



LAX

Los Angeles World Airports



ADA REPORT 03-20

DATE: 11 August 2020

FROM: Lawrence J. Rolon, LAWA ADA Coordinator

TO: Honorable ADA Committee

SUBJECT:

OBSERVATIONS OF THE MIDFIELD CONCOURSE BY LAWA'S ADA COORDINATOR

PURPOSE:

Brief the Disability Access and Accommodation Advisory Committee (DAAAC) on the ADA Coordinator's walk through of the Midfield Concourse on 10 August 2020.

BACKGROUND:

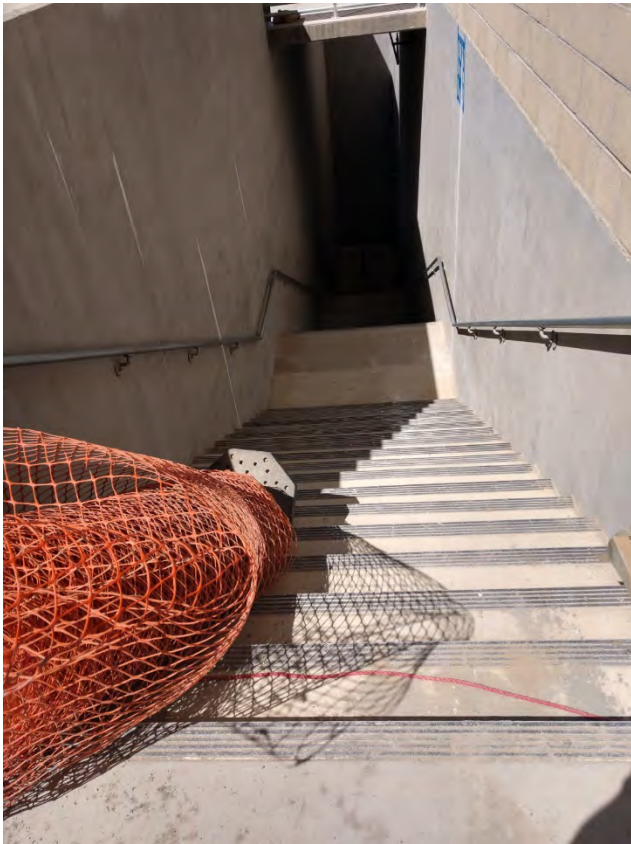
DAAAC is responsible for advising LAWA management on the impact new construction or remodeling may have on travelers with disabilities and older travelers. As part of accomplishing this mission, management has key project personnel brief DAAAC on proposed work to be done, provide status reports, and related informational sessions. In turn, DAAAC provides valuable insight on issues that may be encountered by disabled travelers and older guests, and provides suggestions to remedy observed problems.

DAAAC advice has proven indispensable and has resulted in fixes that could otherwise have been expensive to correct.

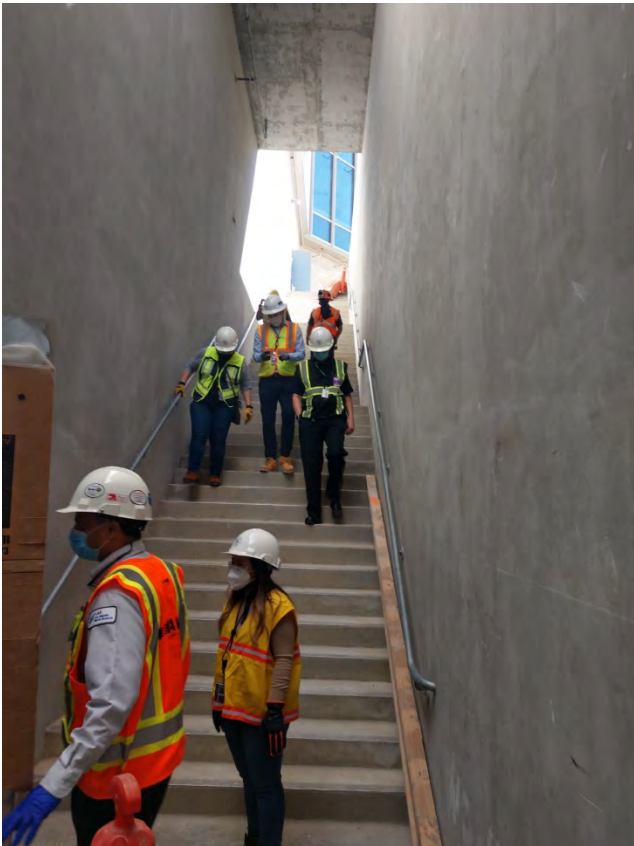
DAAAC provided input on the kind of furniture that works best for persons with disabilities and older travelers.

