AGENDA
ADA Advisory Committee
Thursday, August 28, 2025
3:00 PM
Evanston Public Library: 1703 Orrington Ave.
First Floor Community Room / Zoom

(I) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Welcome guest speaker:

- Chris Sous, P.E., PTOE, CFM, Assistant City Engineer, Public Works Agency

(II) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(III) PUBLIC COMMENTS

- DASH & GO: Disabled Adults Social Hour & Gaming Opportunity, resident request for interest

(IV) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Dog Beach ADA Access

- Brief history
- GEI Consultants review
- Altura Solutions feedback
- Committee feedback
- Upcoming City Council meeting

Next meeting: Thursday, Sept. 25, 2025 at 909 Davis, room 332A/Zoom

(V) COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

(VI) ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES

ADA Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 24, 2025 @ 3:00 PM

Evanston Public Library/Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Members present: Murphy Monroe, Lisa Noble, Julia Pantoga, Jack Kleisner, Matt Dinerstein, Ted Gram-Boarini, Donna Stevens, Litrea Hunter, Aby Karottu

Guests: Miriam McAuley, Carlos Hranicka, Patrick Hughes, Fred Wittenberg, John Willis, David Gayes

Staff: Kimberly Kull (Division Chief, Emergency Management, Fire Dept.), Yazarri Gutierrez (Senior Services Coordinator), Trent Oatman (Accessibility Advisor), Alice Eakes (Accessibility Advisor), Lauren Ruiz (Inclusion & Accessibility Division Manager)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The June 26 minutes were approved by Jack Kleisner and Ted Gram-Boarini.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A visitor shared concerns about the audible pedestrian crossing signals in Evanston being too quiet and requested for the volume to be increased. Additional visitors expressed similar concerns with several specific locations noted and safety concerns being discussed. Manager Ruiz to share these specific locations and obtain the City's procedures for setting the audible signal volumes.
- A visitor shared a concern about the crosswalk on Chicago Ave. across from Jewel frequently having cars speeding through
- A visitor emphasized the need for a bench at the bus stop between Emerson and Dodge
- A visitor expressed concern about Evanston's emergency plan related to flooding and a local unmanned pumping station not having an emergency power source.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Updates about previous inquiries/grievances:

- AMC curb cut inquiry progress: Resident who inquired about this issue met with

Manager Ruiz and Public Works representatives on-site to discuss adding a curb cut to the current "loading zone" area. Progress to continue.

- Dog beach accessibility: New information available to share with the Committee - added meeting for August to discuss, see below.

New inquiries/grievances:

- Public Works garbage/recycling pick up: team is alerted if recycling containers are contaminated. If food/pet waste is in with recycling, the bin contents are placed in garbage instead.
- Contractor truck blocking pedestrian sidewalk: reminder was sent to City contacts about keeping crosswalks clear.
- Overgrown bushes at residence on Emerson & Dodge: Community Development Dept. assists with these situations. An inspector confirmed and provided resident with new inspection date.
- Damage at alley curb area on Emerson & Dodge: asphalt remediation provided.
- Right-of-way blocked at Davis/Orrington for mural: coordinators responsive and adjusted barriers immediately.
- Technology assistance for individuals who are blind or have low vision: local resources provided.
- Malfunctioning audible pedestrian signal at Chicago & Davis: addressed and fixed.

Training/education updates:

- Disability Access Liaison Team Meeting July 1
- Hill Arboretum, Access Evanston July 8
- Prieto Naming Ceremony July 19
- Disability Pride Panel: Sat. July 26, 2 PM at Prieto Community Center

Other items:

- Next meeting: Thursday, September 25, 2025 - update: added meeting for Thursday, August 28 to discuss dog beach accessibility. The August meeting will be held at the Library/on zoom. The September meeting will be held at 909 Davis/zoom.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

- A Member expressed frustration over not being provided with details about his proposed grievance solution of a solar panel that supplies electricity to dog beach entry gate. Manager Ruiz to follow up with Public Works Director.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM.

Memorandum

To: ADA Advisory Committee

From: Lara Biggs, City Engineer

Subject: Dog Beach ADA Access Discussion

Date: August 28, 2025

Recommended Action:

Staff is requesting feedback from the committee.

Background Information:

The City Council directed staff to open the dog beach in 2022, with the direction that the City work towards providing ADA access. Staff worked with a coastal engineering firm, SmithGroup, to design the accessible pathway. A memo dated January 27, 2025, detailing the project history as well as value engineering options is attached to this memo.

On January 27, 2025, while reviewing the value engineering options provided by SmithGroup, the City Council approved awarding a contract to GEI Consultants for a third-party review. GEI provided a report with their recommendations for further reducing cost, which was then sent to the City's consultant Altura Solutions, who drafted the ADA transition plan. GEI was provided with Altura's comments, and they drafted a response to those comments, which is included in their final report. The GEI report and the review by Altura Solutions are both attached to this memo.

Analysis:

GEI has provided a number of recommendations for reducing costs. Their recommendations for the largest cost savings include different options for grading the topography of the sand to the slope and cross-slope required by ADA and installing mobi-mats to provide an appropriate surface. Sand shifts very easily at the lakefront, due to the winds and wave actions in addition to movement caused by foot traffic. Even in locations where the ground is relatively flat and there is easy access from all sides, the mobi-mats can be difficult to maintain. Staff does not recommend relying on mobi-mats installed on sand at a 5% grade, as the City lacks the staffing resources needed to maintain them in compliance with state and federal ADA slope and

cross-slope requirements. If it falls out of compliance, the City would need to shut down the dog beach until it is regraded and reinstalled.

Next Steps:

Following receipt of feedback from the ADA Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Board, staff will provide information to the City Council and get feedback on how to proceed.

Memorandum

To:	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:	Lara Biggs, City Engineer
Subject:	Dog Beach ADA Access Discussion
Date:	January 27, 2025

Recommended Action:
Staff will provide an update on the Dog Beach ADA access design and request feedback on how to proceed with finalizing the project design and rebidding the project for construction.

Council Action:
For Discussion

Summary:
City Council directed staff in 2022 to reopen the dog beach that had closed in 2016, understanding that ADA access could not be immediately available, but also directing staff to work towards building it. State and federal statutes legally require this access; violating the ADA requirements is considered a civil rights violation. Since the City Council directed the staff to open the dog beach, there have been 15 engagements regarding the ADA access ramp with the City Council, commissions, stakeholders, and the public. The list of meetings has been included as an attachment.

The proposed dog beach ADA access was advertised for bid in spring 2024. A recommendation for the construction contract award was first brought to the City Council on June 24, 2024. After several council and commission discussions, the bid expired with no action. The original schedule was to begin construction in the fall of 2024, with completion by December 31, 2024.

At the July 22, 2024, meeting, the City Council approved a motion to direct staff to keep the same general design but look for options to value engineer and/or add ADA parking as close to the dog beach entrance as feasible. Following the city council meeting, Councilmember Kelly requested an additional onsite meeting with the design consultant, SmithGroup. She also requested staff meet with an outside ADA consultant, John McGovern of WT Group. Coordinating and attending these meetings and incorporating the feedback extended the timeline for staff to return to the City Council with the requested information on value engineering. However, at this point, staff has worked with SmithGroup to identify three options for moving forward with required ADA access.

Option 1 - Rebid the Current Design

This option would keep the same design as was previously bid in Spring 2024. A summary of the benefits and challenges of this option is shown in the table below:

Option 1 - Rebid Current Design	
Benefits	**Challenges**
- Bid package can be easily deployed with minimal updates - Preserves all existing design features	- Higher than expected construction costs

This option would require an engineering change order with SmithGroup of $12,300.

Bid prices often increase when rebidding the same project, even if the scope has not been modified. In addition, Chicago construction inflation has been approximately 5% in the last year. Therefore, an estimated bid price would be $765,000, an estimated 10% increase over last year's bid price of $693,577.

Option 2 - Value Engineer the Current Design

Based on the direction provided by the City Council on 7/22/24, staff worked with SmithGroup to look at options to reduce scope while keeping the same general design in order to potentially save on construction. SmithGroup identified multiple options for value engineering as follows:

Item	Description	Impact	Cost Implication
1	Replace boardwalk with concrete path	Increases path impact to beach plantings	$$$$
2	Remove electrical scope (safety lighting, electrical strike gate)	Decreases comfort and ability to use gate at night, removes ability to install a visual disability-friendly gate lock	$$$
3	Reduce path length (and rock revetment) on dog beach by 25%	Increases risk of pathway undermining during extreme high lake levels	$$
4	Reduce path length on dog beach by 50%		$$$
5	Lower protective revetment by 14 inches		$$
6	Eliminate plaza benches	Eliminates comfort seating	$
7	Eliminate connection path, steps and handrail	Eliminates the direct stair access for easier (non-ADA) access from the south.	$

*$ = < $10,000 COST REDUCTION
$$ = $10-25,000 COST REDUCTION
$$$ = $25-50,000 COST REDUCTION
$$$$ = $50- 100,000 COST REDUCTION
$$$$$ = > $100,000 COST REDUCTION
+ = $0-$20,000 COST INCREASE

A more detailed evaluation of the items listed above is included as an attachment. The proposed layout is included as an attachment to this memo. A summary of the benefits and challenges of this option is shown in the table below:

Option 2 - Value Engineer Current Design	
Benefits	**Challenges**
- Preserves the dog wash area - Should result in construction cost savings	- Requires additional design work - Eliminates design features that increased functionality - Reduces resilience to wave action

This option would require an engineering change order with SmithGroup of $22,500.

Rebidding the same project may increase costs, but removing one or more of the features described above will likely offset this increase and save additional funds. If this option is pursued, staff will request feedback on which features to value engineer.

Option 3 - Modify the Current Design
Working with SmithGroup, staff developed an option to significantly shorten the section of the path on the adjacent beach dune area. While shortening the path, this option significantly increases the slope of the path, although the pathway remains ADA compliant. In addition, while the current design has a relatively low impact on a larger area of the beach, the area of the beach by the proposed path will need significant regrading, temporarily removing all plant material from this area of the dunes. (Replanting would be included in the construction contract.) However, shortening the pathway on the adjacent beach and the dog beach itself will result in cost savings. The proposed layout is included as an attachment to this memo. A summary of the benefits and challenges of this option is presented below:

Option 3 - Modify the Current Design	
Benefits	**Challenges**
- Minimizes project footprint in naturalized landscape - Should result in construction cost savings	- Requires additional design work - Smaller area of the beach impacted, but impact is much higher - Eliminates most design features that increased functionality - Significantly decreases access for all users to safely enjoy naturalized dune area - Eliminates dog wash area - Reduces resilience to wave action

This option would require an engineering change order with SmithGroup of $19,800.

While rebidding the same project can increase the cost, the significant decrease in scope makes a cost decrease more likely.

