

Whitman Mission National Historic Site Accessibility Assessment

Summary Report Findings and Recommendations

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Summary Report of Findings and Recommendations
Assessment Date: July 11-12, 2011

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II. Final Identified Locations in FMSS

26070	Visitor Center
28276	Visitor Center Parking Lot
26379	Interpretive Trails
14810	6 of the audio Stations
277846	Audio Station
93484	Covered Picnic Shelter
26283	Maintained Landscapes

III. Park Purpose, History and Themes

Whitman Mission dates back to 1836 when it was founded among the Cayuse Indians by Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. The Park's major themes focus on the importance of the Mission's station along the Oregon Trail in providing rest and medical attention for emigrants, and serving as a mission society wherein Whitman attempted to bring religious worship, books, and education to the Cayuse Indians. A measles epidemic, combined with unease on the part of the Cayuse Indians in regards to maintaining their way of life, was eventually the demise of the Mission. As the epidemic moved through the Mission, and the Whitman's medicine helped only the white children and not the Cayuse, many Cayuse believed they were being poisoned. In response, the Cayuse revolted, ultimately killing Marcus Whitman, his wife, and ten others. Many others were taken captive and later ransomed. The killings ended Protestant missions in the Oregon country and led to war. The site was later named the first territorial government west of the Rockies.

Visitors to the Whitman Mission National Historic Site receive this interpretive information in a variety of methods. At the Visitor Center, the Park staff provides orientation to the Park and the various locations within the Park. A video in the auditorium provides visitors with the history of Whitman Mission. Many visitors walk the interpretive trails throughout the grounds of the Park. The trails interpret the story of the mission through audio and text waysides. There are ground markers denoting the Mission House site, the first house site, the Grist Mill site, the Emigrant House site, and the Blacksmith Shop site, Alice Carissa's Grave and the Great Grave. There is also a portion of the Oregon Trail that includes a replica of a prairie schooner for visitors to see, approach and touch. The Whitman Memorial sits atop a hill that provides visitors a 360 degree view of the entire Park.

The Park hosts a variety of visitor groups, which include school groups, Scout groups, specialty groups (i.e. home-schooled individuals, child care, etc.), and Veteran Affairs groups. There is a picnic area provided within the Park for these and other groups and individuals to utilize.

IV. The National Center on Accessibility Assessment Approach

The National Center on Accessibility assessment process is designed to identify barriers to participation for people with disabilities, make recommendations for barrier removal and improved access, and develop associated work orders and cost estimates to assist Park personnel in long-term planning. The NCA assessment team utilizes the federal standard for program access, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, as a guiding principle for viewing the programs, activities and services of the National Park or Historic Site, in its entirety, for consideration of barrier removal. The assessment team looks critically at the programs that make up the visitor experience from the point of view of persons who have impairments to vision, hearing, mobility, or cognitive processes. This approach focuses the assessment process and outcomes on the visitor experience and beyond the realm of solely the physical environment. The NCA assessment team views the physical environment as a catalyst for program access and thus forms recommendations for barrier removal with program access at the forefront of the investigative and reporting processes.

At Whitman Mission National Historic Site, the assessment team from the National Center on Accessibility conducted an accessibility assessment of the physical and programmatic elements of the Visitor Center and the surrounding grounds. The team also interviewed key Park personnel, collecting information to provide a broad range of recommendations for improving access for visitors with disabilities.

V. Referenced Standards and Guidelines

The National Park Service is legislatively mandated to provide accessible facilities and programs for their visitors with disabilities. Based on these mandates, the National Center on Accessibility utilizes the following accessibility standards and guidelines for their assessment:

Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 as amended (U.S. Access Board, 2004; General Services Administration, effective date May 8, 2006)

This document contains scoping and technical requirements for accessibility to sites, facilities, buildings, and elements by individuals with disabilities. The requirements are to be applied during the design, construction, addition to, alteration, and lease of sites, facilities, buildings, and elements to the extent required by regulations issued by Federal agencies under the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA).

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978, Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) reads, "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or under any program or activity conducted by an Executive Agency."

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508

This section, amended in 2000, requires access to electronic and information technology provided by the Federal government. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Federal agencies must ensure that this technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities to the extent it does not pose an "undue burden."

NPS Director's Order #42: Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities in National Park Service Programs and Services

This NPS Director's Order reiterates the NPS goal to ensure that all people, including the estimated 54 million citizens with disabilities, have the highest level of accessibility that is reasonable to their programs, facilities and services in conformance with applicable regulations and standards. Five objectives are outlined including: incorporation of the highest level of accessibility as a long range goal; implementation through daily operation, policies, organizational relationships and strategies; provision of guidance and direction regarding the NPS interpretation of laws and policies; establishment of a framework for effective implementation; and ensuring the implementation of "universal design" principles within the National Park system.

Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media (February 2012)

These NPS Guidelines combine laws, policies, and best practices for interpretive media. The guidelines acknowledge that no interpretive media product works alone. Media products are interdependent and each has inherent strengths and weaknesses. Park visitors sample and benefit from an array of interpretive media. These guidelines describe design and presentation solutions that are acceptable in most interpretive media situations. It should be noted however that these guidelines present highlights only and are not comprehensive.

Draft Final Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (U.S. Access Board, October 19, 2009)

Achieving accessibility in outdoor environments has long been a source of inquiry due to challenges and constraints posed by terrain, the degree of development, construction practices and materials, and

other factors. These guidelines are proposed by the U.S. Access Board as new scoping and technical requirements for outdoor developed areas covered by the Architectural Barriers Act. The guidelines will cover new and altered trails, beaches, picnic and camping facilities and viewing areas. While these guidelines are not yet enforceable as requirements for Federal entities, they should be integrated into the planning, construction, and renovation of outdoor recreation areas and facilities and in the provision of programs and services provided to the public as best practice guidelines.

In addition to legislative mandates and proposed rulemaking, the NCA assessment team has made recommendations based on best practices in the field in order to create greater opportunities for participation and benefit among visitors with disabilities.

Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The intent of Universal Design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal Design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

There are times when NCA may use the concept of Universal Design for recommendations that are not requirements but are seen as “best practices”. An example would be providing recommendations for benches in the outdoor environment, installing power assisted exterior doors, marking parking spaces uniformly at 11 feet wide, and/or utilizing the advisories in ABAAS when appropriate due to accessibility issues that contribute to safety risks.

Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design

The Smithsonian Guidelines is one of the very first and most formidable resources addressing exhibit design considerations for museum patrons with disabilities. The Smithsonian Guidelines are referenced as best practice for designing to various learning styles and functional abilities in the interpretive environment and especially in situations where the accessibility standards do not fully transfer to unique exhibition designs.

NPS Audio-Visual Accessibility Initiative for Visitors with Disabilities D24 (2420) (October 20, 2006)

A series of official disability rights complaints and testimony received at a Congressional oversight hearing on disability access revealed that the NPS has many audiovisual programs that are not captioned or audio-described; assembly areas that are not equipped with assistive listening systems; and in some cases, captioning systems that are broken and have not been repaired. This initiative established the fundamental goal that the films and audio-visual programs presented in parks provide three basic services: open captions, audio-description, and assistive listening devices for those with hearing loss.

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board Revised Draft Guidelines for Accessible Public Rights-of-Way (November 23, 2005)

Sidewalks, street crossings, and other elements of the public rights-of-ways present unique challenges to accessibility for which specific guidance is considered essential. These proposed guidelines for public rights-of-way address various issues, including access for blind pedestrians at street crossings, wheelchair access to on-street parking, and various constraints posed by space limitations, roadway design practices, slope, and terrain. The new guidelines will cover pedestrian access to sidewalks and

streets, including crosswalks, curb ramps, street furnishings, pedestrian signals, parking, and other components of public rights-of-way.

VI. Key Findings and Recommendations

This section provides an overview of the NCA assessment team's key findings and recommendations. More complete details of findings, recommendations for corrective actions and cost estimates are available through the Facility Management Software System (FMSS) database, and the Cost Estimating Software System (CESS).

The deficiencies are given a priority rating by the assessors. The three accessibility deficiency priorities, as established by the National Park Service within FMSS, are:

Critical - A critical priority would be given to those deficiencies that occur in an asset or facility that is utilized by a significantly high number of people (visitors or employees); or "prohibits" or seriously inhibits people with disabilities from utilizing the facility.

Serious - A serious priority would be given to those deficiencies that occur in an asset or facility but only modestly inhibit an individual with a disability from utilizing the facility.

Minor - A minor priority would be given to those deficiencies that occur in any asset or facility but only slightly inhibit an individual with a disability from utilizing the facility. Minor classifications can also signify that the deficiency can be easily corrected with maintenance and/or minor adjustments or that correction might take more time and money but only needs to be corrected when renovations/replacements are scheduled.

1. Policy Considerations and Best Practices

During the review of assessment data, NCA accessibility specialists identified several barriers to accessibility, unique to Whitman Mission National Historic Site, that are not explicitly addressed in the above referenced standards. As a result of discussion with Park management, and in collaboration with recommendations from the U.S. Access Board, the Park has decided to adopt the following best practices to maximize accessibility for visitors with disabilities.

