

Agenda  
Farmington Village Center Committee  
January 24, 2019  
Town Hall – Council Chambers  
6:00 PM

- A. Call to Order.
- B. Public Comment.
- C. Minutes.
  - 1) To approve the attached January 10, 2019 minutes. **(Attachment 1)**
- D. Reading of Communications and Written Appeals.
  - 1) Correspondence from Ruth Grobe regarding Universal Design.  
**(Attachment 2)**
- E. Presentation.
  - 1) Introduction of consultant- BSC Group
    - a. Kick-off Meeting
- F. To schedule a Public Participation Meeting. **(Please bring your calendars.)**
  - Possible Dates: Thursday – February 21, 2019
  - Thursday – February 28, 2019
  - Thursday – March 7, 2019
- G. Other Business.
- H. Public Comment.
- I. Adjournment.

cc: Committee Members  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk  
BSC Group

Minutes are considered "DRAFT" until approved by committee at next meeting.

Minutes  
Farmington Village Center Committee  
January 10, 2019

**Present**

Bruce Charette  
Nancy Nickerson  
Kevin Ray  
Liz Sanford  
Sarah Jean Willett

Brian Connolly  
John Renehan  
Betty Coykendall  
Ruth Grobe

**Staff**

Kathy Eagen  
Rose Ponte  
Anna Savastano

**A. Call to Order.**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**B. Public Comment.**

None.

**C. To interview firms to select a consultant for the Farmington Village Center Committee - Landscape Architect Services.**

The following firms made presentations regarding a Farmington High School facility survey:

6:00 PM BSC Group  
6:30 PM Freeman Companies  
7:00 PM Richter & Cegan, Inc.

**D. Executive Session: Review and Discussion of RFQ Responses for Farmington Village Center Committee - Landscape Architect Services in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat §§1-200(6) and 1-210(b) (24).**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Nickerson/Sanford) it was unanimously VOTED: to move to Executive Session for the review and discussion of RFQ Responses for Farmington Village Center Committee at 8:12 p.m. with attendance limited to voting and non-voting members of the Farmington Village Center Committee.

The committee returned to Open Session at 8:45 p.m.

**E. To take any action on the selection of a finalist for the Farmington Village Center Committee - Landscape Architect Services.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Sanford/Coykendall) it was unanimously VOTED: to select BSC Group to be the Landscape Architect for the Farmington Village Center Committee, contingent on a due diligence

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background and reference check by the Town of Farmington.

**F. To authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and sign an agreement with the selected firm for the Farmington Village Center Committee.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Coykendall/Renehan) it was unanimously VOTED: to authorize the Town manager to negotiate and sign an agreement with the selected firm for the Farmington Village Center Committee. *(See attached Scope of Services and Fee Proposal.)*

**G. Reading of the Minutes.**

1) **To approve the attached December 4, 2018 minutes.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Nickerson/Corbett) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the December 4, 2018 minutes.

**H. 2018 Brownfield Municipal Grant Update.**

Kathy Eagen gave an update on the Brownfield's Assessment Grant for the former Parson's parcel. The Town was not awarded funding; of the 39 applications submitted to the State, only 11 projects were funded. Without this funding, the Town will have to pay for the entire Assessment Study upfront. The estimated cost of the Study is \$200,000. The Town Council may be concerned paying for this study because Parson's Property is currently owned by the State, and depending on the outcome of the study, the Town may chose not to purchase the property. Kathy Eagen outlined the steps the Town has already started taking:

1. Staff is meeting with consultant Amy Vaillancourt to discuss if she can review the phase 1 investigations in further detail, and give us a plan to move forward.
2. Meet with the legislative delegation to determine if any other State brownfield's funding will become available in the near future.
3. Meet with the Deputy Commissioner of DECD to discuss the Parson's parcel with him to see if he can give ideas and advice moving forward.

