TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH
ADA ASSESSMENT

OCTOBER 6, 2025

TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH NC 28462

Full ADA Compliance Assessment Report for Holden Beach Facilities

Title: ADA Compliance Assessment for Holden Beach Facilities

Prepared by: Town of Holden Beach Planning and Inspections Department

Date: October 01, 2025

Location: Holden Beach, North Carolina

Purpose: To evaluate and ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for physical infrastructure and digital accessibility, addressing the unique coastal environmental challenges of Holden Beach to provide equitable access for residents and tourists.

Contact: Town of Holden Beach Planning and Inspections Department, 110 Rothschild St, Holden Beach, NC 28462

Website: hbtownhall.com

Executive Summary

This comprehensive report assesses the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance of key public facilities in the Town of Holden Beach, North Carolina, as of October 01, 2025. The evaluation covers 19 physical locations, including parking areas, walkways, restrooms, parks, and municipal buildings, alongside a digital accessibility review of the town's website (hbtownhall.com). Assessments are based on ADA standards for physical elements (e.g., signage, access routes, slopes, landings, handrails, fixtures) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA for digital accessibility.

Key findings indicate that most physical facilities are fully or partially compliant, requiring minor maintenance (e.g., repainting, signage adjustments, walkway sealing) or limited construction (e.g., concrete pads at Sailfish Park). Digital accessibility needs enhancements to support assistive technologies. Budget allocations, including $500,00 for ADA projects in FY 2024-2025 (required by Mediation Agreement), 180,00 for existing

projects. A proposed FY 2025-2026 budget maintaining tax rates, support these efforts. Total estimated costs for physical fixes range from $500,000 to $1M over 2–3 years, with digital upgrades at $5,000–$20,000 initially and $1,000–$5,000 annually. Three future sites are identified for assessment. Prioritizing these recommendations will ensure equitable access, mitigate legal risks (e.g., lawsuits averaging $10,000–$50,000 per case), and align with Holden Beach's tourism-driven economy.

Locations Assessed

The assessment covers the following 19 physical locations:

- Ave E / 339 OBE
- 114 OBE
- Halstead Park
- 103.5 OBE
- Jordan Blvd
- Block Q Bathrooms
- Jordan Blvd - Old Pavilion Parking
- Bathrooms Under Bridge
- 329.5 OBW Walkway
- 441 OBW (Pier)
- 790 OBW Parking
- 801 OBW Walkway
- 915.5 OBW Walkway
- Sailfish Park
- Townhall
- Bridgeview Park
- EOC
- Town Pocket Parks

Future locations for evaluation:

- 357.5 OBW Walkway
- 1017 OBW Walkway
- 1191 OBW - New Walkway at West End Gate

Coastal Environmental ADA Challenges

Holden Beach's coastal environment presents unique challenges to maintaining ADA-compliant infrastructure due to its exposure to harsh weather, erosion, and saltwater corrosion. These factors necessitate specialized approaches to ensure accessibility while preserving durability.

Key Challenges

1. **Erosion and Shifting Sands**:
    a. Beach access walkways (e.g., 329.5 OBW, 801 OBW) are prone to sand accumulation, which can obstruct blue mats and create uneven surfaces, hindering wheelchair access.
    b. Coastal storms and tidal shifts can erode pathways, affecting slopes and landings critical for ADA compliance.
2. **Saltwater Corrosion**:
    a. Handrails and fixtures (e.g., Halstead Park, 441 OBW) face accelerated corrosion from saltwater exposure, requiring frequent maintenance or replacement with corrosion-resistant materials.
3. **Weather-Related Wear**:
    a. High humidity and frequent storms degrade parking lot paint and walkway seals, necessitating annual maintenance to maintain visibility and safety (e.g., Ave E, Bridgeview Park).
4. **Tourism-Driven Demand**:
    a. High seasonal tourist traffic increases wear on ADA facilities, particularly walkways and restrooms, requiring robust designs to accommodate heavy use while remaining accessible.
5. **Environmental Regulations**:
    a. Compliance with environmental regulations (e.g., Coastal Area Management Act) can limit construction options for new walkways or parking pads (e.g., Sailfish Park), requiring coordination with state agencies like NC DEQ.