Exterior Doors

While there is no identified accessibility standard for the opening force of exterior doors, it is recommended as best practice for the Park to adjust exterior door closers to reduce the opening force to as close to 5 pounds (maximum force requirement for interior doors) as possible. If this is not possible, the Park should investigate the installation of a power assisted or automatic door opener to minimize the potential barrier for an individual with a disability.

Waysides and Interpretive Panels

As new waysides and interpretive panels are installed, or maintenance is conducted to existing routes where waysides and interpretive panels are furnished, clear ground space complying with ABAAS 305 should be provided, positioned for either a forward or parallel approach, centered on the frame.

Benches

All new accessible benches should be installed with clear floor or ground space positioned near the bench for wheelchair seating that does not overlap the accessible route. As benches are repaired or replaced, accessible benches should be provided until a minimum of 20 percent are accessible in each location. Accessible benches should have back support, at least one armrest, a seat height of between 17 inches minimum and 19 inches maximum, and should be installed along an accessible path of travel (i.e. accessible route, outdoor recreation access route, or trail).

Interpretive Trails Benches

There are seven benches provided along the five trails that make up the interpretive trail system; the benches contain various deficiencies, and none meet the recommendations for accessible benches. A total of six of these benches are being recommended for replacement with benches that meet the above recommendations for accessibility.

Whitman Memorial Benches

There are two benches provided at the Whitman Memorial; neither provides the recommended back support or a minimum of one armrest. The bench seats do not meet the minimum height recommendations above the ground surface. A total of one of these benches is being recommended for replacement with a bench that meets the above recommendations for accessibility.

Great Grave Benches

There are two benches provided at the Great Grave; neither bench provides the recommended back support or a minimum of one armrest. A total of one of these benches is being recommended for replacement with a bench that meets the above recommendations for accessibility.

2. Visitor Information / Trip Planning

The Park website is often the first point of contact for people planning their visit to Whitman Mission National Historic Site. The Park has an accessibility section on their website which provides information to visitors about accessible features available at the Park, in addition to discussing the birding program and the paved paths (trails) that are accessible. However, some of the information provided on the website is inaccurate in terms of meeting the accessibility requirements. The availability of accessible parking and curb ramps is highlighted, although neither is fully compliant (deficiencies addressed in section 8 of this report). The picnic area is listed as accessible; however, it does not meet current recommendations for scoping and dispersion. The website states that accessible restrooms are available, but numerous deficiencies exist, which may present physical barriers to some individuals with disabilities. Information provided about the trails leading to various monuments and interpretive features within the Park is misleading. A paved path is not necessarily an accessible path. While it does increase the path's accessibility, running slope is also a factor. The varying running slope of the paths throughout the Park should be included on the website. The accessibility portion of the website should also offer access to alternate formats for brochures, maps and text through links to audio files (see section 4 of this report for recommendations).

The Park does not have policies for either Service Animals or Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD). It is recommended that the Park reference the latest regulations published by the Department of Justice regarding service animals, and other power driven mobility devices (OPDMD) and develop policies on these issues. Post both new policies in the "Accessibility" section of the Park's website, and include the service animal policy in the "Pets" section as well. Providing information about

all of the accessibility accommodations that the Park makes available on a single page of the website will ensure the information gathering process is simplified for potential visitors. Be sure to include information, not only for people with physical disabilities, but also accessibility information for people with sensory and cognitive disabilities. Finally, include the contact information of the staff member who serves as the Accessibility Coordinator for the Park.

3. Visitor Orientation and Way-finding

The layout of the facilities and managed assets within Whitman Mission National Historic Site (NHS) is communicated through signage, maps, and publications designed to welcome and orient the visitor to the Park. The existing signage, maps, and publications that pertain to visitor orientation are not provided in electronic, large print, or tactile formats for people with low vision or who are blind. In addition, Whitman Mission does not provide a tactile topographical map to help those visitors with visual and/or cognitive impairments better understand their surroundings and to aid in orientation.