ADA Parking Options:
As part of the city council motion provided on 7/22/24, staff was directed to look at options for adding additional accessible parking close to the proposed dog beach entrance. Staff evaluated two options for adding accessible parking.

Option A - Locate new ADA parking by Clark Street Beach Entrance
This parking would be located on the landscaped island closest to the proposed entrance to the new Dog Beach ADA Access path. Since the old entrance to the dog beach will be closed off as part of the construction, this location will be closest to the new accessible dog beach entrance, regardless of which option is selected. However, the parking will be located within the turn-around/drop-off area for Clark Street Beach, which may make that area dense. It

may also require the removal of 1-2 small trees, which will be replaced in the adjacent park area. The cost of this parking is estimated at $15,000.

Option B - Locate new ADA parking in the Church Street Boat Ramp Parking Lot
This parking would be located in the gated Church Street Boat Ramp Parking Lot. Two ADA spaces would be striped at the north end of the diagonal parking adjacent to the turnaround area. Because this lot serves the Church Street Boat Ramp, an additional two ADA spaces would need to be striped to the parking closest to the boat ramp at the south end of the parking lot. Parking spaces along the rock revetment would be removed, and that area would be striped as an accessible pedestrian walkway. The surface of the parking lot has deteriorated, so limited patching of the parking lot may be needed. The minimum cost of this option (based on minimal pavement marking) is $35,000, but the cost could be significantly higher, depending on the need to patch the pavement.

Staff is not aware of a legal requirement to supply additional ADA parking, and 3 ADA parking spaces already exist within 250 feet of the proposed dog beach entrance. However, if additional ADA parking is desired, staff recommends proceeding with Option A, based on adjacency to the proposed dog beach entrance and cost. A figure showing the two parking options is shown below.

Feedback from WT Group:
At Councilmember Kelly's request, staff met with John McGovern and Tanya Scheibe from WT Group to discuss the state and federal requirements for ADA accessibility. During the discussion, the consultants confirmed that the design proposed by SmithGroup seemed to be an appropriate way of meeting the legal requirements.

Next Steps:
Staff requests feedback on the preferred option for the legally required dog beach ADA access. Based on the selected option, staff will bring a change order for engineering services to the next City Council meeting. Staff will then work with SmithGroup to update the drawings and bid on the project, with the goal of beginning construction in late summer/early fall.

Attachments:
Dog Beach Meeting List
Proposed Layouts of Different Options
Value Engineering Options

Dog Beach Public and Stakeholder Coordination Meetings Lists:

Dog Beach ADA Access Meetings with Stakeholders and Commissions (7 total):

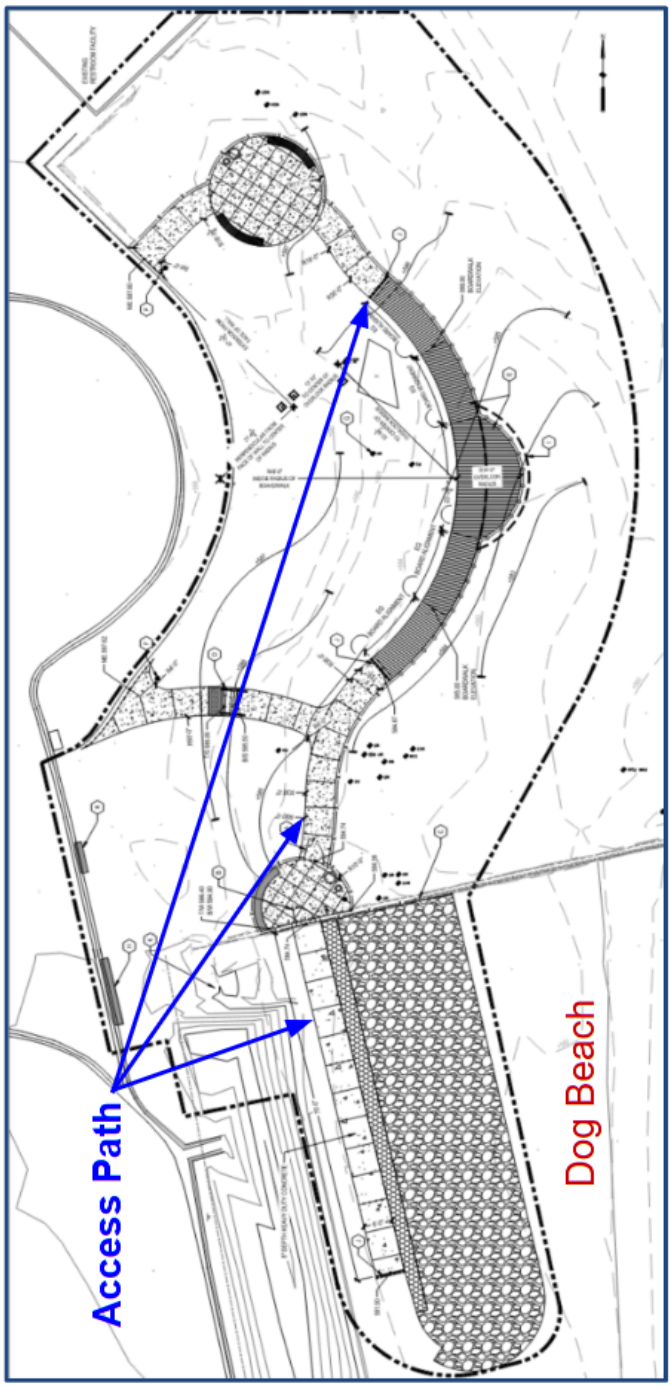
Date	Meeting Type	Description
03/08/23 03/23/23	Community Members	Resolve concerns over the potential impacts to sensitive plant materials on the adjacent beach.
05/30/23	Dog Beach Users, Select members of ADA Advisory Committee	Review ADA access design and receive feedback.
06/07/23	Plant Consultant, Community Members	Discussion of how to protect sensitive plants, resulting in the addition of a section of boardwalk.
07/02/24	Preservation Commission	Staff met with the Preservation Commission for discussion (a Certificate of Appropriateness had been previously approved so there was no item to vote on).
08/28/24	Cm. Kelly, Cm. Nieuwsma, Cm. Burns, John Kennedy	Staff and SmithGroup met onsite to answer questions and hear design feedback.
10/30/24	WT Group	At Cm. Kelly's request, staff met with John McGovern and his colleague from WT Group, a consulting firm that does ADA access work to receive feedback.

Dog Beach ADA Access Meetings with Administration & Public Works Committee and City Council (8 total):

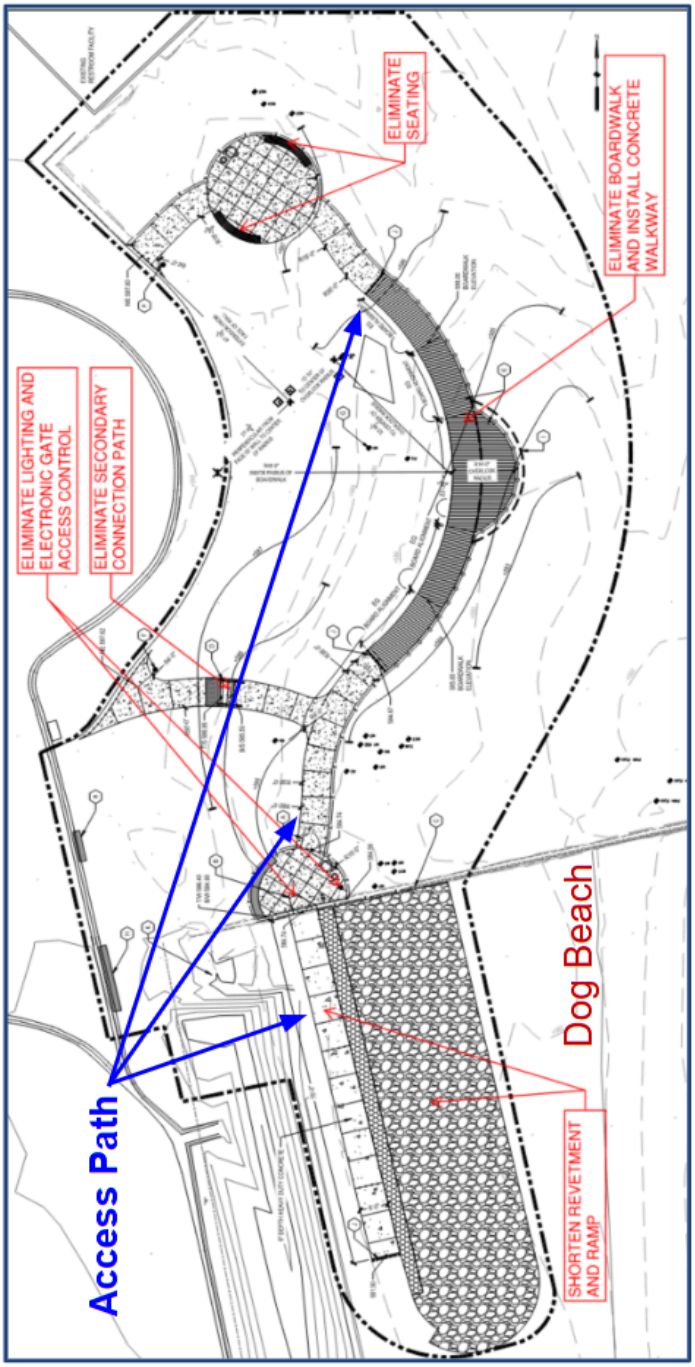
Date	Meeting Type	Description
10/10/22	City Council	Staff was directed to open the dog beach and move forward with designing and constructing the ADA access.
11/14/22	City Council	Approval of Change Order 1 to the Shoreline Stabilization study contract with SmithGroup to design ADA access to the Dog Beach.
02/27/23	City Council	SmithGroup presented two concept solutions for the potential design of the ADA access. City Council directed staff to proceed with the less expensive option to build the majority of the path on the adjacent dune area.
04/24/23	City Council	Approval of Change Order 3 with SmithGroup to authorize consulting services by SmithGroup to develop construction documents, bid and oversee construction of the proposed ADA access.

Date	Meeting Type	Description
10/09/24	City Council	Approval of Change Order 4 with SmithGroup to incorporate boardwalk and other elements to help protect plants into the construction documents
06/24/24	Administration and Public Works Committee	Recommendation of construction award. Staff was directed to meet with the Preservation Commission for review of the proposed improvements.
07/08/24	City Council	Recommendation of construction award. Staff advised City Council that further delays in award of the construction contract would result in the bid expiring and no longer being valid. The item was tabled to the July 22 City Council meeting.
07/22/24	City Council	Staff informed the City Council the bid was no longer valid. Staff was directed via an approved motion from City Council to keep the same general design but look for options to value engineer and/or add ADA parking as close to the dog beach entrance as feasible.

