

**City of Bloomington**  
**COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY**  
**ACCESSIBILITY**

# **Council for Community Accessibility**

## **2021 Annual Report**

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## Who We Are

It all started in 1990...

The City of Bloomington Council for Community Accessibility (CCA) is a volunteer group that advocates for the interests of people with disabilities. Formerly known as the Community Council on Handicap Concerns, the group was formed in 1990. The CCA promotes awareness of the challenges faced by people with disabilities, and works to develop solutions to problems of accessibility in the community.

While they come from diverse backgrounds, CCA members share a personal interest in accessibility issues and bring a range of leadership experiences to their work on the Council. Many members have disabilities themselves or are family members of those with disabilities.

## Objectives

- **Assessment:** To seek information about the needs and available services for persons with disabilities.
- **Awareness:** To educate all segments of the community.
- **Accessibility:** To promote access to places of public accommodation, housing, programs, and services.
- **Advocacy:** To promote the best interests of persons with disabilities by supporting specific, identified issues.
- **Advice:** To serve as a resource for the community.

## Events/Programs

### Breaking down the Barriers



*A slide from Brian Richwine's presentation*

For Breaking down the Barriers in April, the Council for Community Accessibility held a virtual event about virtual events, specifically how to make them more accessible to everyone. Speakers included: Brian Richwine, an accessibility expert from IU University Information Technology Services, who talked about making virtual events accessible; Holly Elkins, Chair, Legislative Committee, at the Indiana Association of the Deaf, who spoke about how to make virtual events more accessible for the deaf; and Ted Boardman, president of the Heartland Association of the American Council of the Blind, who informed attendees on how to make virtual events more accessible for people with low vision and the blind.

### Increasing Transportation and Mobility Accessibility Opportunities for All

In June, the Council for Community Accessibility held an in-person and hybrid event that brought together

Watch [people navigate some of the challenges on city streets.](#)

engineers, planners, city officials, people with disabilities and others to listen to a keynote speaker on common pedestrian access barriers and innovative ways to address them. Together groups navigated and evaluated several routes around the city and witnessed directly many of the challenges people with disabilities face in our community.



Together, we evaluated several routes around the city and witnessed

*CCA Transportation and Mobility Committee Chair, Barbara Salisbury, walks with Liz Peterson from IU Health.*

## ADA Anniversary Celebration



*A family visiting the Monroe County Public Library was pleasantly pleased to be able to take their children through the Anniversary Celebration that was held outside the Library.*

Monroe County Public Library, Stone Belt, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Heartland Association of the American Council of the Blind, and the Youth Self Advocates of Monroe County all helped the CCA celebrate the 31st anniversary of the ADA in July.

## Gather 'round the Table: With Us, About Us

In September, a hybrid event provided an opportunity for both online and in-person attendance. Keynote speaker Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, co-editor of the book *About Us: Essays from the Ability Series of the New York Times*, joined the audience on Zoom, while several inspiring CCA volunteers presented plain language versions of their favorite essays from the book. These reflections led to thoughtful questions and discussions about the essays in *About Us*, and about member's steps in developing plain language versions of its content.

*Watch and listen as you hear about the [impact of the event](#) and potential for a future project.*



(left to right, top to bottom) Our CCA volunteers who shared their favorite essays, Zoe Waters, Michelle Hahn, Tiba Walter, and Lesley Davis.

Beyond the signature events, CCA has two other programs:

### AccessAbility Decal Program

This program, run by the Accessibility Committee, recognizes accessible businesses and provides guidance to businesses to eliminate barriers to accessibility. In the past they have worked on surveying polling locations, bus stops, schools, and medical offices.



### Annual Accessibility and Disability Awareness Months

Bloomington Celebrates  
 Disability Awareness Month during March 2021  
 and  
 Community Accessibility Month during April 2021  
 (As of February 26th)

The months of March and April offer Bloomington a time to consider ways in which our community is a welcoming one to people with disabilities. During March, Bloomington and communities across Indiana celebrate *Disability Awareness Month*. In April, the City of Bloomington's Council for Community Accessibility celebrates *Accessibility Awareness Month*. A wealth of activities will be occurring in Bloomington and on the IU campus over these next two months. Individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, faculty, and other community members are encouraged to participate.