DISCUSSION:

LAWA’s ADA Coordinator participated in a walk through of the Midfield Concourse on 10 August 2020, and makes the following observations.



Picture provides a view from the tarmac of the stairs leading down to an exit people will use to evacuate the Midfield Concourse in the event of an emergency.



Picture shows people walking downstairs from the airfield into the Midfield Concourse entrance

This is a stairway that will be used to evacuate passengers from the Midfield Concourse.

We advise that passengers with mobility issues and older travelers shelter in place inside the building until individuals without mobility issues evacuate the building. We take the following reasoning for this suggestion:

- In an uncontrolled evacuation, older passengers and persons with limited mobility are likely to slow evacuation, causing people to trip over one another, potentially causing injury and death.
- People with limited mobility and older passengers will have a difficult time evacuating through this route because of the many steps that must be climbed.

- It will allow for disabled passengers and older travelers to be better assessed and allow for an orderly evacuation based on individual needs.
- Disabled passengers and older travelers can be safely evacuated once the majority of travelers evacuate. It will be necessary to have designated airport community personnel assigned to remain and assist at the shelter in place location. The most qualified individuals may be wheelchair ambassadors.
- It will provide an opportunity to identify alternative evacuation routes for people in the shelter in place area.



Pictured is a very long corridor, which is part of the Passenger Tunnel (PAX). To the right is a movable walk and to the left is a walkway for persons who want to walk the distance from Bradley West to the Midfield Concourse. On the wall to the right are panels where messaging and advertising will be located.

The Passenger Tunnel (PAX) is quite long and may prove a challenge for some people with hidden disabilities, and older travelers to take without the assistance of the movable walk or ADA Cart.

It needs to be pointed out that some people with cognition difficulty will have difficulty in using the movable walk, as will older travelers, and some people with limited mobility. These groups will have to rely on the ADA Cart for assistance.

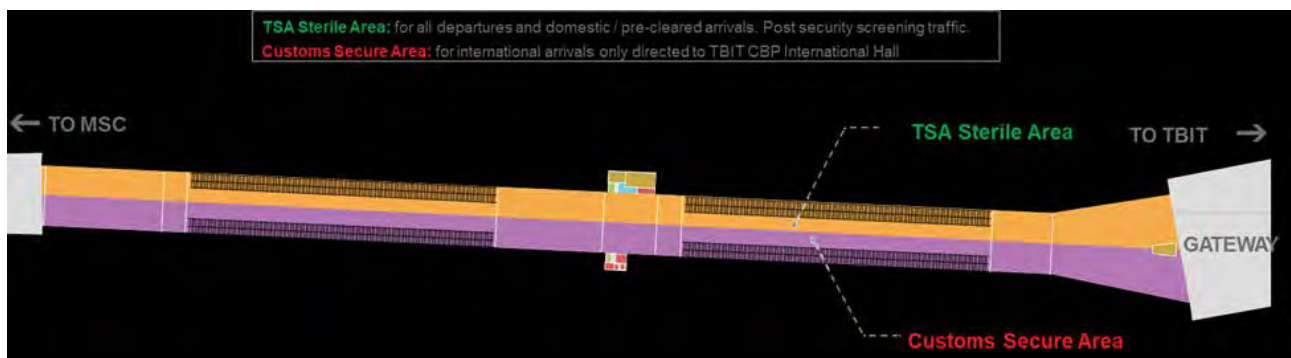
The ADA Office advised project planners that a dedicated tunnel or lane needed to be installed to accommodate departing and arriving passengers. The ADA Office was assured that the walkway would be wide enough to accommodate passengers and carts. On viewing the site, we question the accuracy of that statement.