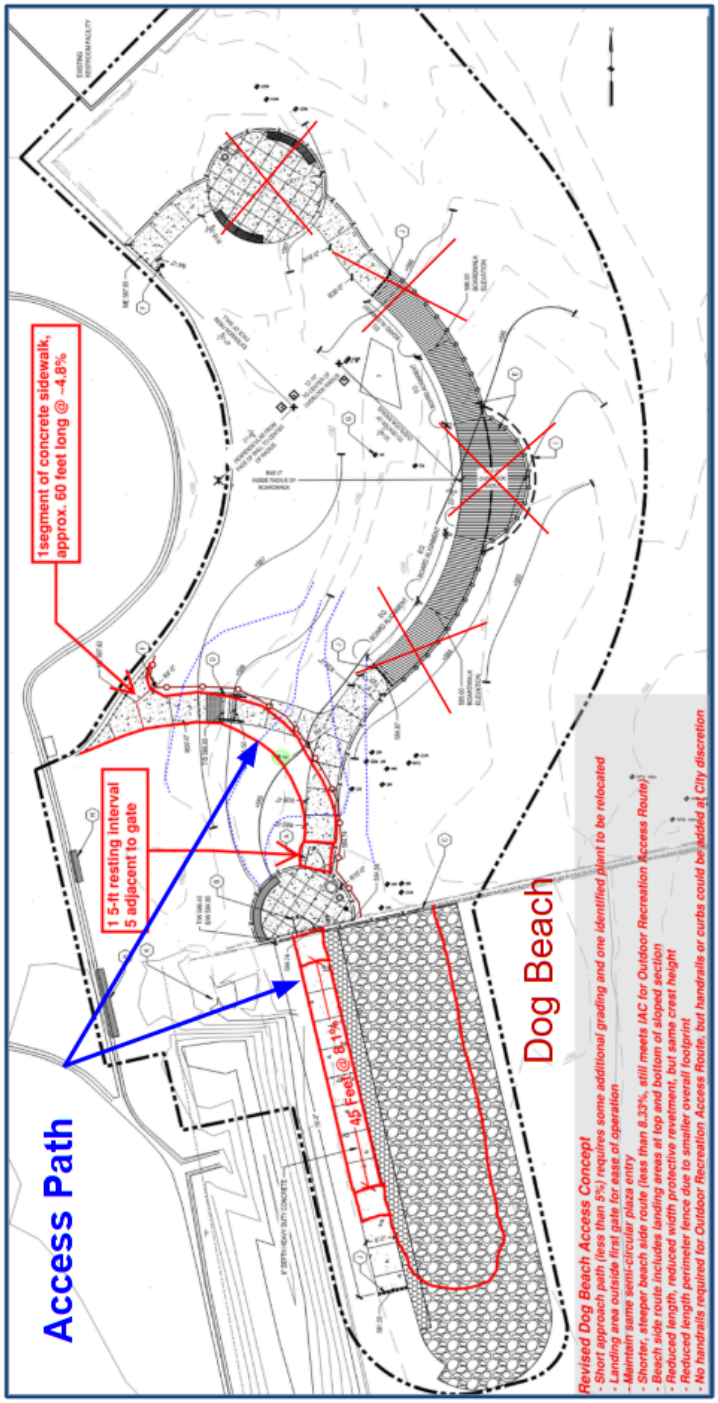
Proposed Layout - Option 1 - Rebid the Current Design



Proposed Layout - Option 2 - Value Engineer the Current Design



Proposed Layout - Option 3 - Modify the Current Design

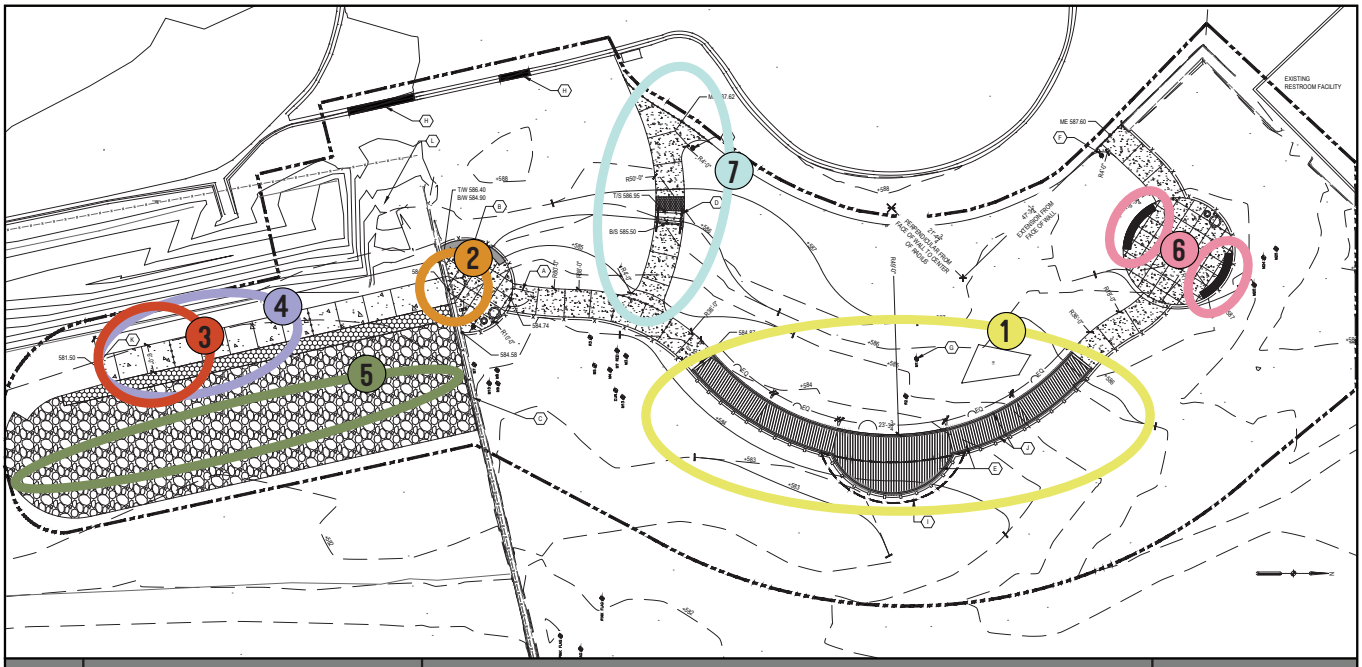


CITY OF EVANSTON DOG BEACH ACCESS

REDESIGN COST SAVINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

For Review

08/27/2024 3:22:25 PM



#	SITE ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	COST IMPLICATION
-	ESCALATION FROM FALL 2024 TO SUMMER 2025	Delaying the project for approximately 9 months will likely increase the cost of the work. Allowing summer construction would offset this increase by reducing weather-related risk for the contractor.	+*
1	REPLACE BOARDWALK WITH CONCRETE PATH	The boardwalk, with the concrete footings, durable hardwood surface, and specialty fencing adds significant cost to the project. However, eliminating the boardwalk will require additional grading, and add to the area of disturbance.	$$$$*
2	REMOVE ELECTRICAL SCOPE (LIGHTING, ELECTRICAL STRIKE GATE)	Eliminating the electrical service would require a different access system (e.g. push button lock as is currently installed).	$$$*
3	REDUCE PATH LENGTH ON DOG BEACH BY 25%	Reducing the length of the path (and protective revetment) on the dog beach increases the risk that the path could be undermined under extreme high lake levels.	$$*
4	REDUCE PATH LENGTH ON DOG BEACH BY 50%	Reducing the length of the path (and protective revetment) on the dog beach increases the risk that the path could be undermined under extreme high lake levels.	$$$*
5	LOWER PROTECTIVE REVETMENT CREST BY 14 INCHES	Reducing the length of the path (and protective revetment) on the dog beach increases the risk that the path could be undermined under extreme high lake levels.	$$*
6	ELIMINATE PLAZA BENCHES	This change only affects the northern plaza close to the clark street beach house. The proposed seating near the groin wall is integral with a necessary retaining wall.	$*
7	ELIMINATE CONNECTION PATH, STEPS AND HANDRAIL	This change would provide only a single access point north of the groin wall (close to the clark street beach house).	$*

KEY

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$$$$ = $50- 100,000 COST REDUCTION
$$$$$ = > $100,000 COST REDUCTION
+ = $0-$20,000 COST INCREASE

Assessment Report of Access Options

Americans with Disabilities Act

GEI Consultants

Report

Evanston Dog Beach ADA Ramp Options Assessment

Evanston, Illinois

Submitted to:
City of Evanston
909 Davis Street
Evanston, Illinois, 60201

Submitted by:
GEI Consultants, Inc.
8615 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 406
Chicago, IL 60641
312.985.0368

May 5, 2025
Project No. 2501250

Alissa Turney, P.E.
Hydraulic Engineer

Michael Koontz, P.L.A.
Senior Waterfront Planning Practice Leader

Mark Stoor, P.E.
Project Manager

Evanston Dog Beach Access
1631 Sheridan Rd
Evanston, IL 60201
ADA Only
Inspection Date: 02/26/2025
Inspectors: Olaf Brunjes

Prepared By

Altura Solutions
ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTANTS

(512) 410 - 7059
alturalp.com

Report Date: 06/18/2025

General: General

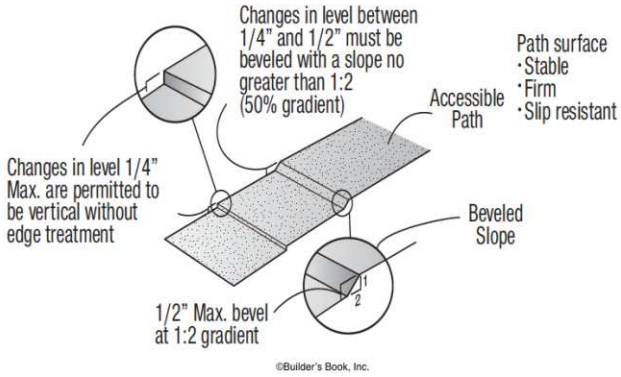
Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 1

Floor and ground surfaces shall be stable, firm, and slip resistant.

2010 ADAS Section 302.1
Floor and ground surfaces shall be stable, firm, and slip resistant and shall comply with 302.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 302.1	**In all possible solutions and scenarios, sand buildup will always be a concern. Ensure that proper maintenance is constantly provided to maintain a firm and stable surface.**



General: General

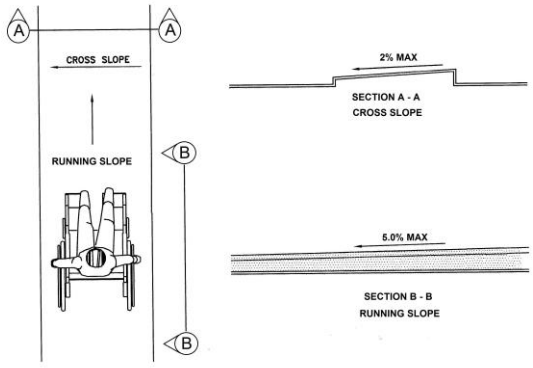
Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 2

Surface cross slopes shall not exceed one unit vertical in 48 units horizontal (2-percent slope). When the slope in the direction of travel of any walk exceeds 1 unit vertical in 20 units horizontal (5-percent slope), it must be constructed as a ramp.