The Park shall identify local resources to reproduce the orientation information found on signage, along with the information on the Park maps in electronic and large print formats. The Park should also design and develop a tactile, topographical map, containing three-dimensional features of the significant Park elements. The following elements should be captured in the map: the Visitor Center, the interpretive trails, the ground markers denoting the various historic structures (Mission House site, first house site, Grist Mill site, Emigrant House site, and the Blacksmith Shop site), the picnic shelter, the Whitman Memorial, Alice Carissa's Grave, the Great Grave, and the portion of the Oregon Trail that crosses through the Park boundaries. While accessibility guidelines do not address visitor orientation and way-finding, visitor orientation signage and a topographical/tactile map should be provided at the Visitor Center. When designing the map, consider factors that make tactile maps accessible and functional for people who are blind or who have cognitive impairments, including size, depth, location, audio description, texturing, keys, legends, and degree of detail. The overall size of the map shall not exceed the maximum allowed reach ranges measured to the center or opposite edge of the map (preferred), depending on the method of installation. Forward reach range requirements for both adults and children should be considered. Knee and toe clearances should be provided for a forward approach by someone in a wheelchair. The map material should be able to withstand high visitor use, be comfortable to the touch, and be finished with a coating that allows for routine cleaning. Any text used to communicate essential information should incorporate accessible font size and type, should be sans serif or simple serif for essential information, and should be large enough to convey the information to the widest range of visitors with and without visual impairments. A variety of textures should be used to distinguish between different landscape features, such as water, routes, trails, roads, and varying topographies. The tactile map should include components such as raised lines and scale orientation options.

4. Publications

Publications offer a wide range of information. It is critical that people with disabilities receive the same information - of the same quality - as other visitors. Publications that are considered "readily available," like the official Park brochure, interpretive handouts, news bulletins and others should be available in large print, Braille, audio and electronic format. At the time of the assessment, the Park's primary publications and the text of the Park's movie were provided and available in Braille and large print formats, but they were not provided in the required audio or electronic format to accommodate visitors who have low vision or are blind.

The Whitman Mission NHS brochures and all other readily available publications should be formatted for audio and electronic distribution. Translate the content for the readily available publications to electronic text files (.txt, .rtf, .doc), and audio (mp3). In the future insert a statement in the primary Park brochure indicating “alternate formats of publications are available upon request.” Ensure that the alternate formats are in stock for onsite visitor requests, and maintain signage at the Visitor Center information desk stating that the information is available.

The Park shall also add a section to the primary Park brochures explaining the availability of services for visitors with disabilities including information to request a sign language interpreter, availability of auxiliary aids and services, alternate formats, trail information, accessibility improvements to the Park, and the contact information for the Park’s Accessibility Coordinator. Ensure that the same information is added to the Park’s accessibility section of the website.

5. Exhibits

Interpretive Exhibits

Interpretive exhibits located within the Visitor Center are provided in multiple formats, including text, photos, graphics, audio, artifacts and reproductions. Some exhibit items are available for tactile exploration (and seem to be geared towards younger visitors), but a majority of the exhibits central to the Park’s main interpretive themes are located within display cases. This leaves little opportunity for visitors who have low vision or are blind, or those with cognitive disabilities to participate in or benefit from the Park’s interpretation. There is no three-dimensional model of the mission provided for tactile examination. Additionally, there is currently no audio description associated with any of the exhibits found in the Visitor Center.

A portion of the exhibit cases are installed with a leading edge exceeding 27 inches above the floor and protruding more than 4 inches into the circulation path; therefore, they are not cane detectable and are considered protruding objects.

Interpretive Panels and Waysides

Interpretive content (text and pictures) is provided on exhibit panels and waysides throughout the Park. Many of the interpretive panels and the labels for exhibit items in the display cases contain italics, lack sufficient color contrast for text, have fonts that are too small, and contain a variety of serif fonts, which all create barriers for visitors with low vision. There is currently no audio description associated with any of the interpretive panels and waysides found in the Park.

Interpretive Content Solution

To address the deficiencies noted in the exhibits, panels and waysides, Park management shall work with design services to create an exhibit design plan and replacement schedule. When interpretive panels are replaced, ensure that the information is presented in a variety of ways that are accessible to the widest range of visitors. Things to consider in interpretive design include the use of sans serif or simple serif fonts (as opposed to serif fonts), minimal use of italics, size of font, contrast between text and background of 70-95 percent, and the incorporation of audio and tactile elements. Text should not appear over images or in shadow as the stylistic presentation of information can interfere with readability.

Items essential to the exhibition’s main themes must be presented for visitors of all abilities. Tactile experiences are essential to people with visual impairments and greatly assist many people with

cognitive disabilities. The Park shall make available artifacts, reproductions or models of various items essential to understanding the main Park themes available as tactile reproductions. Items to consider would include: a tipi, relevant tools and instruments (including weapons, saddles, etc.), and other items that help to show comparisons between the Whitman Mission way of life and the Cayuse way of life. Ensure that any display cases utilized in the new exhibit design are not protruding objects. As display cases are redesigned, provide transitions between glazing and framework to be placed within the visitor's line of sight or provide rounded edges. This will reduce the risk of someone with low vision who leans toward the case from inadvertently making contact with the edge of the case. The exhibits, panels and wayside content should all be included in the audio described tour recommended for the Park (addressed in section 7 "Talks and Tours" of this report).