Recommendations for Coastal Challenges

- **Erosion Mitigation**: Regularly clear sand from blue mats and walkways (e.g., 329.5 OBW); install elevated boardwalks where feasible to reduce erosion impact.

- **Corrosion-Resistant Materials**: Use stainless steel or composite materials for handrails and fixtures; apply marine-grade sealants annually to protect walkways.
- **Weather-Resistant Design**: Use high-durability paint for parking spaces and access routes; schedule maintenance post-storm seasons (e.g., fall/winter).
- **Tourist Accessibility**: Enhance signage with durable, high-contrast materials to guide tourists to ADA-compliant access points; integrate real-time updates on hbtownhall.com for accessibility status during peak seasons.
- **Regulatory Coordination**: Collaborate with NC DEQ for grants and permits to balance environmental and ADA requirements, especially for new sites like 1191 OBW.

Digital Accessibility: ADA Website Requirements

Title II of the ADA mandates that public entities ensure website accessibility for individuals with disabilities, adhering to WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards. This is critical for providing access to beach information, permits, and services in a coastal community like Holden Beach.

Key WCAG 2.1 Requirements

1. **Perceivable**: Alt text for images (e.g., beach access points), captions for videos (e.g., town meetings), and sufficient contrast ratios (4.5:1 for text).
2. **Operable**: Keyboard-only navigation, no time limits (or adjustable), and seizure-safe content (no more than 3 flashes/second).
3. **Understandable**: Clear language, consistent navigation, and error correction for forms.
4. **Robust**: Compatibility with assistive technologies (e.g., JAWS, Voiceover) and valid HTML/CSS.

Current Assessment of hbtownhall.com

A direct browse of hbtownhall.com yielded insufficient content for a detailed WCAG audit, but common issues in municipal sites include missing alt text, inadequate contrast, and poor keyboard navigability. A $65,000 increase in professional services for FY 2025-2026 may support website audits or redesigns. No interactive maps or specific ADA beach access details were extractable, though nearby towns like Emerald Isle serve as models.

Recommendations for Website Compliance

- Conduct a professional WCAG audit ($2,000–$5,000) using tools like WAVE or axe.
- Implement fixes: Add alt text ($500–$1,000), enhance contrast ($1,000–$3,000), ensure keyboard access ($2,000–$5,000), caption videos ($500–$2,000).
- Ongoing maintenance: Annual audits ($1,000–$3,000/year).
- Staff training: WCAG sessions ($1,000–$2,000).
- Total initial cost: $5,000–$20,000; annual: $1,000–$5,000.

Coastal Town Context

Digital accessibility is crucial for tourists accessing beach, event, and emergency information. Non-compliance risks lawsuits ($10,000–$50,000 per case). Public hearings, such as the October 21, 2025, session at Town Hall, provide opportunities for community input on digital improvements.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations (Physical Infrastructure)

Assessments evaluate compliance with ADA standards, categorizing costs as Minimal (<$1,000/site) or Low ($1,000–$10,000/site). Recent budgets highlight ongoing ADA investments, including $334,000 in FY 2024-2025 for projects like walkways and restrooms.

Ave E / 339 OBE

Description: Bathroom, emergency egress, ADA walkway, parking.

Findings: 8 ADA spaces (2 van), compliant walkway/restroom; needs locks/signage.

Recommendations: Repaint, seal, add sign. **Cost**: Minimal.

Maintenance: Annual sealing, restriping.

114 OBE

Description: 2 restrooms, ADA walkway, parking.

Findings: 5 ADA spaces (1 van), misaligned signs.

Recommendations: Reposition signs, repaint, add mats. **Cost**: Minimal.

Maintenance: Seal, restripe.

Halstead Park

Description: Waterway Park with dock.

Findings: 1 van space, compliant walkway; needs picnic tables.

Recommendations: Repaint, seal, replace rails/tables. **Cost**: Low.

Maintenance: Seal, restripe.

103.5 OBE

Description: Beach access walkway (under bid).

Findings: Pending compliance work.

Recommendations: Re-assess post-construction, extend mats. **Cost**: Minimal.