2010 ADAS Section 403.3
The running slope of walking surfaces shall not be steeper than 1:20. The cross slope of walking surfaces shall not be steeper than 1:48.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 403.3	**In all options, ensure that the cross slope is no greater than 2% (1:48).**



General: Option 1A

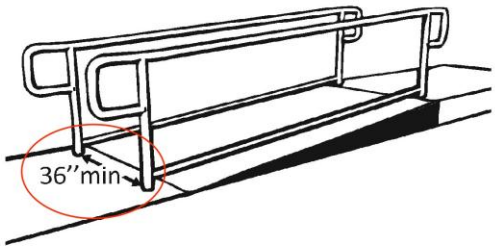
Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 3

Ramps shall have a minimum clear width of 36 inches

2010 ADAS Section 405.5
The clear width of a ramp run and, where handrails are provided, the clear width between handrails shall be 36 inches (915 mm) minimum.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 405.5	**Ensure that the ramp provides a clear width of at least 36 inches measured from the inside of the handrails.**



General: Option 1A

Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

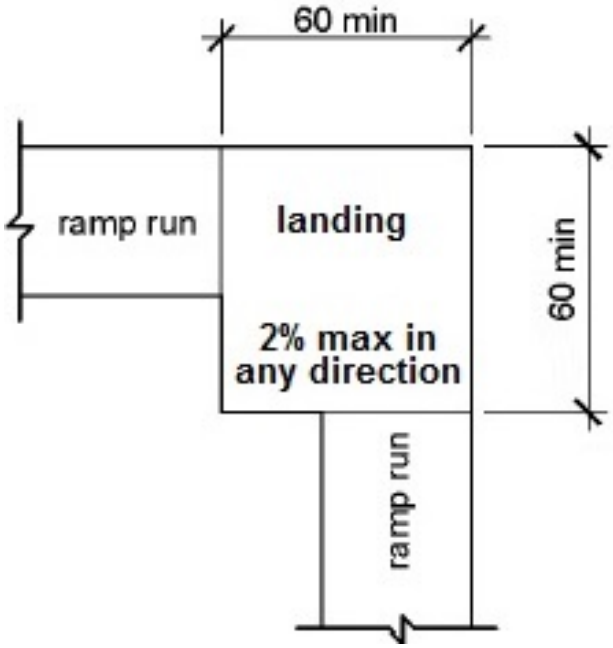
Finding: 4

The landing at the change of direction does not meet minimum size requirements.

Landings at a change of direction shall have a dimension of not less than 60 inches by 60 inches.

2010 ADAS Section 405.7.4
Ramps that change direction between runs at landings shall have a clear landing 60 inches (1525 mm) minimum by 60 inches (1525 mm) minimum.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 405.7.4	**Where ramp runs change direction, an intermediate landing must be provided with a minimum clearance of 60x60 inches measured inside the handrails.**



General: Option 1B

Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 5

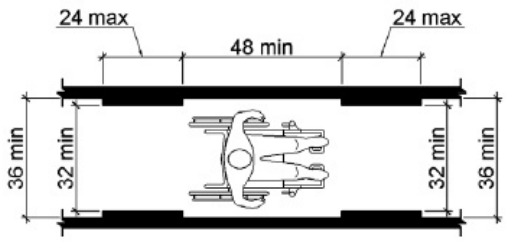
The minimum clear width for sidewalks and walks is 36 inches.

However, clear width shall be permitted to be reduced to 32 inches minimum for a length of 24 inches maximum provided that reduced width segments are separated by segments that are 48 inches long minimum and 36 inches wide minimum.

2010 ADAS Section 403.5.1
Except as provided in 403.5.2 and 403.5.3, the clear width of walking surfaces shall be 36 inches (915 mm) minimum.

2010 ADAS Section 403.5.1 Exception
The clear width shall be permitted to be reduced to 32 inches (815 mm) minimum for a length of 24 inches (610 mm) maximum provided that reduced width segments are separated by segments that are 48 inches (1220 mm) long minimum and 36 inches (915 mm) wide minimum.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 403.5.1, 403.5.1 Exception	**Ensure that the mobility mats provide a clear width of at least 36 inches throughout.**



General: Option 2

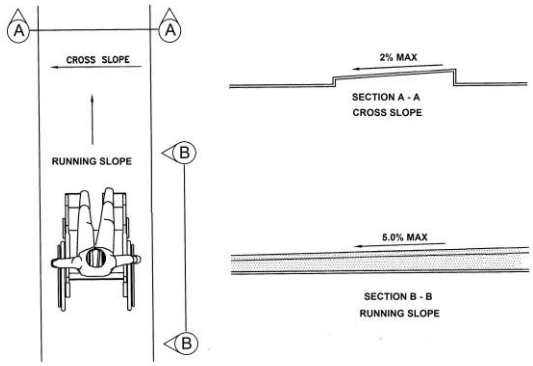
Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 6

When the slope in the direction of travel of any walk exceeds 1 unit vertical in 20 units horizontal (5-percent slope), it must be constructed as a ramp. Surface cross slopes must not exceed one unit vertical in 48 units horizontal (2-percent slope).

2010 ADAS Section 403.3
The running slope of walking surfaces shall not be steeper than 1:20. The cross slope of walking surfaces shall not be steeper than 1:48.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 403.3	**The intent of this option is to not require a ramp. Ensure that the running slope is no greater than 5% (1:20).**



General: Option 2

Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 7

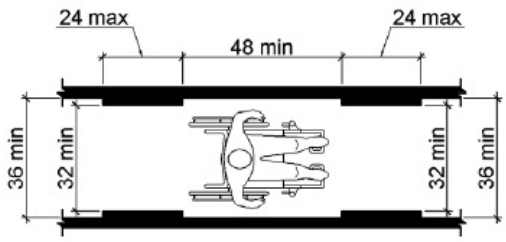
The minimum clear width for sidewalks and walks is 36 inches.

However, clear width shall be permitted to be reduced to 32 inches minimum for a length of 24 inches maximum provided that reduced width segments are separated by segments that are 48 inches long minimum and 36 inches wide minimum.

2010 ADAS Section 403.5.1
Except as provided in 403.5.2 and 403.5.3, the clear width of walking surfaces shall be 36 inches (915 mm) minimum.

2010 ADAS Section 403.5.1 Exception
The clear width shall be permitted to be reduced to 32 inches (815 mm) minimum for a length of 24 inches (610 mm) maximum provided that reduced width segments are separated by segments that are 48 inches (1220 mm) long minimum and 36 inches (915 mm) wide minimum.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 403.5.1, 403.5.1 Exception	**Ensure that the mobility mats provide a clear width of at least 36 inches throughout.**



General: Option 3

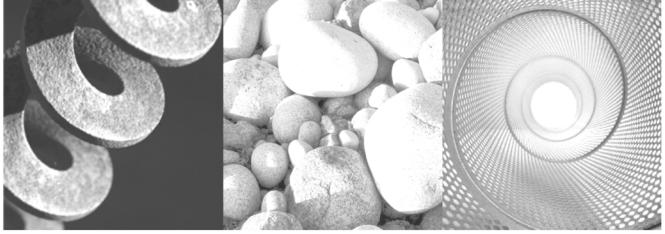
Lat/Long: [42.0475508, -87.6725992]

Finding: 8

The maximum rise for any ramp is 30 inches.

2010 ADAS Section 405.6
The rise for any ramp run shall be 30 inches (760 mm) maximum.

Citation:	As Built:
2010 ADAS Section: 405.6	**Ensure that the ramp runs do not exceed a rise of 30 inches. Intermediate landings must be provided as required to have a vertical change in elevation no greater than 30 inches at each ramp run.**



GEI Consultants

Report

Evanston Dog Beach ADA Ramp Options Assessment

Evanston, Illinois

Submitted to:
City of Evanston
909 Davis Street
Evanston, Illinois, 60201

Submitted by:
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July 16, 2025
Project No. 2501250

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

The city of Evanston (City) has more than four miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, including seven public beaches, one of which permits offleash dogs. On February 24, 2025, the City contracted with GEI Consultants, Inc. (GEI) to assess options for accessibility to its dog beach.

1.1.1. Project Purpose

This report includes:

a. An assessment of existing site conditions;

b. Findings; and

c. Planning level implementation cost ranges/estimates for up to two conceptual options/alternatives in addition to one City option.

During a subsequent meeting with City staff, it was decided that GEI would consider "Option 3" from City staff's January 13, 2025, presentation because it provided the most direct route for access and was the least expensive ($480,000-$515,000) of the three City possibilities. Therefore, this analysis includes two additional options in addition to the City's Option 3, which is also included as "Option 3" in this report as a basis for comparison.

The purpose of this project was *not* to provide detailed conceptual designs, construction plans, or cost estimates for each of the three options. Instead, the purpose is to give the City enough information, including general cost ranges, for its future consideration.

All elevations referenced in this report are given in International Great Lakes Datum (IGLD).

1.1.2. Project Objectives

The following objectives informed this analysis. City staff directed GEI to assess options that will:

a. Minimize construction costs and ongoing, *intensive* maintenance and operation (O&M) expense/time by City staff.

b. Comply with relevant Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and similar requirements and conform to relevant guidance where such conformance would not significantly increase costs.

c. Reduce, if not eliminate, impacts to lakefront ecology.

2. Analysis

2.1. Site Characterization and Background

Today, the dog beach entrance is characterized by a concrete ramp at the north side of the beach. An initial gate with a coded lock sits at the top of the ramp and a second gate is located at the bottom of the ramp. Together, the two gates reduce the risk of off-leash dogs breaking away from their owners. The existing concrete ramp between the two gates is approximately 20 feet long. It is not currently considered ADA accessible, as it is too steep and lacks the landings at the top and bottom of the ramp, and handrails as required along walkways with a gradient of 5% or greater.

Figure 2-1. Existing north entrance concrete ramp, looking from the initial gate downward toward Lake Michigan.

The north end of Dog Beach is close to the Clark Street Beach House. This facility provides access to restrooms and other amenities. Additionally, an existing dog wash station is near the north entrance. To get to the existing north entrance, ADA motorists may park near the existing Clark Street Beach House and traverse almost 250 feet to get to the initial gate. Non-ADA motorists typically park on Sheridan Road. These parking dynamics figured strongly into our analysis.