6. Audio/Visual Programs

All new media productions shall be open captioned and audio described per Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the NPS Audio-Visual Accessibility Initiative. All existing media shall be captioned, audio described and available for use with an assistive listening system. The accessible features of the audio/visual programs such as assistive listening, audio description and open captioning shall be maintained through periodic testing and staff training. An assistive listening system should also be available upon visitor request for demonstrations, special events and ranger-led tours. Display signage at visitor information areas indicating that the assistive listening system and audio description are available (when obtained) and market their availability through brochures, program announcements and the Park website.

Assistive Listening System

The Park has an assistive listening system installed for the Park movie shown in the Visitor Center theatre. Signage indicating the availability of the system and receivers is posted near the entrance of the theatre. The system was fully operational at the time of the assessment and available upon request.

Audio Description

The Park movie does not include an audio description component, and an audio description system is not provided. The Park shall develop an audio description script and recording to accompany the movie. Along with the production of the audio description program, audio description equipment will need to be determined. A media specialist is recommended to visit with Park staff to help decide the best equipment for the specific needs of the theatre. It may be possible to incorporate the audio description with the existing assistive listening system currently utilized at the Park.

Open Captioning

The Park movie shown in the Visitor Center theatre contains open captions. The Park shall ensure any future movies and/or presentations shown in the theatre continue to include open captions.

7. Talks and Tours

Portable Assistive Listening System

There is no portable assistive listening system available for ranger-led walks, talks and tours originating from the Visitor Center. People with hearing loss must be provided an equal opportunity to participate in the various programs offered for all visitors. Scoping for portable assistive listening system receivers should be generally based on the seating capacity in the Park's assembly areas. Therefore, a minimum of three portable multi-channel assistive listening system receivers (two of which shall be hearing-aid compatible) and two portable multi-channel transmitters shall be provided for ranger-led walks, talks

and tours. Display a sign that includes the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss at the Visitor Center information desk indicating that the assistive listening system is available. Include a notice on the Park website when the portable assistive listening system is acquired.

Audio Description

There are many visual elements in the Whitman Mission Visitor Center, throughout the Park grounds, as well as the Park landscape itself that are not audio described. This presents a barrier to full participation for visitors who are blind or have low vision, and for individuals with cognitive impairments. While the Park offers waysides that incorporate audio components, these waysides do not provide a comprehensive audio described tour of the Park interpretation, exhibits and self-guided tour that is necessary for visitors who are blind or who have cognitive impairments to gain an equal understanding of the subject matter. The Park shall work with a consultant to develop and record a script that will incorporate the visual elements of Whitman Mission NHS into an audio-described tour. Be sure to include the following elements in development of the script: a general orientation to the Visitor Center; exhibits in the Visitor Center; description of the grounds and significant features such as the Prairie Schooner, the Great Grave, Whitman Memorial, and the various building foundation footprints; exterior interpretive panels and waysides; photos and text on interpretive panels; trails that provide interpretation and/or unique experiences such as the Historic Route of the Oregon Trail; and all tactile components throughout the Park (found primarily in the Visitor Center). Where audio description for specific exhibits is provided, incorporate a 2x2 inch sign alerting visitors to its availability. In addition, the consultant should assist in determining what equipment would be most appropriate for the site's specific audio description needs. Ensure that the equipment is hands-free or has a hands-free option (so that visitors can explore their surroundings tactilely), is able to be independently operated, and is hearing-aid compatible. Display signage at the Visitor Center information desk indicating that audio description is available, and include a notice on the Park website when the program is obtained.

8. Physical Building Elements

Below is a summary of the major physical accessibility deficiencies, by area, found at Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Detailed explanations of identified barriers and recommended solutions for barrier removal can be found in associated FMSS work orders and cost estimations.

Parking

There are two accessible parking spaces with three marked access aisles provided in the Visitor Center parking lot; neither of the parking spaces meets the minimum width requirements for a van accessible parking space. There is no vertical signage installed to designate the accessible parking spaces. There are a total of 40 parking spaces (38 standard and two accessible) in the parking lot. A minimum of one standard accessible parking space and one van accessible parking space shall be striped, each with an adjacent marked access aisle shall be provided. The parking spaces in the parking lot are angled due to the one-directional flow of traffic; therefore, access aisles shall be located on the passenger side of the accessible parking spaces. The Park shall purchase and install into the grass surface, at the required heights, two parking space identification signs. Parking space identification signs shall include the International Symbol of Accessibility. Signs identifying van parking spaces shall contain the designation "van accessible."