Jordan Blvd

Description: Parking near 103.5 OBE.

Findings: 2 ADA spaces (1 van), obstructed route.

Recommendations: Repaint, adjust stops/signs. **Cost**: Minimal.

Block Q Bathrooms

Description: Under construction.

Findings: No details.

Recommendations: Assess post-construction.

Jordan Blvd - Old Pavilion Parking

Findings: 2 ADA spaces (1 van), obstructed.

Recommendations: Repaint, secure stops. **Cost**: Minimal.

Bathrooms Under Bridge

Findings: 2 ADA spaces (1 van), obstructed.

Recommendations: Repaint, add van sign. **Cost**: Minimal.

329.5 OBW Walkway

Findings: Compliant with mats.

Recommendations: Seal, clear mats. **Cost**: Minimal.

441 OBW (Pier)

Findings: Compliant walkway, 8 ADA spaces; needs restriping.

Recommendations: Repaint, adjust layout. **Cost**: Minimal.

790 OBW Parking

Findings: 2 ADA spaces (1 van).

Recommendations: Repaint. **Cost**: Minimal.

801 OBW Walkway

Findings: Compliant with mats.

Recommendations: Seal, clear mats. **Cost**: Minimal.

915.5 OBW Walkway

Findings: Compliant with mats.

Recommendations: Seal, clear mats. **Cost**: Minimal.

Sailfish Park

Findings: Non-compliant parking/route/tables.

Recommendations: Pour concrete, paint, reposition tables. **Cost**: Low.

Bridgeview Park And Docking Facility

Findings: 2 ADA spaces (1 van), Handicap pier and pier head/with exception for tidal actions, Handicap Kyak Launches /needs adjustments handicap parking spaces.

Recommendations: Repaint, add stops/signs. Location to be identified as handicapped friendly. **Cost**: Minimal.

Townhall

Findings: 2 van spaces, compliant ramp/restrooms; needs paint.

Recommendations: Repaint. **Cost**: Minimal.

EOC

Findings: 1 van space, compliant door/restroom; needs sign/paint.

Recommendations: Repaint, add sign. **Cost**: Minimal.

Town Pocket Parks

Findings: No Findings

Recommendations: Access for Viewing. Cost Minimal

Note: All Walkways, when topography and AEC elements allow for modifications, actions should be taken for ADA compliance. Cost: Unknown

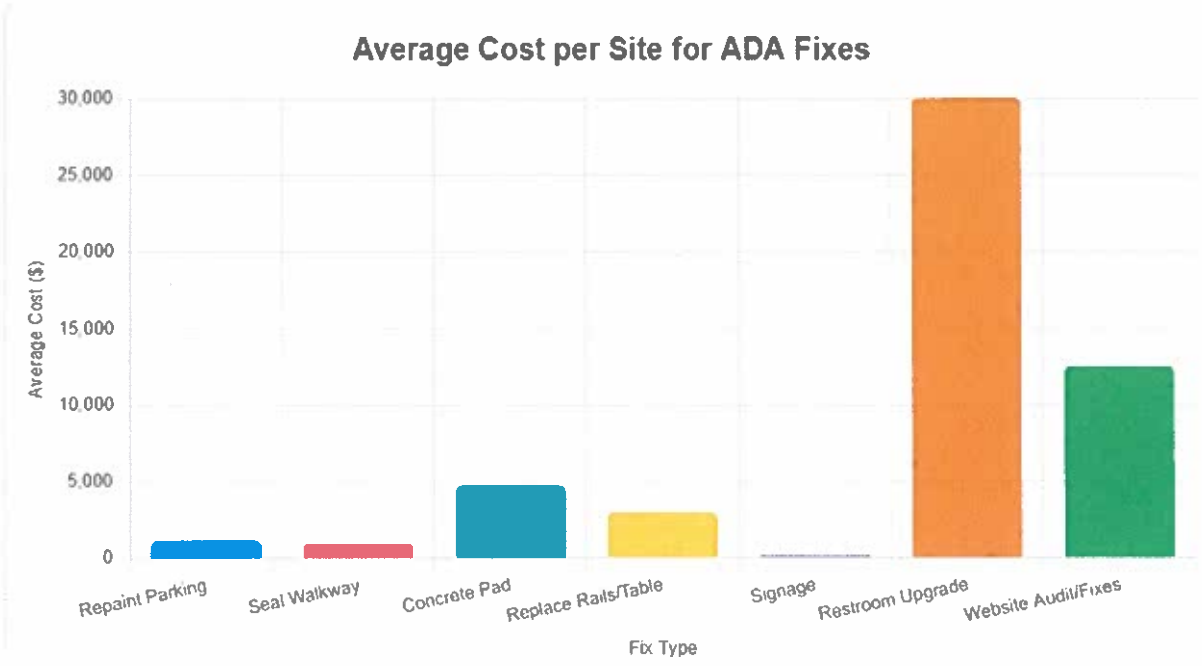
Cost Breakdown for Physical and Digital ADA Fixes