A parking lot and drive exists adjacent to and to the west of the initial gate of the existing north entrance. This drive and parking lot is largely for boaters who wish to put their boats in or take their boats out of Lake Michigan via the boat ramp south of the dog beach. To the north of the parking lot and drive, but south of the Clark Street Beach House, is a traffic gate. To open and lower the gate, motorists with boats must scan a key card. Approximately 125 permit holders currently use key cards to enter and exit the gate. Presumably, most key card holders are boaters and must pay a fee, but some are City staff who do not pay a fee for entrance. This drive also allows emergency vehicles to access the boat ramp to the south.

Based on aerial analysis, it appears a ramp was installed around 2016 at the north side of the beach, extending from the road approximately 50 feet east (lakeward), perpendicular to the shore. Extreme high lake levels in 2019 and 2020 damaged the ramp. The City has the authority to close the dog beach for public safety reasons and did so during the time when the above-mentioned structure failed. As part of the City's exploration of ways to enhance accessibility after the existing north entrance beach ramp was damaged, the City retained SmithGroup under an existing contract. At the City's direction, SmithGroup designed a walkway starting near the Clark Street Beach House and ending near the existing second gate of the north entrance to the Evanston Dog Beach. The proposed walkway (current City Option 3) extends lakeward from the drive through existing dunes then bends southward and cuts through a sheet pile jetty which separates Dog Beach from Clark Street Beach to the north. As the

walkway extends south, it runs parallel to the shore, on grade cast-in-place concrete ramp down to elevation 581.5 ft, 5.5 feet below the 100-year flood elevation. The ramp is protected by a 25-foot-wide revetment.

2.2. Environmental Conditions

Evanston's beaches, including its Dog beach, are dynamic environments as lake levels can vary 7-8 feet, and beach elevations change over time (erode and replenish). Review of the beach survey shown for Option 3 show sand elevations at the Dog Beach varied several feet between 2022 and 2023.

The historical high calm water level (~100-year) is 582.4 ft. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year base flood elevation is 587 ft (this includes wave heights), similar to the initial gate elevation. This is comparable to the elevation of the existing initial gate. The 2019-2022 lake levels were among some of the highest on record dating back to 1918 (Figure 3-2). Thus, access to the Evanston Dog Beach must consider lake levels and wave conditions as well as changes in beach elevations.

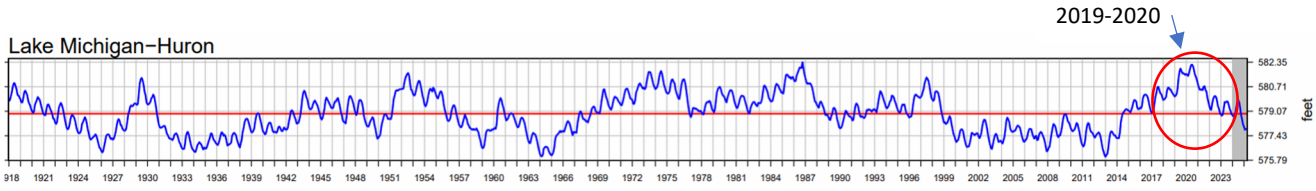

Figure 2-2. Lake Michigan water levels over time. Courtesy: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

As seen in Figure 3-2, extreme high lake levels do not occur frequently. The blue line is the monthly mean lake level for Lakes Michigan and Huron by IGLD. The red line is the long-term annual average lake level. The high lake levels in 2019-2020 are near the historical high within the red circle.

While future access could be designed to withstand these extreme conditions, it may not be necessary for the City to incur the expense associated with building to these conditions because, as has occurred in the past, the City can (and has) close the dog beach during extreme high lake levels for public safety reasons. So, while designs must be resilient enough to not be damaged during high lake levels, designs do not need to assume public access during those times, which in turn can add unnecessary costs for the City. More importantly, extreme high-water levels are relatively rare, obviating the need for designs (and therefore, expense) to be based on those extreme high-water levels.

2.3. ADA Guidelines and Requirements

Due to the dynamic and unique nature of beach environments, there are no American with Disability Act (ADA) requirements for beaches. However, technical guidelines can be adhered to for best efforts to create ADA friendly access. The following ADA guidelines were incorporated by GEI for optimizing ADA accessibility:

<u>Walking Surfaces</u>

- Slope not greater than 5% (1:20).

- Minimum width of 36 inches.
- Cross slope (slope of the surface perpendicular to the direction of travel) no steeper than 1:48.

Ramps (Figure 3-3)

- Slope no greater than 8.33% (1:12).
- Maximum vertical drop of 30”.
- Handrails on both sides of ramps and sloped paths greater than 5% (1:20).
- Landings at the top and the bottom of the ramp (36” minimum wide by 60” long).
- Minimum 36” ramp width

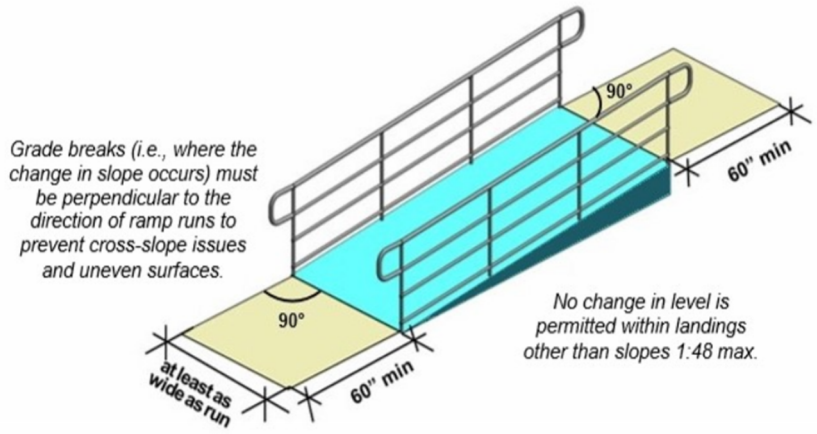

Figure 2-3. Ramp Schematic (Americans with Disabilities Act). For ADA illustration purposes only.

2.4. Synopsis of Options

This section of the report provides a synopsis of three options. The term “option” is used to describe a possible approach to meet the City’s three objectives. The term “alternative” is used to describe a variation of an option GEI has evaluated. For example, Option 1 has two alternatives, one that is permanent and another that is seasonal.

Option 2 is a reconfiguration of the South entrance.

Option 3 is from the option of the same name from the City’s January 13, 2025, presentation.

Locations for these options are shown in Figure 2-4.

Options 1 and 2 would result in common benefits as compared to Option 3, including:

- Avoid cutting through the existing dune at the southern perimeter of Clark Street Beach. This is anticipated to reduce ecological impact as well as cost.

- Avoid cutting through the steel sheet pile bulkhead wall, creating a transition (gap) in the structure that could reduce service life to some degree and allow for the accumulation of sand downwind of the wall.
- Provide closer access to ADA parking spaces to optimize mobility challenged access and simplify wayfinding for beach users.
- Provide various levels of cost savings.

Options are based on reasonable uses. For example, while Option 1(A) and Option 3 are intended to withstand design wave and water levels such as those on Lake Michigan in 2019-2020, these options may not be necessary because the City may close the Dog Beach to foot traffic anyway, like it did in 2020. Likewise, City staff members conveyed that if the dog beach is open in wintertime, it is only "at your own risk." As such, the City can save money if it does not overbuild and still remain within ADA recommendations. Double gates are included in options and cost estimates though not necessarily shown in concept drawings.

"Permanent" alternatives will not last forever, of course, but this terminology is used to convey that these alternatives can withstand more extreme lake conditions, and do not require seasonal or temporary installation or removal.

All options should include gates in closer proximity to one another than current gate locations to avoid conflicts between users and pets and to best contain a "foyer" area where dog owners are leashing and unleashing their pets.

All cost ranges provided are based on reviews as of the time of this report's submittal and are subject to change due to potential changes in market materials and labor. Cost ranges are provided because actual means and methods of construction are unknown as of the time of this report. The engineer's opinion of probable construction costs are based on quotes, cost estimation software, contractors' construction bids for similar projects, and engineering judgment.

City staff members have mentioned that road salt is not applied along the lakefront due to time limited water quality standard requirements under the Clean Water Act.

Finally, as also mentioned above, the purpose of this section is not to provide detailed conceptual designs, construction plans, or cost estimates for each of the three options. Instead, the purpose is to give the City a potential road map that includes general cost ranges, for its future consideration based on the three objectives for this report.

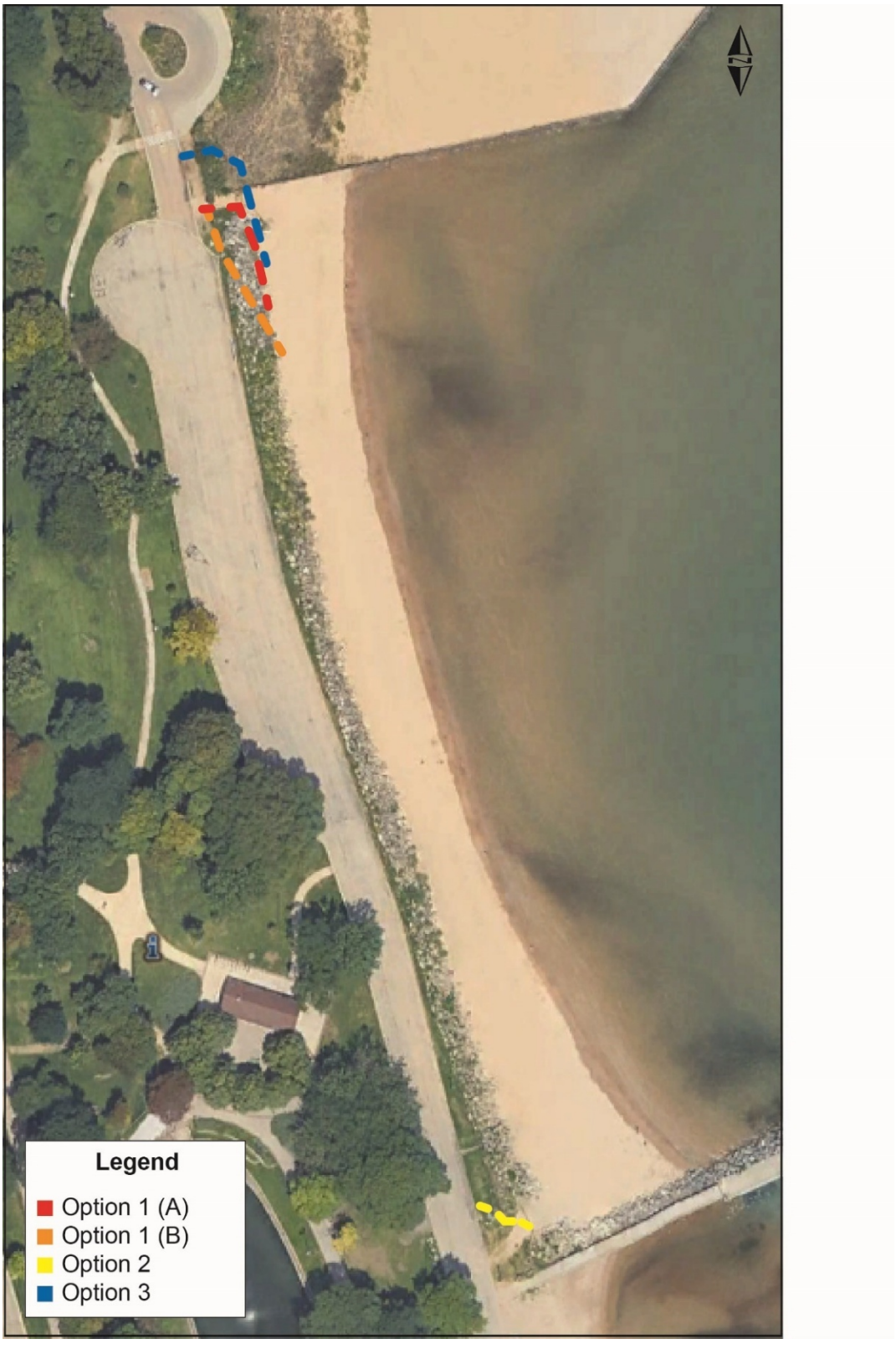

Figure 2-4. Evanston Dog Beach Option Locations.