The committee member also recommended hiring a lobbyist to advocate for the Town on the State level. The Committee plans to give their recommendation to the Town Council in the near future.

**I. To discuss the committee's next steps and approve a meeting schedule.**

The next step for the committee is for Town Staff to meet with BSC Group to finalize the contract. After the contract is finalized, BSC group will meet with the Committee to discuss expectations. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

**J. Public Comment.**

None.

Minutes are considered "DRAFT" until approved by committee at next meeting.

**K. Adjournment.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Nickerson/Corbett) the meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Savastano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Savastano  
Management Assistant



January 4, 2019

Ms. Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director  
Town of Farmington  
1 Monteith Drive  
Farmington, CT 06032

300 Winding Brook Drive  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Tel: 860-652-8227  
800-288-8123

www.bscgroup.com

**Re: Proposed Scope of Services  
Farmington Village Center Streetscape Improvements**

Dear Ms. Ponte:

BSC Group-Connecticut, Inc. (BSC) is pleased to submit the following scope of services for professional planning, landscape architecture, and engineering services in support of the Town of Farmington’s Village Center Streetscape Improvement project. We recognize that this project has been a long-term effort and we are eager to contribute our expertise to facilitate further enhancements of the Village Center area. With over 50 years of experience in the consulting industry, BSC offers an interdisciplinary team of in-house professionals with the requisite expertise to serve your needs.

To undertake this important project BSC has amassed a talented group of professionals who are prepared to build on your past efforts, knowledge, incorporate new methods, and address community concerns. The expertise of our in-house team members will allow for seamless collaboration to deliver a unified design that will serve the Town of Farmington for years to come. Our team offers a variety of strong advantages for your project, which are detailed in our proposal response and summarized below:

- Expertise in combining streetscape design with community revitalization efforts, aimed to solidify a sense of place within the community while also catalyzing economic development
- Licensed landscape architects to develop innovative designs that are environmentally sensitive, aesthetically pleasing, and cost-effective
- Regularly assists clients in the identification and application for grant funds from private and public sources
- Depth of resources and broad range of expertise to begin project immediately and within schedule
- Skilled communicators to lead an effective and efficient public participation process
- Solutions-oriented focus and experience coordinating with CTDOT

**1.0 OVERVIEW**

BSC's scope of services has been developed to achieve a successful balance of streetscape, circulation and design recommendations to create a sense of place within the Farmington Village Center and foster the area’s role as the economic and municipal center of the community. Throughout the project, BSC’s integrated team of urban designers, landscape architects, planners, engineers, economists and transportation specialists will work with Town officials, the Farmington Village Center Committee (the "Committee") and community stakeholders to develop a viable strategy that builds upon past work, defines a vision for the area, and identifies implementation tools for realization. This will be done with an eye towards place-making and economic vibrancy while also addressing the realistic day-to-day needs that

Engineers  
Environmental Scientists  
Custom Software Developers  
Landscape Architects  
Planners  
Surveyors



occur within the Village Center, such as deliveries to businesses, parking, and pedestrian safety.

To assure the continued revitalization of the Village Center, the planning process will consider its unique characteristics, the built assets, the surrounding context, the available infrastructure, and the transportation options – all to better understand the key elements that will define the Farmington Village Center Area with a distinct sense of place and a realization of its positive economic position and contribution to the Village’s employment and property tax revenue.

The BSC team will provide the Town/Committee with strategic technical support during all phases of our scope of services that will include the following:

- Gaining a detailed understanding of the area’s physical characteristics and opportunities.
- Developing a streetscape aesthetic that builds upon local character and culture, creates a sense of place, provides pedestrian comfort, enhances abutting businesses and accommodates daily operations.
- Developing an integrated and flexible traffic, parking, and transportation framework that supports reuse, redevelopment and future growth of properties.