Both departing and arriving domestic passengers will use the same tunnel, as will pre-screened arriving international passengers. (It needs to be noted that some passengers will be bused from the airfield to and from the terminal.)

We are not aware of any study having been done to estimate the number of disabled and older travelers who are likely to request the use of an ADA cart because of the tunnel distance, and their inability to take advantage of the moving walk. The ADA Office suspects the demand for ADA carts will eventually exceed expectations. The added demand for carts will hamper the flow of passengers through the tunnel.

Arriving domestic passengers and departing passengers will be using the same tunnel. The ADA Office suspects that combining foot traffic and anticipated demand for cart service will make it difficult for carts to maneuver the tunnel safely.

Below is a diagram showing the tunnel from TBIT on the right end to the MSC on the left end. The two brown areas are moving walks. The butterscotch colored area is for departing passengers and arriving domestic passengers, and persons who have cleared immigration and customs prior to arrival at LAX.



The area in purple is the tunnel that will be used by arriving passengers who need to clear immigration and customs. Traffic will flow one way. The sterile tunnel leading to immigration and customs also has moving walkways.

Emergency call boxes will be placed strategically between the end of moving walks and start of moving walks so that people can call for assistance if necessary.



Pictured is a wall. On the wall is a call button and speaker for people to call for help. To the left of the call box is a fire extinguisher box. Both the call box and fire extinguisher are at a height that is easy for someone in a wheelchair to use.