2.4.1. Option 1(A): Modify Existing North Entrance—Permanent Alternative

Summary: This option is largely consistent with the Option 3, except that instead of cutting through the dune and steel sheet pile wall north of dog beach, a concrete ramp at a maximum slope of 8.33% (1:12) would extend seaward from the location of the current initial gate. The ramp would start at elevation of 587 ft and would extend 25 feet down to elevation 585 ft. At a slope of 8.33%, this stretch would have handrails on both sides of the ramp.

A 60" long x 36" wide landing would be constructed at the bottom of the initial ramp. Following this landing, the ramp would continue south parallel to the shoreline an on-grade, cast-in-place concrete ramp with a slope of 8.33% down to elevation 581.5 ft. Again, for this option, handrails will be installed on both sides of the ramp. We recommend handicap parking be added inside the traffic gate, with free access for disabled users. Any potential conflict with existing traffic patterns can be addressed with travel lane pavement "striping." The striping can direct car traffic in a manner that safely avoids the ADA parking area so that disabled users never have to traverse active lanes of traffic.

Cost Range: $325,000-$375,000

Pros:

- Reduces initial cost and ongoing O&M by eliminating gradient slopes that require excavation through an existing dune.
- Uses the current entrance area to reduce cost and remain close to amenities at the Clark Street Beach facilities.
- Existing barrier rocks can be sustainably re-used as protection from erosion to minimize cost.
- Locates a large portion of the permanent structure in areas of higher elevation, where resilience concerns are minimal.

Cons:

- Permanent structures, including concrete, tend to have high construction costs.
- Displaces otherwise usable sections of beach to make room for revetment, similar to Option 3.
- Requires long-term maintenance (including costs).

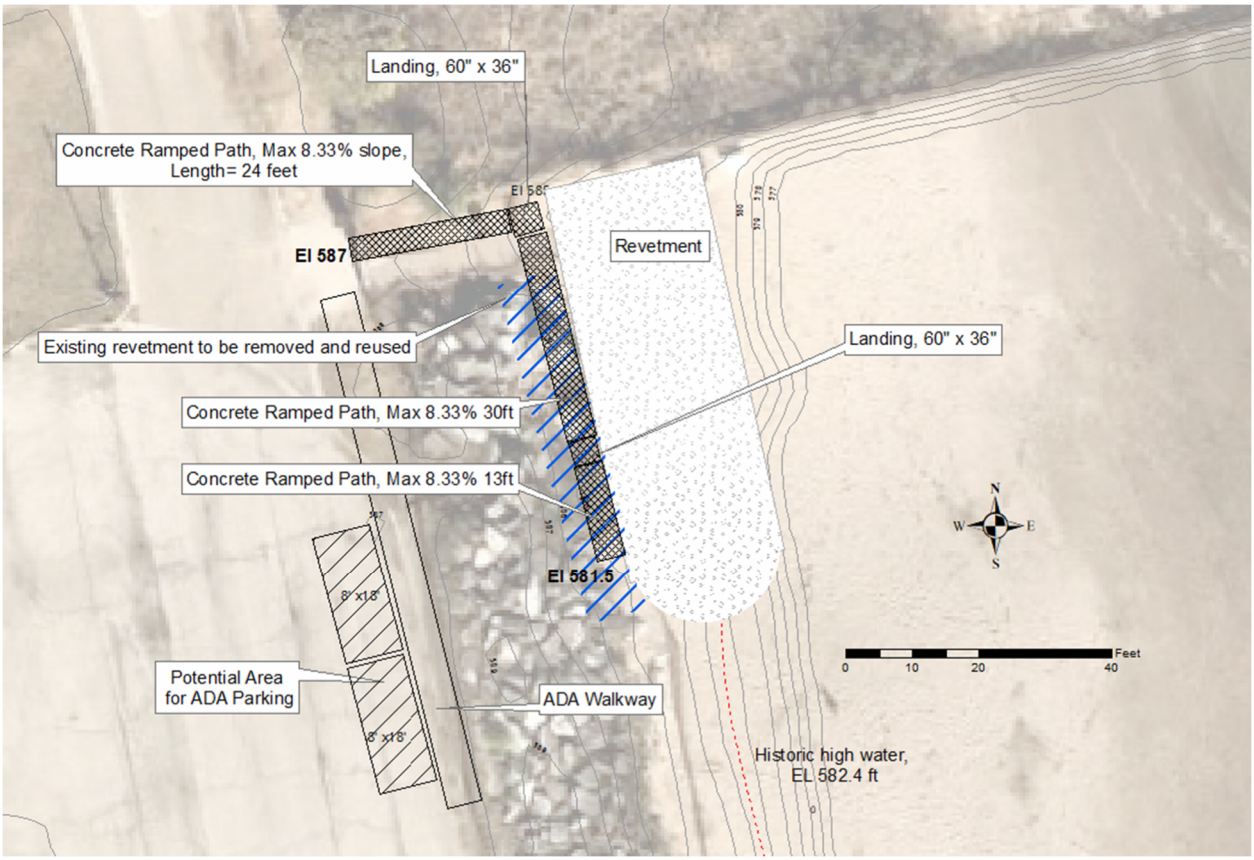

Figure 2-5. Option 1(A).

2.4.2. Option 1(B): Modify Existing North Entrance—Seasonal Alternative

Summary: This option includes the use of mobility mats, which are commonly used at other Evanston beaches. Mobility mats are temporary surfaces to allow ADA access. They are often shorthanded as "mobi mats," which is a trademarked product. Therefore, this report refers to the generic term, "mobility mats."

The current site geometry can be re-graded to provide a 5% (1:20) slope from the existing entrance down to the beach. This is most efficiently constructed in a diagonal orientation as it allows for the shallow slope to be achieved and protects the upper portion of the sloped path. The sand level under the ramp will vary over time and require re-grading maintenance.

As with Option 1(A), handicap parking can be added inside the traffic gate, with free access for disabled users.

Cost Range: $130,000-$180,000.

Pros:

- Uses the current entrance area to reduce cost.

- Minimizes the extension of the ramp toward the East to reduce cost
- Existing barrier rocks can be sustainably re-used as protection from erosion to minimize cost.
- Reduced initial cost and ongoing O&M cost because the ramp does not cut through the dune.
- Located access path that works with natural systems in an area where resiliency concerns are more *prevalent*.
- Lower associated installation costs than permanent structures.
- Mobility mat installation and maintenance program currently in place at Clark Street Beach, which has a much larger system.
- Less displacement of usable beach than permanent structures require.

Cons:

- Requires more M&O than a permanent structure. However, this short-term M&O is still not considered intensive as City staff must remove and install mobility mats at other Evanston beaches, many of which have the same or longer distances.

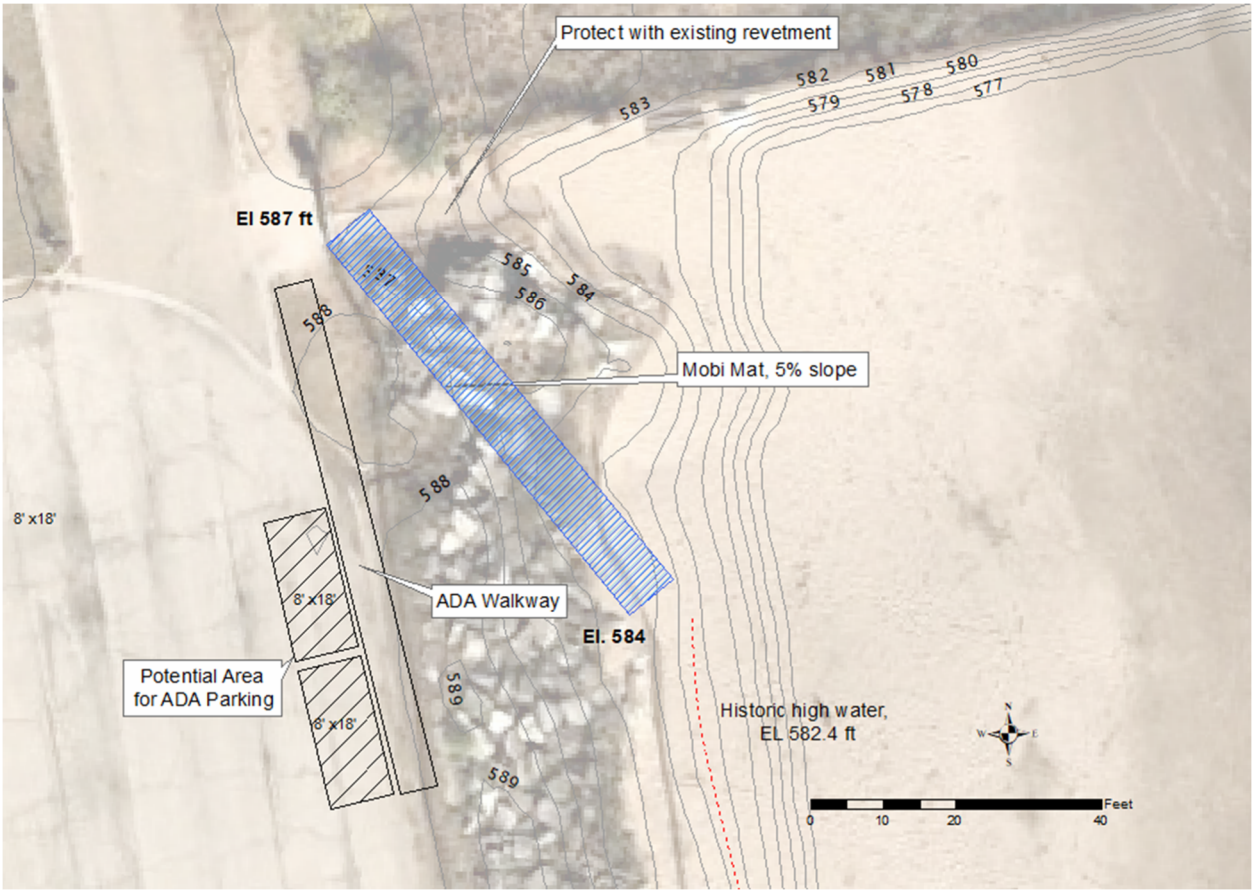

Figure 2-6. Option 1(B).