Additionally, we recognize that developing achievable Village Center improvement plans is not simply a matter of physical planning and design. Rather, a dynamic area plan that must:

- Coordinate with the Farmington Village Center’s wider objectives and aspirations for future growth are articulated in your recent master plan.
- Be responsive to and incorporate existing initiatives and priority projects that may already be underway.
- Identify federal and state programs and funding opportunities and local actions.
- Coordinate strategic public investment to leverage private investment.

## **2.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES**

BSC proposes a scope of services for the project that is comprised of seven (7) phases as follows:

- Phase 1 - Project Initiation and Data Collection
- Phase 2 - Analysis of Existing Conditions
- Phase 3 - Development and Evaluation of Alternatives
- Phase 4 - Cost Estimating
- Phase 5 - Community Outreach/Public Engagement
- Phase 6 - Final Report
- Phase 7 - Implementation

A detailed discussion of each of these phases is presented below.

### **Phase 1 - Project Initiation and Data Collection**

1. BSC will collect from the Town and review relevant literature, plans, reports, grant applications and studies that pertain to the Village Center area and adjacent features. Information of interest includes, but is not limited to, previous studies/reports, relevant State and local traffic studies and plans, local ordinances and regulations, property



ownership, pending development and infrastructure projects in the project area, utilities, parking, traffic, and local road surface and sidewalk improvement plans.

2. BSC will attend a project kick-off meeting with the Town and Committee. This meeting will generally include a review of the project's goals; confirmation of lines of communication; discussion of the design process and project deliverables; and establishment of a project schedule with key milestones. Another key goal of the kick-off meeting is to discuss the design program and potential scope of improvements. This initial programming will contemplate both the “needs” and “wants” of the Town considering the project’s goals and potential funding. The Priority Matrix included in the RFQ provides an excellent start for this programming discussion. Following the kick-off meeting, BSC will issue meeting minutes and an updated schedule for submittal to the Town. The schedule will identify each project task, deliverables, and associated time-frames/key dates.

Another key element of the kick-off meeting will be development of the framework for community outreach/public engagement (See Phase 5 herein). These discussions will focus on developing the general approach for this important project element, including outreach and engagement strategies, timing/scheduling of meetings/workshops, meeting locations, informational materials, etc.

3. BSC will set-up a project-specific web site using our Microsoft® Sharepoint® system. This is a secure, controlled-access web site that will be accessible by the Town and Committee from any internet connection via a dedicated username and password for each individual. This project-specific website will be a useful tool and information repository for project materials such as schedules, existing conditions photos, meeting minutes, plans, specifications, cost estimates, etc.

## **Phase 2 - Analysis of Existing Conditions**

1. Base Mapping - BSC will initiate this phase by developing base mapping for the Village Center area that will serve as the basis for planning and design. Base mapping will be prepared using a combination of available sources which may include previous survey work, Town GIS data, 2016 Connecticut Orthographic Imagery, and aerial photography available in the public domain. The base plan will be considered a non-survey “compilation plan” since it will be compiled from several sources. The plan will show existing features, roadway layout, approximate property lines, buildings, visible utilities, and other relevant conditions. Property lines and street right-of-way lines will be depicted based upon the available data and will be noted as approximate. Topography as obtained from the 2016 Connecticut Orthographic Imagery will also be depicted. Once completed, BSC will create a base plan AutoCAD file (.dwg) for use.
2. Site Visit/Field Reconnaissance - The BSC project team will walk the entire project area to document visible existing features such as sidewalks and crosswalks, roadway geometry, traffic conditions, driveways, parking, pedestrian activity/routes, circulation patterns, abutting buildings, public spaces, utilities, lighting, vegetation and current land uses. Conditions will be noted on plans and with photo documentation. The field reconnaissance will identify deficiencies as well as opportunities in the public realm that should be addressed by this project. In addition, the field reconnaissance will help identify gateways into the area, key transportation



links, uses and buildings that contribute to the character of the area, and other factors that will influence plan recommendations.