The curb ramp connecting the existing access aisle to the accessible route exceeds maximum slope requirements, and the clear width of the curb ramp does not meet minimum requirements. The Park shall conduct a design study to determine the most feasible and effective method of providing two curb ramps connecting the two required access aisles (addressed in a separate work order to the accessible

route leading to the picnic shelter and the Visitor Center. Curb ramps and the flared sides shall not project into vehicular traffic, parking spaces, or parking access aisles. Curb ramps shall not be steeper than 8.33 percent and shall be a minimum of 36 inches wide and shall contain a landing at the top that meets requirements. Curb ramp flares, where provided, shall not be steeper than 10 percent. Ensure there are no changes in level at any of the transitions (where the ramp meets the parking area and/or the accessible route).

Accessible Routes

The hardware on the three sets of double doors into the Visitor Center does not meet requirements as they are not operable with a closed fist. All three sets of double doors have an operating force that exceeds the recommended 5 pounds, and automatic door openers are recommended on at least one set of doors. The hardware on the doors shall be replaced with hardware that is operable with a closed fist, such as a lever handle, or a larger loop.

Picnic Facilities

There are a total of nine picnic tables dispersed under a covered picnic shelter and within the grass area adjacent to the shelter. All of the picnic tables meet the physical dimensions for an accessible picnic table. There are two distinct and separate picnic experiences in this location: the covered shelter and the individual tables dispersed on the grass. There is no outdoor recreation access route (ORAR) to a minimum of one picnic table in the grass area. There is also no firm and stable clear ground space provided at the wheelchair accessible spaces at any picnic table and along all usable sides of the table. Picnic facilities should provide accessible picnic units for visitors with disabilities that are comparable to, and integrated with, those available to others. Therefore, a concrete ORAR, meeting all recommended accessibility guidelines, should be provided to a minimum of one picnic table located outside of the picnic shelter. This new route should originate from the existing concrete ORAR that leads to the picnic shelter. This designated table should sit on a firm and stable surface that provides 36 inches of clear ground space along all usable sides of the table measured from the back edge of the benches. Ensure a clear ground space that meets recommendations is provided at the wheelchair seating location at the table, and is positioned for a forward approach. Ensure the table maintains the recommended knee and toe clearance under the unit.

Restrooms

Men's Restroom

There are multiple barriers to accessibility in the men's restroom: the exterior door pressure exceeds maximum recommendations for opening force of an exterior door; the restroom sign is not installed at the latch side of the door and does not contain the required raised characters, Braille or the International Symbol of Accessibility; the lavatory pipes are not wrapped to protect against contact; the soap dispenser exceeds maximum reach range requirements above the finish floor; in the accessible toilet stall, the space between the wall and the side and rear grab bars exceeds the required absolute measurement; and the baby changing table installed inside the accessible stall decreases the required clearance around the water closet when in the open position.

While there is no identified standard for the opening force of exterior doors in the accessibility standards, it is recommended as best practice for the Park to adjust the closer on the door to reduce the opening force to as close to 5 pounds as feasible (maximum force requirement for an interior door). If this is not possible, the Park shall investigate the installation of automatic door operators to meet the opening force recommendation. Purchase one men's restroom sign that contains the required raised characters, pictograms, Braille, and the International Symbol of Accessibility, and install on the wall to

the latch side of the door at the required height. Insulate the lavatory pipes to protect against contact. Remove and reinstall the soap dispenser so that all operable parts are within reach range requirements. Remove both the side and rear grab bar and dispose of them. Purchase and install two new grab bars that meet requirements. Ensure a space of exactly 1 ½ inches between the bars and wall. Remove and dispose of the baby changing station.

Women's Restroom

There are multiple barriers to accessibility in the women's restroom: the exterior door pressure exceeds maximum recommendations for opening force of an exterior door; the restroom sign is not installed at the latch side of the door and does not contain the required raised characters, Braille or the International Symbol of Accessibility; the lavatory pipes are not wrapped to protect against contact; the soap dispenser exceeds maximum reach range requirements above the finish floor; in the accessible toilet stall, the space between the wall and the side and rear grab bars exceeds the required absolute measurement; the baby changing table installed inside the accessible stall decreases the required clearance around the water closet when in the open position; and the flush control on the floor-mounted water closet is on the closed side of the unit, and the toilet centerline does not meet minimum distance requirements from the side wall.