Two alternatives for option 1 are proposed, a permanent alternative and seasonal alternative. A combination may also be considered, including and concrete ADA ramp in the upper part, followed by mobility mats for the rest of the decent.

2.4.3. Option 2: Recalibrate Existing South Entrance

Summary: The south entrance is beneficial to ADA access due to the naturally shallow slope of the terrain from the road to the beach. Similar to option 1b, option 2 involves the use of mobility mats. This option is seasonal and would require little re-grading due to the shallow slope to the beach.

As public access is shared with city Maintenance access, a separation barrier is proposed to separate pedestrians form vehicle traffic. Parking could be added adjacent to the south entrance.

Cost Range: $125,000-175,000

Pros:

- With possible addition of new ADA parking spaces, distance of travel for disabled users is greatly decreased. Potential minor relocation of select rocks and snow fence section not expected to significantly increase cost.
- Vertical variances between the road and the beach are less at the south entrance, reducing the footprint and therefore cost of access.
- City staff mentioned that salt could be a concern during the winter, but the City does not use chlorides or deicers near the lakefront because of time limited water quality standards under the authority of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.
- Less displacement of usable beach than permanent structure.

Cons:

- Public access must be shared with City maintenance access, which would require separation, so beach users are safely protected from maintenance vehicle traffic (e.g., tractors) that enter at this location.
- Existing dog wash location would need to be relocated if needed at all.
- Far from Clark Street Beach House (desired amenities)
- The current entrance would need to be relocated.
- Grass area would need to be paved for new parking location.

City staff have also mentioned that salt application as part of the drive must be kept from accessing the beach through a recalibrated south entrance. Salt mitigation is often addressed through best management practices (e.g., not salting the drive near the access point and/or using sand instead, which is common practice, especially in environmentally sensitive areas).

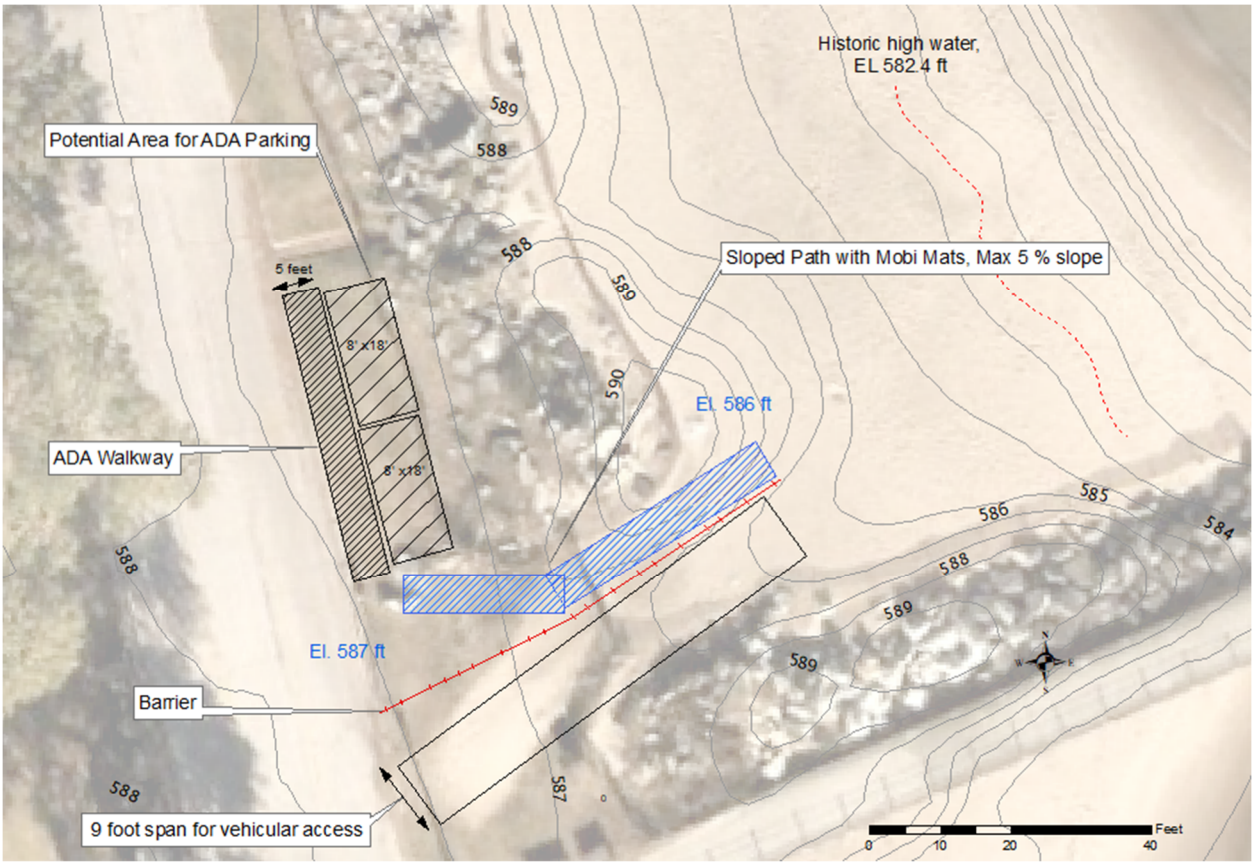

Figure 2-7. Option 2.

2.4.4. Option 3: Use Existing City "Option 3"

Summary: This Option is similar to a ramp running through a section of existing dune and through the steel sheet pile wall where it exits onto the dog beach (Figure 2-8. *Option 3 from January 13, 2025, Presentation.*). For the ramp to reach the current level of the beach, it will steadily descend from street level to the current level of the sand.

Cost Range: $480,000-$515,000 per January 13, 2025, City presentation.

Pros: Design/permitting already completed.

Cons:

- This option has a cost range higher than the other options. As the access ways are longer than possible alternatives, it entails comparative construction, and long-term O&M cost considerations that do not accompany other alternatives.
- Requires longer transit distances than is necessary (i.e., from north of the traffic gate) for mobility challenged visitors than is necessary.
- Requires disruptions to the existing dune with the area for the concrete sidewalk having to be excavated, and newly created dune slopes in need of extensive erosion control protection.

- Is protected by a 25-foot-wide revetment. This takes up an area of the existing beach.
- The 8.1% slope for 45 feet does not meet the ADA guideline that ramps steeper than 5% require a handrail and a landing every 30 feet of reach.
- Susceptible to sand build up from the north (Clark Street Beach) as well as at the toe of the structure. This may involve potentially intensive O&M by City staff as its location on and adjacent to the dune may produce sand that will require erosion control procedures to address resilience concerns.

Though the City has already obtained the necessary permits from permitting agencies, a cut through the existing SSP would still be required and that would not be necessary with other options in this report. Option 3 will experience sand build up which will require regular maintenance to clear the boardwalk and ramp of sand. This is especially true when strong winds from the northeast occur, as sand from Clark Street Beach is unobstructed. The same cannot necessarily be said of alternatives since Option 3 is north of the jetty whereas Option 1, and potentially Option 2, are more shielded from northeasterly winds due to their location south of the jetty.

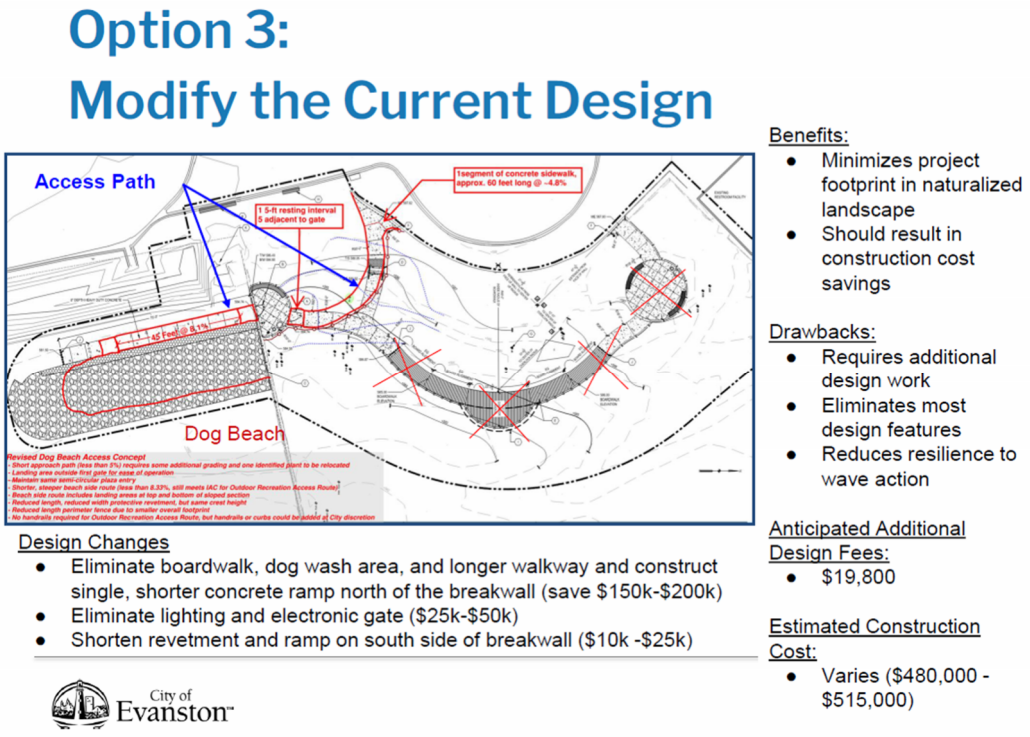

Figure 2-8. Option 3 from January 13, 2025, Presentation.

3. Review

GEI reviewed the documents in the table below to help develop potential options.