3. Landscape and Public Realm Site Analysis - Based on our Site Visit/Field Reconnaissance BSC will photograph and document the current inventory and condition of existing plant material, site furnishing, signage, walls and fencing, historical features and all other elements in the public realm. We will carefully evaluate the condition of existing vegetation with an emphasis on street trees. We will also document important views and vistas. As above, this information will be incorporated into our base plan for a comprehensive site analysis plan.

This analysis will also include a review of existing utility information available for the area. BSC will analyze existing infrastructure such as pavement materials, lighting, storm water structures, and other elements that support the operation and safety of the roadway. Additionally, BSC will identify opportunities for providing sustainable infrastructure (low impact development, storm water reuse, reusing/recycling existing on-site materials, etc.).

4. Site Analysis Plan - The BSC team will prepare a Site Analysis Plan explaining opportunities and challenges for the project area. This may involve a few plans, with supporting photographs and written materials to provide a full summary of existing conditions.

### **Phase 3 - Development and Evaluation of Alternatives**

1. Preliminary Streetscape Improvement Options - The BSC Team will collaborate with Town staff and Committee to prepare up to three alternatives showing potential landscape, streetscape and transportation improvements in the project area. These alternatives will build upon the existing conditions information, program needs, goals and objectives, as well as the opportunities identified in the Brainstorming Session summary included in the RFQ. The plan will meet Complete Streets standards to the maximum extent practical, including pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular flow patterns and conceptualization of the overall look and feel of the Farmington Village Center Area.

Options for the Farmington Avenue corridor will focus on streetscape improvements that will augment the recently constructed roadway improvements. Such improvements will support “branding and placemaking” of the Village Center area may include gateway treatments, vegetation, site furnishings, wayfinding, public art areas, and similar elements.

Options for Main Street will consider comprehensive corridor improvements including the roadway, sidewalks, parking, pedestrian spaces and integration with abutting conditions. The streetscape improvements will enhance the character of this key corridor in the Village Center by carefully balancing roadway and parking needs with pedestrian and placemaking goals.

For all alternatives, BSC will also suggest material options, including visuals for pavement, site furnishings, signage, landscaping, public art areas, lighting, crosswalks, screening, and similar elements. The landscape options will be developed in concert with proposed circulation and parking improvements, land use, green





infrastructure, complete streets and other infrastructure needs. The plans will also acknowledge the needs of special events, historic resources and cultural attributes in the area. A series of graphical depictions will be prepared to convey the contemplated alternatives. Preliminary construction costs will be prepared for each option.

The BSC team will review the concept plans with the Town and the Committee and refine the plans based on comments received. Development of more detailed schematic plans of the proposed improvements including bike accommodation, lighting styles, paving/brick details, bench and bus stop designs, and tree specifications will be prepared for public display and the community meetings/workshops.

2. Preferred Design – After receiving Town and public input regarding the conceptual options, BSC will meet with the Town and Committee to discuss the elements to be included in a preferred design plan for the proposed improvements. The plan will be attentive to all the complete street elements analyzed and incorporated into the preliminary concept plans.

A preferred plan, with updated cost estimates, will then be developed and rendered in preparation for presentation at a public meeting. The preferred plan will show the vision for future improvements. Image boards containing photos and 2&3-Dimensional graphics representing envisioned site improvements for the alternatives will also be compiled. BSC Group will prepare an itemized preliminary cost estimate for the proposed improvements.

3. BSC Group will meet with Town and Steering Committee officials to present the preliminary design and solicit feedback. Suggested changes will be made and the plan will be prepared for public display and public presentation.

#### **Phase 4 - Cost Estimating**

1. The development of accurate cost estimates will be critical to ensuring that the design concepts are achievable within the realm of anticipated funding mechanisms. Throughout evolution of the project, BSC will develop cost estimates using data obtained from our in-house cost database, recent projects, contractor inquiries, and other industry sources.