**MARCH ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS MONTH ACTIVITIES**

**Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**      **Addressing COVID Anxiety and Isolation: A Caregiver University Program**  
 Join our partners at IU Health's Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Service for a live Zoom session at 10:00 am – 11:00 am, to discuss the impact of isolation on dementia and to learn strategies for caregiving during the pandemic. Topics will include how to decrease isolation and how to cope with the anxiety of these times. Age 18 and up. To register, please contact Dayna Thompson at dthompson6@iuhealth.org or 812-353-9299.

**Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>**      **"Way to Go"**  
 Travel Training Bloomington Transit hosts free travel training sessions for individuals and groups. The purpose is to teach people of all abilities to navigate the city bus system. Sessions are held each month. These are usually held in person at the 3rd & Walnut Transit Center. However, this March 11th class will be held virtually via Zoom at 1:30 pm. Participants must contact Eli McCormick Customer Service Manager, at mccormick@bloomingtontransit.com or 812-336-7433 extension 2 for instructions on joining the Zoom meeting. Additional classes can be arranged if these scheduled ones do not fit participant's schedules.

CCA interns keep track of numerous events sponsored by organizations concerned with disability and accessibility. In the month of March the CCA celebrates Disability Awareness Month and in April Accessibility Awareness Month.

## 2021 Goals in Review

Goals are listed with some points on the progress made on those goals.

### **Goal 1: More engagement between CCA and the deaf community**

- Holly Elkins, Chair, Legislative Committee, Indiana Association of the Deaf, presented at our virtual Breaking down the Barriers event in April 2021.
- An effort was made to reach out and invite other members of the deaf community, but there is not any regular attendance.

### **Goal 2: Building permits within Monroe County to comply with ADA requirements**

- State Senator Shelli Yoder spoke at a CCA meeting where this issue was discussed.
- There is irregular contact with Jim Gerstbauer, Building Commissioner at Monroe County, on specific issues, but not as much progress as had been hoped for in this area.
- Progress was made on accessibility of the new parking garages and that more City departments are working with the CCA on various issues of accessibility, including Legal, Engineering, Planning, Parks and Recreation, Economic and Sustainable Development, and Public Works than ever before.

### **Goal 3: Create interconnectivity through the CCA's three signature events with a wider range of groups to create wider diversity**

- Members of the public anticipate the three yearly signature events (Breaking down the Barriers, ADA Anniversary Celebration, and Gather 'round the Table) and changing locations and modes of delivery for the events attracted different populations.
- Annual events coordinated and directed by the Transportation and Mobility Committee are gaining in popularity and the CCA now considers this a fourth signature event.

### **Goal 4: Educate the community about transportation and mobility in Bloomington and its opportunities and challenges**

- The Transportation and Mobility Committee provided training on mobility issues for people with disabilities for the City's engineers, planners, other City staff, and Common Council members.
- Progress has been made in developing Accessible Transportation and Mobility Principles with the hopes of the City Council's adoption of the Principles and that might then lead to interest in working on a Complete Streets policy.

### **Goal 5: Develop a digital accessibility program to augment the general accessibility survey program presently in place**

- Progress has been made on a digital accessibility survey with extensive efforts from IU's ServeIT students. Features of the survey emphasize the need to expand digital accessibility which would result in increased engagement with the disability community and more diversity.

## 2022 Goals

Goals are listed with some strategies in points below as appropriate.