Table 3-1. Documents Reviewed by GEI

No.	Document	Provided By
1	SmithGroup Original Bid Documents, April 2024	Publicly Available
2	FEMA FIS and FIRM, 2021	Publicly Available
3	Illinois Department of Natural Resources Permit Application, SmithGroup, May 2024	Publicly Available
4	SmithGroup OPCC (Opinion of Probable Construction Costs), April 2024	City of Evanston
5	Power Point Presentation to City Council, January 13, 2025, July 22, 2024	Publicly Available
6	Guidance on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design	Publicly Available
7	Evanston Dog Beach Applicable Sections Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines	Ultura Solutions Accessibility Consultants
8	Dog Park Design	Fairfax County, VA Park Authority Dog Park Study Report
9	Cook County Off Leash Dog Ordinance	Publicly Available

In addition to document review, GEI also discussed the project with specialists. Those discussions are listed in the table below:

Table 3-2. Discussions conducted by GEI with City Staff, Experts, and Specialists

No.	Discussion
1	Discussion with City staff
2	Discussion with Wilmette Park District staff re: Gillson Park dog beach
3	Communication with Chicago Park District staff re: Montrose Beach
4	Discussion with mobility experts

4. Adjacent Beaches

During our analysis, City staff asked whether other Lake Michigan shoreline communities had similar challenges or ADA dog beaches. Though this analysis was not part of the scope of work, GEI staff researched and found that Wilmette, bordering Evanston to the north, and Chicago, bordering Evanston to the south, had dog beaches.

4.1.1. Wilmette

The Wilmette Park District owns and operates its own dog beach. According to Wilmette Park District staff, the nearest ADA accessible parking is 75-100 yards away from the dog beach entrance and the beach itself is not ADA accessible.

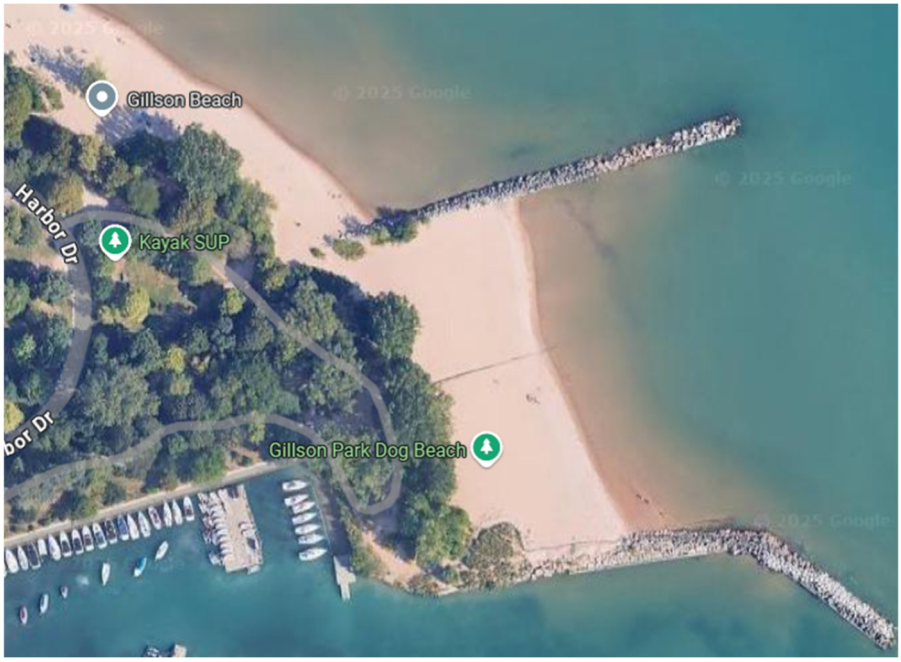

Figure 4-1. Gillson Park Dog Beach.

4.1.2. Montrose Dog Park, Chicago

The Chicago Park District operates “dog friendly areas” within its parks. The most similar to Evanston’s situation is the dog-friendly area at Montrose Beach. Though mobility mats are used for one section of beach access, a Chicago Park District spokesperson could not confirm whether dog beach access is ADA compliant.

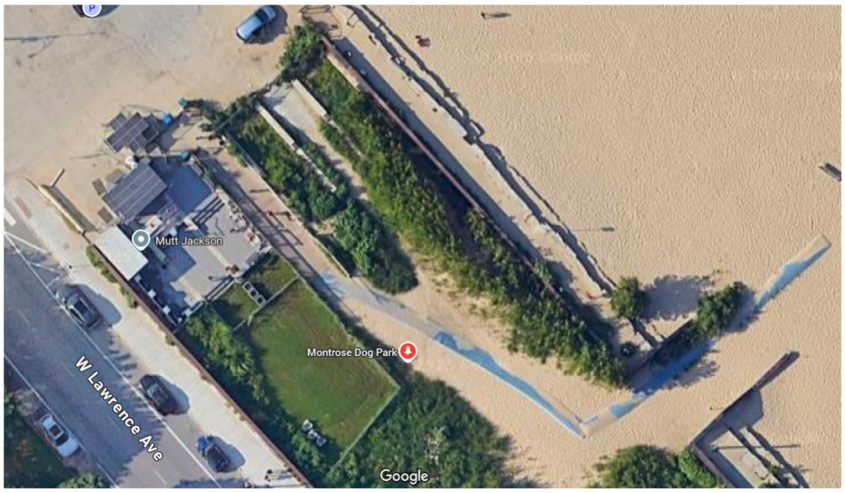

Figure 4-2. Montrose Beach dog friendly area, including use of mobility mats.

5. Project Team

The GEI project team is comprised of three staff members with expertise in Great Lakes, coastal dynamics, and ADA accessibility.

Cameron Davis

Cam, an Evanston native and resident, has been a Great Lakes ecological restoration specialist for four decades. He served as President Obama's lead, coordinating the work of 11 federal departments to invest $2 billion in funding as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. In addition to serving as a vice president at GEI Consultants, he is a commissioner at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Prior to serving in these capacities, he was President and CEO of the Chicago-based Alliance for the Great Lakes, which oversees a 15,000-volunteer Adopt-a-Beach® program, including Evanston beach cleanups.

Michael Koontz

Michael is the Senior Waterfront Planning Practice Leader for GEI. He is a Landscape Architect with quality design, project, staff, and client management experience, with a focused expertise on Resilient and Sustainable public works on the waterfront. Michael has over three decades of experience designing creative yet realistic access to waterfront spaces in general, and coastal beach environments in particular.

Alissa Turney

Alissa focuses on coastal and riverine hydraulic analysis including hydraulic structure design and flood risk assessment. She performs comprehensive hydrologic and hydraulic modeling studies for municipalities, state agencies, industry, and federal organizations. Her coastal work includes characterizing storm parameters such as wind speeds and wave heights; wave setup analysis, wave runup and overtopping modeling; and mapping of flood inundation extents.

6. Response to Comments Memoranda

Memo

To: Lara Biggs

From: Cameron Davis, Alissa Turney, Michael Koontz

c: Stefanie Levine, Edgar Cano, Luke Stowe

Date: July 16, 2025

Re: Evanston Dog Beach Accessibility Assessment
Evanston, Illinois
GEI Project No. 2501250

Thank you for your helpful comments of May 8, 2025. Below are answers to your questions.

1. The concept plans and cost estimates do not appear to take into account the Cook County off-leash dog area requirements, including an ADA accessible, secure double-gate access and secure fencing. Were these items included?

Cook County: Yes. We consulted the Cook County ordinance in developing the analysis. Under the ordinance, areas for off leash animals must be secured in an "enclosure." Article III, Section 10-77 defines an enclosure for off-leash pets as:

> a fence *or structure* of at least six feet in height, forming or causing an enclosure suitable to prevent the entry of young children, and suitable to confine a vicious dog *in conjunction with other measures* that may be taken by the owner or keeper, such as tethering of the vicious dog, within the enclosure. (Emphasis added).

Fencing at access points with double gates is included in our cost estimates. We did not including fencing west of the beach in our cost estimates because: (A) it was not necessary as limestone boulders act as a functionally equivalent "structure" to prevent children's access out of, and dogs contained within, the beach area; (B) the existing snow fence west of the boulders acts as an "other measure" in conjunction with the boulders to keep out young children; (C) in keeping with the City's cost considerations, continued use of the existing boulders would be less expensive than fencing; and (D) consistent with our March 31 discussion with City staff, new fencing by the boulders would not likely have the aesthetic appeal, visual accessibility, or public acceptance that existing natural boulders would have in acting as barriers. Double-gate access and fencing were included in our cost estimates.

ADA: ADA accessibility costs were included in our analysis.

2. Can you provide more information on what is included in the cost ranges? We want to understand what is included in the pricing, what you are using for contingency etc. (I understand that these are likely to be more conceptual than what has been provided by SmithGroup, but I generally want to look at what is included).

- These estimates do not include additional design fees or electrical components.
- All costs are in 2025 dollars. All costs included only 5% contingency and 2% for bonds and insurance.
- Costs include two gates and 6-foot-high fencing between the gates.
- It is assumed all onsite boulders can be reused and not hauled offsite.
- It is assumed the existing ramp from the road can be used on the existing north access and, with strategic placement of wheel stops, no new curb will need to be installed on the south access point.
- The existing south access point includes costs to create parking and a barrier.

3. You indicate in your report that you had discussion with mobility experts (Table 3-2). Can you provide information on who the experts are and their contact information?

We consulted a Duncan Law Group interpretation of the Cook County leash ordinance, one of the few websites referencing Cook County's leash law.

We discussed mobility with John McGovern of WT Group (jmcgovern@wtgroup.com) and Charles Petrof (cpetroff@accessliving.org). We did not receive any information during these discussions that we did not already know or factor into our analysis.

On our March 31 call with City staff, we invited suggestions for discussions with other specialists. We received a summary of ADA parameters from Altura from City staff. We found this summary useful and appreciate it being provided.

4. You indicate in your report that you had discussions with Wilmette Park District and Chicago Park District staff. Can you provide information on who the contacts were, similar to above?

   We had a short discussion with the Wilmette Park District. The point of contact is Emin Jakupovic at ejakupovic@wilpark.org.

   We exchanged emails with Michael Lange (Michael.Lange@ChicagoParkDistrict.com) of the Chicago Park District.

Memo

To: Luke Stowe

From: Cameron Davis

c: Lara Biggs, Stefanie Levine

Date: July 16, 2025

Re: Evanston Dog Beach Accessibility Assessment
Evanston, Illinois
GEI Project No. 2501250

(A) GEI Consultants received additional comments dated May 6 from City on July 12. We have fine tuned the draft based on minor comments and included those changes in the final report. Below are responses to some of the more significant July 12 comments.
The City requested that double gates be built into designs.

We have added the following language to the final report: "Double gates are included in options and cost estimates though not necessarily shown in concept drawings." The report's concept graphics incorporate legal requirements. The scope of work required high level designs, construction estimates, and cost ranges. As such, not all requirements are necessarily captured in Report illustrations. We are happy to discuss next steps with the City should it wish to move on to a design phase.

(B) Altura comments dated June 18, 2025.

As stated in our May 9 response to the City's comments, we drafted the report based in part on Altura's previous document. We have since received the City's June 18 comments, which include additional comments about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Please see Section 2.3 of the report.

(C) Comment about parking spaces in Options 1(A) and 1(B) "jutting out into a travel lane and may get clipped by boaters."

We believe the location of these parking spaces can be adjusted in a design phase to account for additional reduced risks. The purpose of this report was to show that the City can reduce overall costs while still complying with relevant ADA standards.