Cost estimates will be tailored to the specific level of planning or design. Costs for early concepts will be based on planning-level estimates, and where appropriate, cost ranges will be used to capture a broad range of design options. As design concepts progress and are refined, cost estimates will likewise be refined, and will be prepared using the Unit Quantity Method, with the estimates based on the material types and anticipated quantities included. The scope of proposed improvements will be divided into the various individual operations or items that collectively “build” the anticipated improvements, with quantities and item costs assigned and tabulated. Once total costs are calculated, the estimates will be checked against similar projects for general consistency and cross-checked using industry guidelines for similar work. All cost estimates will be tabulated and noted with the appropriate clarifications and assumptions for inclusion in the Final Report (see Phase 6).



### **Phase 5 - Community Outreach/Public Engagement**

1. Based on the community outreach/public engagement framework established during the kick-off, BSC will implement a project-wide community outreach/public engagement program with the following goals:
  - Engage the community.
  - Promote consistent “messaging” regarding the project consistent with Town and Committee requirements.
  - Solicit public input through meetings/workshops (3).
  - Inform and advise the public.
  - Garner public support.

It is understood that Community Outreach/Public Engagement activities will occur throughout evolution of the project.

#### **Informational Tools and Messaging**

Many tools are available to provide information regarding the project. The specific nature of these materials will be defined at the outset of the project, but it is envisioned that the BSC will provide the following type of materials in support of the project:

- Information on the Town’s website. As the project evolves, this will be an ideal location to post photos, graphics, public meeting information, etc.
- Large format graphics that can be printed and posted at town hall.
- PowerPoint presentations that can be posted on the Town website and used at public meetings.

#### **Community Input, and Progress Meetings, and Forums**

Integral with the development and evaluation of alternatives, BSC will coordinate with the Town, Committee, and other stakeholders. It is envisioned that much of this coordination will be conducted in a series of three (3) meetings/workshops with the Committee and public. Public meetings will contemplate the community’s “needs” and “wants” for the project area. For each meeting, BSC will prepare the appropriate colored graphics, plan sheets, handout content, and slide-show presentations as appropriate. BSC will give a general review of the subject area, site constraints, habitats and conditions of existing improvements as well as review areas that offer better potentials for development or access. Pros and Cons for each plan will be presented and be reviewed in order to further refine the scope and phasing of the conceptual plans.

### **Phase 6 – Final Report**

1. A Final Report will be prepared that documents the planning process. This report will include the site analysis plan, alternatives, preferred plan, cost estimates, phasing recommendations, and a summary of the public input process. A main component of this report will be an illustrative plan and supporting graphics to visually convey the improvement proposed in the Farmington Village Center Streetscape Master Plan.



**Phase 7 - Implementation**

1. The BSC Team will coordinate with and assist the Town in identifying funding sources to enable the community's vision for the project to be realized. Since the possibilities for improvements are extensive, but funding can be limited, we are prepared to identify project phases and priorities. To identify possible funding sources, BSC will conduct the following.
  - BSC will identify potential funding sources with a focus on grant programs that support similar public projects. We will compile a listing of potential funding sources from both state and federal programs.
  - For each funding source identified, BSC will summarize the key parameters that define the nature of the program. This will include information such as grant applicability to the project, grant amount, grant conditions/limitations, application process, administrative contact information, etc.
  - BSC will compile a Funding Matrix that summarizes the funding source and the key parameters in tabular format to allow the Town to compare the applicability, attributes, and drawbacks of each program in a relative manner. BSC will provide the Funding Matrix to the Town in hard copy and digital format.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this scope of services to the Town. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact us by telephone at 860-652-8227 or by e-mail at [jfasser@bscgroup.com](mailto:jfasser@bscgroup.com) (Jef) and [kprochorena@bscgroup.com](mailto:kprochorena@bscgroup.com) (Kurt).

