is closer to parking than the restroom near the shelterhouses. Both restrooms are open in winter, but have only minimal heat.

City Park: Veteran's Building- RESTROOMS NOT ACCESSIBLE. This is an old county fair building that contains public restrooms, two large activity rooms and a kitchenette. There is handicap parking and 48 inch wide sidewalks to the two main entry doors. The width of these doors is 29 inches and no automatic door openers. There is a 17.5% slope from the entry lobby down to the two public restrooms and a 90% turn required to enter them. The interior of the restrooms has a 35 inch radius for turns and there is a 53 inch turn radius to reach the north or south room entry doors from the main lobby. The weight limit is 500 pounds for this facility and the maximum speed limit is 2 miles per hour for mobility devices.

Simpson Garden Park: Simpson Building- Handicap parking is available and there is a one inch high concrete slab to reach the entry doors. The width of these doors is 33 inches and the ADA restroom (Family restroom) has a 65 inch turn radius. The weight limit is 500 pounds for this facility and the maximum speed limit is 2 miles per hour for mobility devices.

Simpson Garden Park: Outside Restroom- This unisex restroom is located at the north end of the Maintenance Garage and is open from dawn to dusk. There is handicap parking and a ramp of less than 5% slope to reach the entry door. The width of the doorway is 33 inches and there is a 54 inch turn radius at the top of the slope to enter the restroom. The restroom interior has a 65 inch turn radius. There is a 1,000 pound weight limit on this facility and a maximum speed limit of 2 miles per hour.

Wintergarden/ St. John's Nature Preserve: Rotary Nature Center- The Nature Center is reached from handicap parking via a 48 inch wide walkway. There are no automatic door openers; the main entry door width is 35 inches. Restroom doors are 32 inches in width and there are accessible stalls in both the men's and women's restrooms with a 45 inch turn radius. There is a 500 pound weight limit for the building and its floors/thresholds. The maximum speed limit for any mobility device is 2 miles per hour.

## **NATURE TRAILS/GARDEN PATHWAYS**

### General Guidelines and Definitions

**Nature trails** are mulch or dirt pathways, usually 48 inches in width with slopes that can exceed 5%. A portion may consist of boardwalk when crossing wetlands. Nature trails are seasonally wet and **may be impassible**; they are not cleared in winter. The purpose of nature trails is to provide a quiet experience outdoors in direct contact with nature. They are currently only at Wintergarden/St. John's Nature Preserve.

**Garden pathways** are comprised of stone screenings, brick or concrete. Some side trails are mulched or stepping stones and not accessible. Screening trails are accessible except when very wet, usually early-Spring. Brick and concrete trails are a firm surface and a minimum of 48 inches wide. Garden pathways are NOT cleared in winter. Some slopes will exceed 5% and there are stairways and arched bridges in some gardens that are NOT ACCESSIBLE. Please check with park staff for more information. The purpose of garden pathways is to provide a quiet and educational experience of the public gardens at Simpson Garden Park.

The speed limit on both nature trails and garden pathways is 2 mph when others are present, 5 mph when others are not present.

Wheelchairs and EPAMDs are permitted, but may be restricted by the trail width, turn radius, weight restriction or pose a substantial risk to the natural and cultural

resources associated with the sand-based trails or garden beds. Such limitations are described below.

Other power driven mobility devices (OPDMDs), except as noted above, are NOT PERMITTED on nature trails or garden pathways for the following reasons:

- The slope of the natural terrain may exceed 5%.
- There is a legitimate safety threat to pedestrians on the winding shared paths of the parks and in areas of vegetation that create blind spots.
- They pose a substantial risk to the natural and cultural resources associated with the sand-based trails.
- By their nature, they disturb the intended trail experience.

If you wish to tour the garden pathways and nature trails, but are unable to do so due to a disability, it is possible to contact our Staff and arrange a tour in one of our electric vehicles. Advanced planning is essential for this option and times for such tours will be limited.

#### Wintergarden/St. John's Nature Preserve

The walking trails at Wintergarden/St. John's Nature Preserve cover over 2 miles. They can be most congested during evenings and weekends from Spring through Fall. Accessibility information for these trails is as follows:

TWYMAN TRAIL – A minimum width of 48 inches exists with a maximum length of 8 feet due to curves. Some turn radii are very sharp, making steering a challenge. Speed must be lowered greatly to make the turns. There is a STEEP SLOPE on this trail in sand, making it impassible for some electric wheelchairs. A side trail that slopes more gently has been installed at this point in the trail, but is difficult to see because few use it.

