The Town of West Hartford ("the Town") is committed to ensuring that its programs, services, and activities are accessible to all members of the public, including individuals with disabilities. As part of that commitment, the Town engaged the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD) to independently evaluate the accessibility of Town facilities.

IHCD's presentation of the ADA self-evaluation will take place on December 7, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 400 at West Hartford Town Hall.

The Town provides this statement to explain the Town's obligations, how the evaluation will be used, and the steps the Town is taking in response to IHCD's presentation.

The Town's Obligations Under the ADA

As a public entity, the Town is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and its implementing regulations at 28 C.F.R. Part 35 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Town recognizes and accepts these obligations. Title II requires that no qualified individual with a disability be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, the Town's programs, services, or activities because of a disability.

With respect to facilities, the ADA establishes different requirements depending on when a facility was built or altered:

• **Existing facilities.** Many Town buildings were designed and constructed before federal accessibility standards were adopted. For these facilities, the Town must ensure that each program, service, and activity, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities (28 C.F.R. § 35.150). This standard, known as "program accessibility," may be met through physical modifications, relocation of services to accessible locations, or other effective methods.

• **New construction and alterations.** Facilities constructed or altered after the ADA's effective date must comply with the applicable federal accessibility standards, currently the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (28 C.F.R. § 35.151) sets forth the minimum enforceable physical accessibility requirements for the Town along with the Connecticut State Building Code.

The Town also recognizes its obligations to conduct a self-evaluation of its services, policies, and practices (28 C.F.R. § 35.105), to maintain a transition plan identifying the physical changes needed to achieve program accessibility and a schedule for completing them (28 C.F.R. § 35.150(d)), and to designate a responsible employee to coordinate compliance and address concerns (28 C.F.R. § 35.107).

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Town commissioned this evaluation to obtain a thorough and candid assessment of current conditions. The evaluation identifies barriers to accessibility, many of which reflect the age of Town facilities and the standards in place at the time they were built. The Town views these findings as an essential starting point. An objective understanding of existing conditions is necessary to set priorities, allocate resources responsibly, and make meaningful, lasting improvements.

The Town's Next Steps

The Town is developing a comprehensive plan to implement the evaluation's key recommendations. That plan will:

1. Prioritize barriers that most directly affect access to Town programs, services, and activities, with particular attention to entrances, accessible routes, restrooms, and public meeting spaces.

2. Establish a reasonable schedule for completing physical improvements, coordinated with the Town's capital planning and budget processes.

4. Incorporate input received from the public, including individuals with disabilities and organizations representing them, during the public participation period.

The Town recognizes that achieving full accessibility is an ongoing responsibility, and it is committed to making steady, measurable progress toward that goal.

Public Comment

The draft Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans are available on the Town's website and will be at the presentation on December 7, 2026. Comments can be shared at the presentation or sent via email to ADA@westhartfordct.gov through December 18, 2026.

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, should contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at SuzanneO@westhartfordct.gov or (860) 561- 7580, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand. All other inquiries, please contact the Office of the Town Clerk via (860) 561-7430.