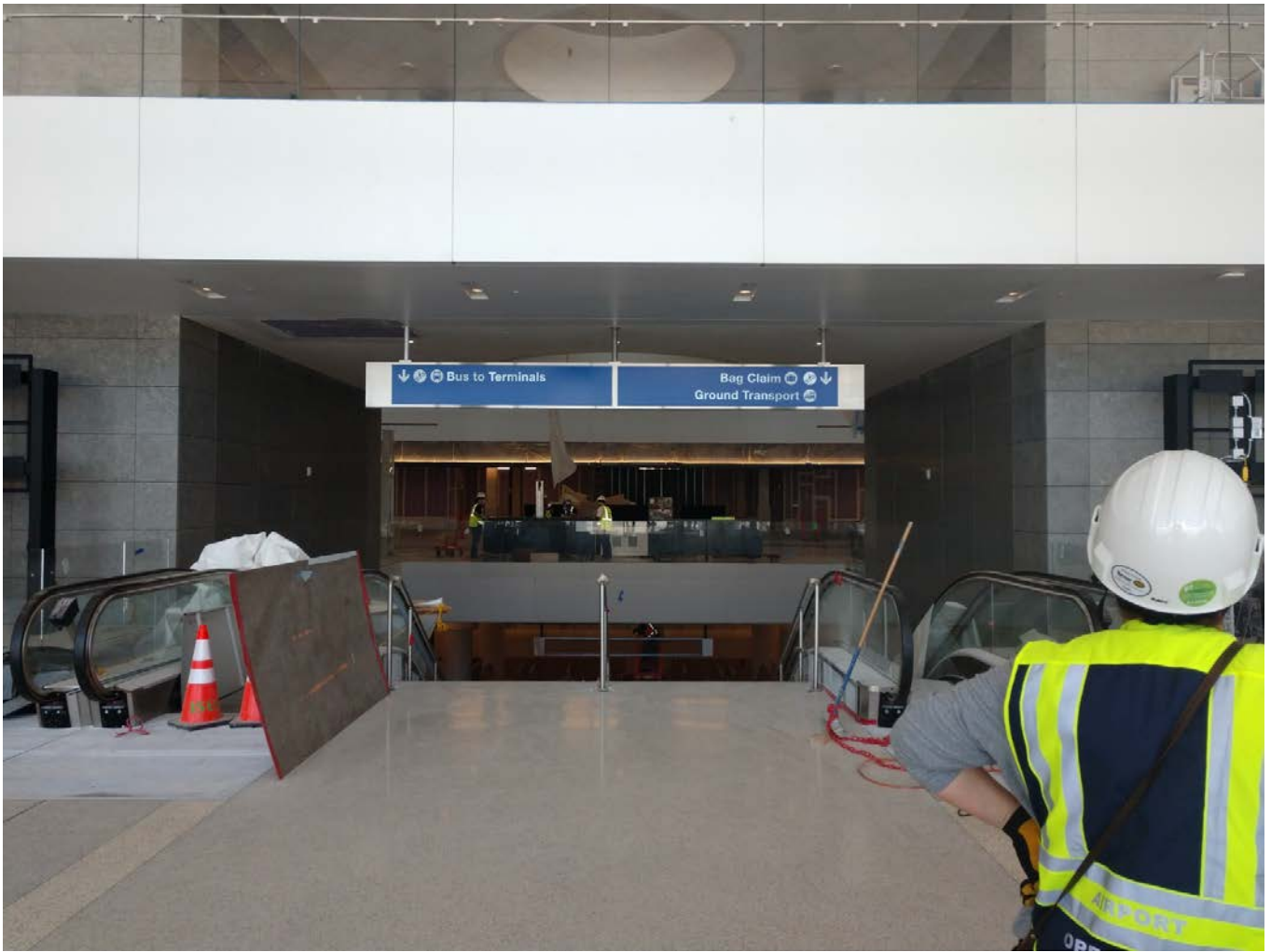


Pictured are two escalators and support beams in the center between the escalators. Escalators are under construction as are the beams and surrounding area is wrapped waiting for work to be done.

Pictured above are escalators that will lead from the walkway to the main hall of the Midfield Concourse. There are elevators for use by persons in wheelchairs.

We asked if the elevators will be able to accommodate ADA Carts, but no clear answer was provided.

The importance of having elevators accommodate ADA Carts with passengers was brought up to the project planners' attention prior to the start of construction.



Pictured is a view from the main concourse looking at signage that directs arriving passengers to baggage claim, ground transportation and connecting terminals. Stairs are in the center with one escalator on either side of the stairs.

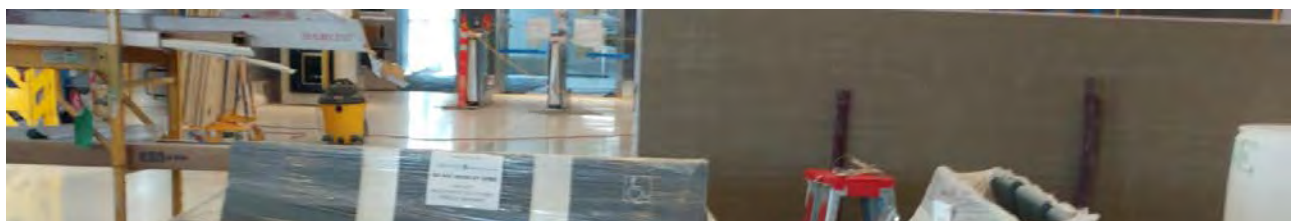


Pictured above are workers walking along the corridor which leads to gates. Overhead you can see the frame for a display board, and above that a passage way for arriving passengers going to customs. Part of the floor is covered by construction paper.

Once a person arrives in the main corridor, they can go left or right to their respective gates.



Pictured is a view of the gate corridor. There is seating to the right which is covered in plastic. There is a blue work cart and furniture gurney. The floor is carpeted in browns and grays.