Sincerely,

**BSC Group-Connecticut, Inc.**

James E. Fasser, ASLA, AICP, LEED AP  
Vice President/Principal

Kurt A. Prochorena, PE, LEED AP  
Vice President/Principal



January 4, 2019

Ms. Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director  
Town of Farmington  
1 Monteith Drive  
Farmington, CT 06032

300 Winding Brook Drive  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Tel: 860-652-8227  
800-288-8123

www.bscgroup.com

**Re: Fee Proposal  
Farmington Village Center Streetscape Improvements**

Dear Ms. Ponte:

BSC Group-Connecticut, Inc. (BSC) is pleased to submit this fee proposal to provide professional planning, landscape architecture, and engineering services in support of the Town of Farmington's Village Center Streetscape Improvement project.

BSC proposes the following fees by task:

Phase 1 - Project Initiation and Review of Past Studies	\$3,500
Phase 2 - Analysis of Existing Conditions	\$6,000
Phase 3 - Development and Evaluation of Alternatives	\$20,000
Phase 4 - Cost Estimating	\$5,000
Phase 5 - Community Outreach/Public Engagement	\$10,000
Phase 6 - Reporting	\$10,000
Phase 7 - Implementation	\$0.00 (no charge)
<b>Total Fee</b>	<b><u>\$54,500</u></b>

Should you have any questions or comments regarding our fee proposal please contact us by telephone at 860-652-8227 or by e-mail at jfasser@bscgroup.com (Jef) and kprochorena@bscgroup.com (Kurt).

Sincerely,

**BSC Group-Connecticut, Inc.**

James E. Fasser, ASLA, AICP, LEED AP  
Vice President/Principal

Kurt A. Prochorena, PE, LEED AP  
Vice President/Principal

- Engineers
- Environmental Scientists
- Custom Software Developers
- Landscape Architects
- Planners
- Surveyors

To: Members of the Farmington Village Center Committee  
From: Ruth Grobe, Chair, Farmington Human Relations Commission  
Re: Request regarding upcoming meeting with BSC  
Date: 1/17/19

Dear Friends on the Village Center Committee,

I am writing to you because I will not be at our meeting next week with the representatives of BSC Group; for over a year, my husband and I have had tickets to go on a tour of the Galapagos Islands, and I cannot miss that. So I am writing to you as the person who tries to be a voice for the residents of Farmington who have limited mobility and who use wheelchairs. I wish I were going to be at our meeting because even though I voted for BSC Group as the overall best candidate, they were oblivious to the fine points of accessibility, and unfortunately, with accessibility the devil is in the details. My anxiety at missing the meeting is compounded by the absence of Bill Warner, who was a very knowledgeable and strong advocate.

Let me give you two concrete examples of the devilish details that may help you hold the BSC gentlemen's feet to the fire. When we redeveloped Unionville Center a number of years ago, I served on a committee similar to the Village Center Committee, and we worked with a landscape architect on the streetscape. The landscape architect thought that it would be aesthetically pleasing and historically appropriate to put strips of faux cobblestones at intervals along the sidewalk. At the time, I raised the issue of how the uneven surface might prove difficult for a sub-section of wheelchair users, and Town Engineer Matt Blume (who was always very supportive of accessibility concerns) assured me that the cobblestones were ADA compliant and would be fine. Years later, when Matt's daughter tragically ended up using a wheelchair, he told me what a hard time she had with maneuvering along the cobblestones in Unionville Center. Matt was a total expert in ADA regulations, but it took direct experience for him to see the whole picture.