While there is no identified standard for the opening force of exterior doors in the accessibility standards, it is recommended as best practice for the Park to adjust the closer on the door to reduce the opening force to as close to 5 pounds as feasible (maximum force requirement for an interior door). If this is not possible, the Park shall investigate the installation of automatic door operators to meet the opening force recommendation. Purchase one women's restroom sign that contains the required raised characters, pictograms, Braille, and the International Symbol of Accessibility and install on the wall to the latch side of the door at the required height. Insulate the lavatory pipes to protect against contact. Remove and reinstall the soap dispenser so that all operable parts are within reach range requirements. Remove both the side and rear grab bar and dispose of them. Purchase and install two new grab bars that meet requirements. Ensure a space of exactly 1 ½ inches between the bars and wall. Remove and dispose of the baby changing station. The floor-mounted water closet shall be reinstalled to ensure a centerline that meets distance requirements from the side wall; the exposed plumbing at the back of the water closet shall be adjusted to provide the flush control on the open side of the unit.

Drinking Fountains

The drinking fountain located at the exterior of the Visitor Center has a knee clearance that does not meet minimum height requirements. There is no drinking fountain for standing persons who have difficulty bending or stooping.

The drinking fountain located on the outdoor recreation access route to the covered picnic shelter is designed as a wheelchair accessible unit. However, the spout exceeds maximum height requirements for a low unit. There is no drinking fountain for standing persons who have difficulty bending or stooping.

The drinking fountain located at the Whitman Memorial has a solid base and therefore does not provide the required knee and toe clearance for wheelchair access. There is no clear ground space centered on the unit. The spout exceeds maximum height requirements for a low unit. There is no drinking fountain for standing persons who have difficulty bending or stooping.

Remove all three of the existing steel drinking fountains. Purchase and install a high-low drinking fountain unit that meets requirements for each location. Ensure the spout height of the high unit meets height requirements above the ground surface for standing persons. Ensure that the new low unit complies with knee and toe clearances and clear ground space. Ensure the spout of the lower unit meets height requirements. Both spouts shall provide a flow of water 4 inches high minimum. Operable parts of the new high-low units shall be operable with one hand and shall not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist and shall not exceed maximum pounds of force to operate. Upon installation, ensure that the new units leading edge (or adjacent protective barrier) is cane detectable at 27 inches maximum above the finish ground if it protrudes into the circulation path.

9. Trails & Scenic Viewing Opportunities

The appendix at the conclusion of this document visually identifies the trail segments evaluated by the assessment team from the National Center on Accessibility. It is the responsibility of the Park to conduct condition assessments of any new and/or altered trails, make accessibility findings available to the public, and integrate the information into the recommendations for trail accessibility improvements as identified below and within the associated FMSS work orders. Trail segment B and D are the only two trail segments within Whitman Mission NHS that contained deficiencies, the other three trail segments meet the recommendations for accessible trail segments.

The Draft Final Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (Draft Final – Outdoor) apply to Federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service. The guidelines also apply to non-federal entities that construct or alter facilities on Federal lands on behalf of the Federal government. According to the Draft Final – Outdoor, a trail is defined as, “A pedestrian route developed primarily for outdoor recreational purposes. A pedestrian route developed primarily to connect elements, spaces, or facilities within a site is not a trail.”

Where the Park determines that a specific portion of a trail does not permit full compliance with the trail guidelines set forth in the Draft Final – Outdoor, the Park should ensure that the trail complies with the guidelines to the maximum extent feasible. The Park should document the basis for the determination and should maintain the documentation with the records for the construction or alteration project.

Program Access on Trails

A common misconception among park and recreation practitioners is that the “program access” standard under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act only applies to staffed, structured, traditional programs, such as specially scheduled interpretive tours. The program access standard applies to every good, service or activity provided by the Park to the public, including trails. In addition to assessing the trails for physical access, the programmatic elements offered on each individual trail should also be assessed. Program access on trails encompasses more than just information provided on waysides along the trail; it includes the entire experience that the trail offers to a visitor. The experience could include prominent features found along a trail, facilities and/or amenities along the trail, or a type of environment provided on a trail that may not be found elsewhere within the Park. Therefore, it will be necessary to first look at Whitman Mission National Historic Site’s *entire* trail system, and then each individual trail, to adequately determine if visitors with disabilities are being offered equal programmatic experiences on the trails at Whitman Mission National Historic Site.