Pictured is a row of three seats. The middle seat is marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA symbol). Behind is a second row of seats with the ISA on the right seat. All seats are wrapped in plastic.

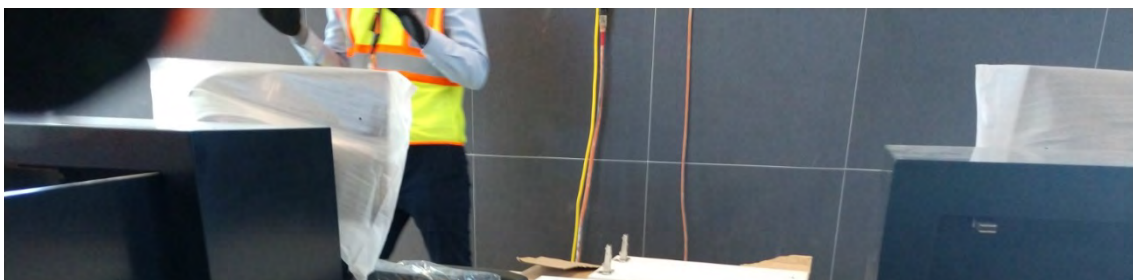
We did not have the ability to look at the furniture to see if it complied with DAAAC's recommendations on accessible seating since everything was wrapped. DAAAC will have the opportunity to look at the furniture during its onsite ADA walkthrough.



Pictured above is a workman kneeling at the left corner of the picture. Also shown is a check-in counter that is in the process of being installed. The picture shows a middle counter that can easily be approached by a wheelchair user and a higher counter on either side of the middle counter. A window and jet bridge are visible in the background.

Unlike at TBIT West where there was a failure to consult with the ADA Committee, until after the majority of work was completed, the check-in counters at the Midfield Concourse demonstrate what can be done when the airport consults with the disability community. The picture shows how under universal design, everybody benefits. The counters allow for wheelchair users to use a frontal approach and not have to look up at someone for assistance. The lower counter is deep enough to allow a wheelchair user to take advantage of the table for writing. (We did not measure the depth of the lower counter).

Below is a closeup view of a counter.



Close up view of a check-in counter.



Pictured is a door and sign to the right of the door stating the room is an adult changing room.



Pictured are boxes inside a white colored room. In the lower right is a grab bar and panic button box.

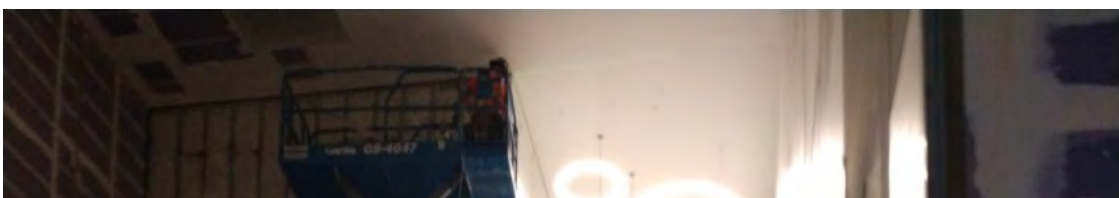
The Midfield Concourse will have one adult changing room in the departure level. The changing table and other amenities are not installed yet.

The adult changing room will have a panic box (see arrow). Like other panic boxes, calls go to airport police dispatch. Police dispatch is best equipped to send the level of assistance necessary to assist the caller.



Pictured above is the accessible stall in one of the restrooms. The walls are covered by wood. A grab bar is visible above the toilet. To the left is a panic box with button for emergency calls if needed.

Restrooms are still being worked on. The picture above shows an accessible stall. Notice the panic box and button (arrow).



Pictured is the escalator leading to immigration and customs.

Within the secured area, arriving passengers take an escalator to immigration and customs. Elevators are available for wheelchair users.