To skip to the present, there is already a problem with the brand new sidewalk that the State DOT has installed along Route 4. Although at our Town government's request, the State has relocated a number of the wayfinding signs, there are still at least two that meet only the *minimal* ADA standard for the width of the pedestrian passage between the leg of the sign and the edge of the sidewalk. Since 2015, the US Access Board has been advocating for upgrades and changes in the ADA standards, including widening the rights of way along sidewalks to accommodate the much larger motorized wheelchairs and scooters that have been developed, but their recommendations have yet to be adopted by the Justice Department. With the signs that are impeding access on Route 4, all it would have taken to make the pedestrian right-of-way wider would have been to shift the location of the legs of each sign. This is what I mean by "the devil is in the details."

Knowledge of each little individual ADA "spec" is not enough. Universal Design is an approach that integrates and at times surpasses ADA standards into a comprehensive whole that will work for everybody. It has taken me years to develop the limited expertise that I presently possess, (my background is in social work and human rights, not engineering). I don't see how the BSC gentlemen can do it without some help, especially since they left accessibility out of their presentation altogether and were somewhat clueless when I asked my question.

Please don't let people with disabilities be the afterthought that they so often are. I believe that either BSC needs to add an expert in Universal Design to their team OR the Town needs to hire an expert to review plans and identify potential problems such as cobblestone strips (especially in the absence of Bill Warner). At the minimum, I am asking you to make the BSC representatives aware that Universal Design principles are a priority for us. Thank you very much for considering this request.



## UNIVERSAL DESIGN: A FOUNDATION FOR OPTIMAL ACCESS

### What is universal design...inclusive design...design-for-all?

...a **framework** for the design of places, things, information, communication and policy that focuses on the user, on the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design.

**Or, more simply: Human-Centered design (of everything) with everyone in mind.**

### Universal Design Principles:

**Equitable Use:** The design does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users.

**Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

**Simple, Intuitive Use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

**Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

**Tolerance for Error:** The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

**Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

**Size and Space for Approach & Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

*[Developed by a group of US designers and design educators from five organizations in 1997. Principles are copyrighted to the Center for Universal Design, School of Design, State University of North Carolina at Raleigh. The Principles are in use internationally.]*



## **Relationship between Legally Mandated Accessibility & Universal Design**

Within a civil or human rights context, legally mandated requirements for accessible design, and in particular the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provide a vital basis for autonomy and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. To be effective, legal mandates require an infrastructure of information and enforcement in order to ensure meaningful compliance. Inevitably, the legal mandates establish a set of minimum standards for some built, information and communications environments and address the needs of people with some types of functional limitations, but not all. Too often those minimum standards are understood as maximums. Importantly, the requirements are not flexible enough to easily reflect advances in technology.

Accessibility is focused on people with disabilities, especially those who are 'qualified' as defined in the law. The design standards for accessible design focus primarily on accommodating the needs of wheelchair users and, to a lesser extent, people who are blind and hearing impaired. Though wheelchair users are relatively small in number, their wheeled devices make very clear demands on the built environment; and design features that make it possible to wheelchair users to participate equally benefit the much larger number of people who have difficulty walking. Additional requirements for "effective communication" also require taking at least minimum steps to provide for alternative means of communication through auxiliary aids and services, again reflecting advances in technology.

Accessibility laws and state codes on accessibility are a limited indicator of the potential of design to facilitate independence, participation and wellbeing for the disabled, a growing minority population. In a world in which we live 30 years longer than people did 100 years ago surviving illness and injury at record rates, most of us will experience at least periods of functional limitation in the course of our lives. It is not about "special" anymore.

Universal or inclusive design starts with accessible design and calls for a more creative and imaginative engagement of designers to design places, products and technology that will work seamlessly for the widest possible group of potential users. The goal is to eliminate disabling environments (physical, information, communication, social and policy environments) in favor of enabling ones for everyone.

### **Contact the Citizens Coalition For Equal Access (CC=A):**

**Keith Mullinar, Co-Chair: 860-298-7915**

[mullinar@att.net](mailto:mullinar@att.net)

**Ruth Grobe, Secretary: 860-604-8755**

[ruthgrobe@gmail.com](mailto:ruthgrobe@gmail.com)