Interpretive Trails (See Appendix A)

Trail Segment D

Trail D is 917 linear feet of exposed aggregate surface that measures 5 feet wide. The trail meets at the intersection of the Oregon Trail and Trail E and is the method by which visitors access the Whitman Memorial. However, it was determined that as a result of the deficiencies recorded during the assessment, and the natural contour of the trail's terrain, the trail could not be brought into compliance with the Draft Final – Outdoor technical specifications for running slope. The maximum running slope was 21.5 percent with the typical running slope averaging approximately 15 percent. Trail D is considered exempt from the accessibility recommendations as a result of more than 30 percent of the total length of the trail containing a running slope steeper than 8.33 percent (General Exception 2; 1017.7). It would be infeasible to bring the trail into compliance with the running slope recommendations due to the elevation change required to reach the Whitman Monument; therefore, the entirety of the trail meets the Conditions for Exceptions 1: Compliance is not feasible due to terrain.

As a program alternative the Park has discussed the purchase of a powered vehicle that meets accessibility requirements, which would provide a shuttle for visitors needing the accommodation from the Visitor Center to the Whitman Memorial. The purchase and use of this shuttle would be a modification of the Park's policies, practices, and procedures; the feasibility of this purchase and modification should be further evaluated by Park management.

Trail Segment B

Trail B connects the Great Grave to the Visitor Center and is 405 linear feet of exposed aggregate surface that measures 5 feet wide. For the purpose of the accessibility assessment, the term "stations" denotes feet. For this trail, station 0000 was at the Great Grave site and station 0405 is the Visitor Center's rear doors. At station 0020, the running slope of the trail exceeds the maximum allowed running slope for a trail of 12.5 percent, up to 15 percent. At station 0076 is the general access point to the tipi, which is located 65 feet from the trail tread. The ground surface that connects the trail to the tipi is a natural dirt surface and does not contain an established trail. The Park conducts interpretive programs at the tipi and should provide an accessible ground surface leading to the tipi that is firm and stable. After the intersection of the trail, the running slope falls back within the recommended technical specifications for an accessible trail. Upon alterations to Trail B, the Park should ensure that the running slope of the trail does not exceed the recommendations as provided in the Draft Final – Outdoor guidelines. This will require grading and resurfacing of the trail beginning at station 0020 and continuing for potentially 200 feet to ensure that the trail running slope specifications can be met.

10. Concessions

Discover Your Northwest is the Park's operating concessionaire, managing the Park store, and providing educational items for visitors. Concessions for the Park are provided in a combined exhibit and bookstore area of the Visitor Center. There were no deficiencies noted in these areas at the time of the assessment.

Provision of accessible goods, activities and services by the concessionaire should be reviewed as part of the annual NPS evaluation. At a minimum, the concessionaire should strive to achieve the same level of program access as is expected of the programs or services offered by the National Park Service. As such, taking action on the recommendations to improve program access as outlined in this report would also be prescribed for the concessionaire. For example, when new inventory is selected, buyers are encouraged to seek video/DVD programs with captions and audio description, and make those titles

known to customers. If videos or DVDs are shown in retail spaces, versions with open-captions and audio description are recommended for viewing.

VII. Action Planning

Upon receipt of the assessment data, it will be critical for Park personnel to review and embark on a series of actions to continue planning for improved access to the programs and facilities at the Whitman Mission National Historic Site.

Park senior management is encouraged to establish a core accessibility management team with representation from various divisions including interpretation, maintenance, administration, concessions and senior management. Representation should include individuals with decision-making authority in order to appropriately prioritize funds while assuming responsibilities for compliance oversight in those key areas.

A process to review and prioritize corrective actions to improve Park access for visitors with disabilities should be developed. In addition, a strategy and timeline should be outlined to conduct accessibility assessments of facilities and programs as they are changed or updated so that any deficiencies may be entered into FMSS, and proposed corrective actions can be cost estimated to serve future planning and budget requests.

A process to review all new construction and renovation plans or designs should be implemented to ensure the minimum accessibility standards and guidelines are appropriately applied and opportunities for the application of universal design are seized. In addition, a process to inspect all construction projects for compliance with the minimum accessibility standards and guidelines should be established.

Provide staff training for full-time staff, seasonal staff and volunteers on select topics including the application of the accessibility standards and guidelines for Park maintenance; the principles of universal design; program access; methods for developing accessible interpretive programs; the accommodation process; techniques for interacting with people with disabilities and the use of people first language. Interpretive staff should receive more specific training on the provision of audio description for people with visual impairments and tailoring talks for people with cognitive impairments. Frontline customer service staff should also receive a seasonal update on accessibility improvements in order to field and/or refer questions on accessibility from the public.

An ongoing evaluation of programs, services and activities should be instituted to ensure the Park is meeting the needs of visitors with disabilities.

Appendix A