Funding includes $334,000 (FY 2024-2025) and a 2023 amendment ($261,753) for infrastructure. The FY 2025-2026 budget proposal maintains tax rates and supports projects.

Cost Estimates by Fix Type

Fix Type	Description	Average Cost (Single Site)	Frequency
Repaint Parking	Restriping spaces/routes	$300–$2,000	17
Seal Walkway	Annual sealing	$500–$1,500	9
Concrete Pad	Solid surface	$2,500–$7,000	3
Replace Rails/Table	Handrails/tables	$1,000–$5,000	2
Signage	Adding/repositioning	$100–$300	10
Restroom Upgrade	Fixtures/ramps	$10,000–$50,000	2–3
Website Audit/Fixes	WCAG compliance	$5,000–$20,000	1

Total Estimate: $500,000–$1M (physical, 2–3 years); $5,000–$20,000 initial + $1,000–$5,000/year (digital).



Overall Recommendations and Prioritization

- **Physical**: Address Sailfish Park (concrete pad, routes) and construction sites (103.5 OBE, Block Q). Maintain annually to counter coastal wear.
- **Digital**: Audit hbtownhall.com, implement fixes (alt text, contrast, navigation), and train staff.
- **Coastal Challenges**: Use corrosion-resistant materials, clear sand regularly, and coordinate with NC DEQ for environmental compliance.
- **Funding**: Leverage BPART funds ($334,000), pursue NC DEQ grants ($2.25M statewide in 2025).
- **Community**: Engage via public hearings (e.g., October 21, 2025) and forums.
- **Future**: Assess new sites (357.5 OBW Walkway, 1017 OBW Walkway, 1191 OBW - New Walkway at West End Gate). And all improvements to existing non-compliant walkways.
- **Update**: Perform annual ADA assessment for the Town of Holden Beach, for budget analysis and workload.

• ADA Coordinator/Grievance/ Procedures

- The Town Planning Director serves as ADA Coordinator.
- • Address: 110 Rothschild Street, Holden Beach, NC 28462
- • Phone: (910) 842-6484
- • Email: townmanager@hbtownhall.com

• Step 1: Filing a Grievance

- Submit written grievances (letter, email, or online form) to the ADA Coordinator within 180 days of the alleged violation. Include:
- • Complainant's contact information.
- • Description of the violation (date, location, details).
- • Supporting evidence.
- • Desired remedy.
- Accommodations for filing (e.g., alternative formats) are available upon request.

• Step 2: Acknowledgment and Investigation

- The coordinator acknowledges receipt within 15 business days and investigates promptly, typically within 60 business days, gathering necessary information.

• Step 3: Resolution

- The coordinator issues a written determination with findings and remedies. If dissatisfied, appeal to the Town Board of Commissioners within 15 business days. The Board issues a final decision within 30 business days.

• Non-Retaliation

- Retaliation against complainants or participants is prohibited and will be investigated.

• Alternative Remedies

- This procedure does not preclude other legal remedies, such as complaints to the U.S. or North Carolina Department of Justice.

• Public Notice

- This policy is posted on hbtownhall.com and available at Town facilities. Contact the Coordinator for alternative formats.
- Adopted: Date _____ Reviewed periodically for ADA compliance.