WINTERGARDEN WOODS TRAIL - A minimum width of 48 inches exists with a maximum length of 8 feet due to curves. One section has a slope greater than 5%.

ST. JOHN'S WOODS TRAIL - A minimum width of 48 inches exists with a maximum length of 8 feet due to curves. A boardwalk over the wetland has no bumpers or rails and the drop, when the wetland is dry, is over 6 feet.

BORDNER MEADOW TRAIL - A minimum width of 36 inches exists with a maximum length of 8 feet due to curves. Two boardwalks over the wetlands may pose challenges to those using wheelchairs and OPDMDs. There are 2.5 inch side rails

and an 18 inch rise on the boardwalk in the southwest portion of the meadow and no rails on the northern boardwalk which has a 42 inch drop at the maximum. The trail is soggy in spring and after heavy rains, so the path to and from the boardwalks **may be impassible** to wheelchairs and OPDMDs. Another section of this trail has loose sand and a slope under 5%, but it can be difficult for electric wheelchairs to traverse.

### Simpson Garden Park

The garden pathways at Simpson Garden Park consist of a variety of surfacing materials. The most accessible trails are immediately around the Simpson Building, near the handicap parking places. A map of the Garden and its trails is available from the Parks and Recreation Department; contact information is near the beginning of this document.

The WILLOW WALK and CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY GARDEN offer paved concrete walkways at least 48 inches in width with wide turn radii. Some stone screening trails 30 inches wide and children's sized mulched pathways and atunnel lead off to play areas in the Children's Garden. The Potting House is not accessible because of its narrow turn radius off the 30 inch screening walkway. Those with mobility issues have accessed the Potting Shed in the past with assistance. Raised bed planters along the main walkway enable easy access to herbs.

The SENSORY GARDEN has a 48 inch wide brick paver walkway that is uncurved. Raised bed planters provide easy access to plants that stimulate the sense of touch, smell and hearing. The beds dedicated to vision are next to a mulched trail that may not allow access. Interpretive signage is placed throughout the garden for self-guided enjoyment during the growing season, but the signage does not feature braille.

The DAYLILY WALK AND SHADE GARDEN are located under the main archway entrance off the parking lot. The walkway begins as a brick paver trail at least 48 inches wide but quickly turns into a straight, flat trail composed of stone screenings that leads throughout the rest of the garden park. Several mulched trails with uneven surfacing lead off the main screening trail.

The SCULPTURE GARDEN has a slope greater than 5% and trails consisting of stone screenings. During heavy rains, portions of the slope erode and cause ruts which can remain into the dry times...making this a bumpy ride for wheeled methods of mobility. The ROTARY AMPHITHEATER, in the Sculpture Garden, has stone substrate, and was designed for first-level seating of wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

The PEACE GARDEN can be seen from the main trail but is not accessible from above due to stairs. There is a stone screening pathway from below, but mobility devices will have to use this same pathway to enter and exit the garden. Slopes from above are steep, well over 5% and the total drop from top to bottom of the garden is over 70 inches. A waterfall and curved stone bridge are scenic, but make the main trail NOT ACCESSIBLE to some mobility devices. There is also a 400 pound weight restriction on the bridge. After viewing the Peace Garden from above, mobility-challenged visitors should take the loop back around the waterfall (future UPLAND GARDEN) to continue their eastern passage to the back of Simpson Garden Park.

The HEALING GARDEN, at the eastern end of Simpson Garden Park, features loose stone pathways that can pose challenges to electric wheelchairs. There are sharp turns in this garden and raised stone borders on the beds, further complicating the issue. The trails are at least 48 inches in width and the outer trails have 90 degree turns.

The PRAIRIE GARDEN is located on a sloped area of the main stone pathway, between the Healing Garden and Peace Garden. It can be viewed from the main trail, but the mulched trails within this garden are not considered accessible due to slope and surfacing. Again, the curved bridge at the Peace Garden will probably necessitate backtracking to the Healing Garden and taking the main pathway to the future Upland Garden to return to the main parking lot. For mobility devices that can navigate across grass, the Alee may be a short-cut directly to the Upland Garden.