**Goal 1: Create interconnectivity through our three main events with a wider range of groups, including the deaf and mental health communities, the intellectual and developmentally disabled, and the neurodivergent, to increase diversity**

**Goal 2: Maintain physical surveys for the AccessAbility program and be ready in case other local facilities need survey assistance (like schools, bus stops, polling places, etc.)**

**Goal 3: Finalize the digital accessibility survey form and market/distribute it to potential surveyors and businesses**

**Goal 4: Complete the work with Health-by-Design and City staff on the Accessible Transportation and Mobility Principles for the Common Council to consider**

**Goal 5: Ensure that the Transition Plan addresses the issues of transportation and mobility**

**Goal 6: Develop a course on the “why” for ADA design for the Engineering Department that will include a field experience for engineers and people with disabilities together**

**Goal 7: Continue to work with BT Access on paratransit and connect with the new General Manager of Bloomington Transit**

**Goal 8: Develop a summer or fall event that speaks to a current transportation/mobility topic, such as shared streets/greenways**

**Goal 9: Support the efforts for the development of a Mobility Aids Lending Library (MALL)**

## Services

### **Awareness Training**

For organizations, businesses, and government employees

### **Disabilities Awareness Presentations**

To schools and religious and civic groups through our Speakers Bureau

### **Free Consultations**

To review building or architectural plans to evaluate accessibility according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications

### **Workshops for Businesses**

On the benefits and responsibilities of complying with the ADA

## Committees

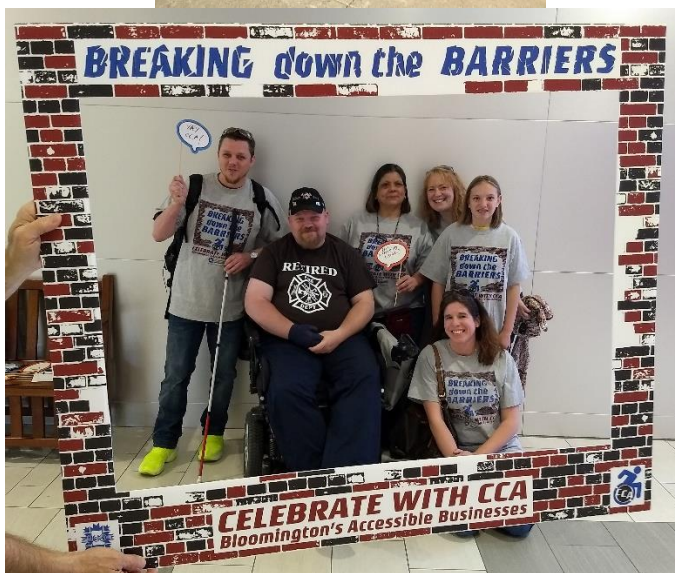
### Accessibility Committee

Runs the AccessAbility Decal Program and works with volunteers to survey businesses for accessibility



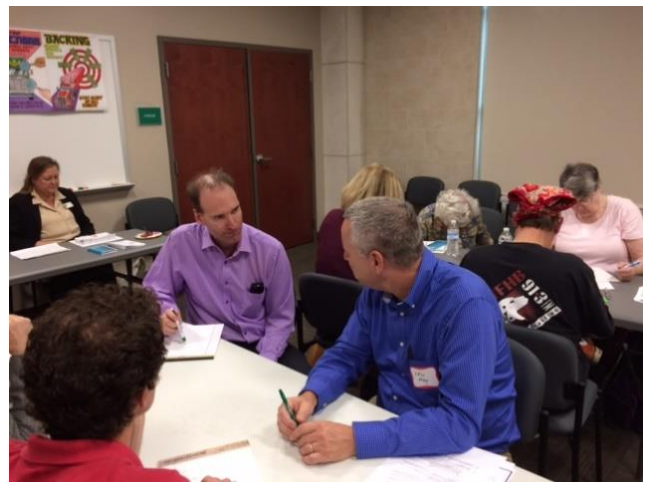
### Activities and Events Committee

Plans programs and events to foster community awareness



## Transportation and Mobility Committee

Examines and acts on ways for people with disabilities to move more comfortably and efficiently through the community



## The Council for Community Accessibility is sponsored by the City of Bloomington

The Council for Community Accessibility meets the last Monday of each month from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in Bloomington City Hall (and on Zoom). All are welcome.

 CouncilforCommunityAccessibility

Web: [bloomington.in.gov/cc](http://bloomington.in.gov/cc)

To receive the CCA newsletter or for other inquiries, e-mail [cca@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:cca@bloomington.in.gov) or (812) 349-3471.

### Community and Family Resources Department

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