Conclusion:

As a result of the walk through of the Midfield Concourse on Monday, 10 August 2020, we have come to the following preliminary conclusions:

With the current stage of construction, it is not safe for the committee to take a tour of the facility at this time. However, conditions will be very different in the next 30-60 days.

The ADA Coordinator should evaluate conditions in 30-60 days to see if DAAAC members can safely take a pre-opening on site evaluation of the facility at that time.

The primary way of getting around the terminal at this time is by using stairs. The facility is not conducive to wheelchairs.

Work material is strewn throughout the terminal, making it impossible for wheelchairs to get passed.

Furnishings are wrapped or in boxes.

No equipment or furnishings are situated to see how they will function in an active terminal.

Emergency call boxes in accessible restrooms appear to be at around 15" .

There is one Adult changing room in the departure level. This complies with the minimum requirements of California State Law. The ADA Office believes that it would have been advisable to include one adult changing room at opposite ends of the terminal.

The Passenger Tunnel (PAX) leading from Bradley West to the Midfield Concourse is long. There are two moving walks to assist for part of the travel through the tunnel.

The ADA Office had expressed its concerns about the length of the tunnel prior to construction. The Office suggested that the tunnel should be widened to allow for two-way transportation of ADA passenger carts while allowing safe passage by pedestrians. Ideally, having a dedicated tunnel for carts would have been preferred. The Office was advised that the tunnel width was wide enough to accommodate passenger traffic and carts.

It appears there will be a heavy dependence on electronic messaging and information kiosks. The ADA Office is concerned that designers may have failed to consider the issues faced by persons with cognition issues, and travelers as they age. There needs to be a way to address the needs of people who will have difficulty using technology for information and wayfinding because of age and cognition.

It is important that signage be strategically situated that shows distances between different points along the passenger's journey.

As pointed out by the U. S. Census Bureau persons with disabilities are traveling more than ever. We believe this trend will continue to grow. The same holds true for older travelers. We mention this because of the believe there was a failure to fully consider the needs of these populations. We suspect there will be a higher demand for cart service than expected by the planners. If more carts are required than anticipated, how will they impact pedestrian traffic in the tunnels? Where will the carts be housed? How will adding carts impact traffic flow in the tunnels in the event of an emergency evacuation? (These are points for DAAAC to consider as they prepare for their walk through).

We leave the committee with this thought:

DURING THE NATURAL PROCESS OF AGING, FROM INFANCY TO DEATH, PEOPLE EXPERIENCE PERIODS OF VARYING ABILITY AND DISABILITY. BECAUSE OF HEREDITY, INCOMPLETE DEVELOPMENT, PREGNANCY, DISEASE AND, INEVITABLY OLD AGE, ALL PEOPLE WILL AT SOME TIME BE DISABLED.

A DISABILITY DOES NOT RESTRICT ONE'S ACTIVITIES OR CAPABILITIES UNTIL THE ENVIRONMENT POSES OBSTACLES. ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS COMBINE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS TO SEVERELY LIMIT THE ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PERPETRATE THE MYTH THAT DISABLED PEOPLE ARE INFERIOR, DEPENDENT, AND IN IN NEED OF CONSTANT CARE.

ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, ADMINISTRATORS, DESIGNERS AND OTHERS WHO MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN DECISIONS INADVERTENTLY CREATE BARRIERS. THE PHYSICAL ISOLATION RESULTING FROM SUCH BARRIERS HAS SEVERE SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES AND CONTRIBUTES TO MISCONCEPTIONS AND NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DISABLED WHICH FURTHER SEPARATES THEM FROM THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY.

Barrier Free Environment, Inc. Design for Disability. 1974. In Hamraie, Aimi, Building Access: Universal design and the politics of disability. University of Minnesota Press, 2017. [p. 146].

DISCLAIMER: This document was prepared by LAWA's ADA Office to address a disabilities related matter. It was not prepared by lawyers and is not intended to serve as legal advice.

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