Accessibility in Reader Services:
Obtaining a Reader Card at
The Huntington Library

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MLIS 2024

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Opportunity for Accessibility

In July 2021 the Reader Services department at The Huntington Library expanded their access policy to anyone over the age of 18 with an established research need that requires the use of Huntington collections.

With an expanded access policy, the library now caters to a more diverse population of patrons, some of whom historically have been underrepresented and marginalized within academia.

This project aimed to determine what services could be improved or employed to better serve Huntington researchers through an accessibility assessment of the online process users must undergo to obtain a reader card and the physical space of the special collections reading room.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Title III of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public accommodations to comply with basic nondiscrimination requirements that prohibit exclusion, segregation, and unequal treatment. This applies to physical spaces as well as provided services.

The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens aims to make their space accessible to all guests. The ADA is the basis for this project, but in order to create a welcoming and truly inclusive space institutions must strive to go beyond mere compliance.

Digital Assessment

I conducted manual testing for keyboard accessibility of the library's webpages a user must navigate in order to obtain a library card, and demonstrated my findings through a screen recorded walkthrough.

This assessment revealed that the website itself did not have many accessibility issues. However, it highlighted a lack of intentional space for readers with disabilities to request accommodations prior to visiting the library.

My solution was to create an accessibility accommodations libguide and request form.

Information included in this form is directed to specific library personnel, ensuring privacy for requestors.

I suggested the inclusion of relevant language and links to the resource throughout the library's website to make the libguide accessible to new and current users.

THE HUNTINGTON

THE HUNTINGTON / RESEARCH GUIDES / ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS / HOME

Accessibility Accommodations

Enter Search Words [Search]

Home

Accessibility At The Huntington

Service Animals

Bringing A Companion

Accommodations Request Form

LIBRARY INFORMATION

We're Here to Help

Email or call the library for assistance with your research or to inquire about library services.

Learn more about virtual library services.

Library Hours

Monday, Thursday, and Friday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday: 9 a.m.–7 p.m.

Closed weekends, **major holidays**, and other planned closures.

ACCESSIBILITY AT THE HUNTINGTON

The Huntington is committed to making its collections, buildings, programs, and services accessible for all visitors. For general information regarding accessibility at The Huntington, please see the institution's accessibility page.

The library seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for physical access, communications, or other needs to ensure that services, activities, and programs are available to individuals with disabilities. Please complete the Accommodations Request Form located in this guide and submit it no later than 14 days before your planned library visit. Your request will be addressed as expeditiously as possible.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require the Huntington Library to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The Huntington welcomes all visitors, including those assisted by a service animal. Visitors with service animals are permitted in all publicly accessible areas. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Huntington recognizes only dogs and miniature horses as Service Animals. These animals are specifically trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. Guests who use service animals must retain control of their animal at all times, and are required to keep them on a leash or harness while visiting. **Emotional support animals, dogs, and other pets are not recognized as service animals under the ADA and are not permitted at The Huntington.**

BRINGING A COMPANION

Individual staff assistance cannot always be provided in the library but patrons may bring necessary assistive devices and may be accompanied by a companion. As a reminder, patrons must submit an Aeon application and schedule a library orientation session to use the library. Please see the library's Apply for Access page for full instruction on obtaining a library card. **If you plan to bring a companion during your library visit, they must also submit an Aeon application and schedule an orientation appointment.**

Please fill out the Accommodations Request Form indicating that you will be working with a companion and library staff will be in contact to make proper arrangements.
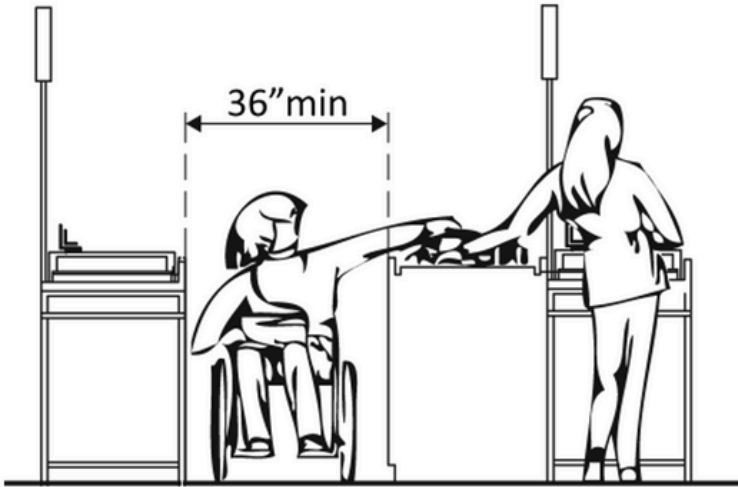
Physical Assessment

An adapted version of the ADA Checklist created by The Institute for Human Centered Design was used to conduct the assessment of the Ahmanson Reading Room where special collections materials are viewed by researchers.

Part of the assessment included extensive measuring, in line with ADA guidelines, of the routes throughout the room.

This revealed potential alterations to the room and accessible seating options.
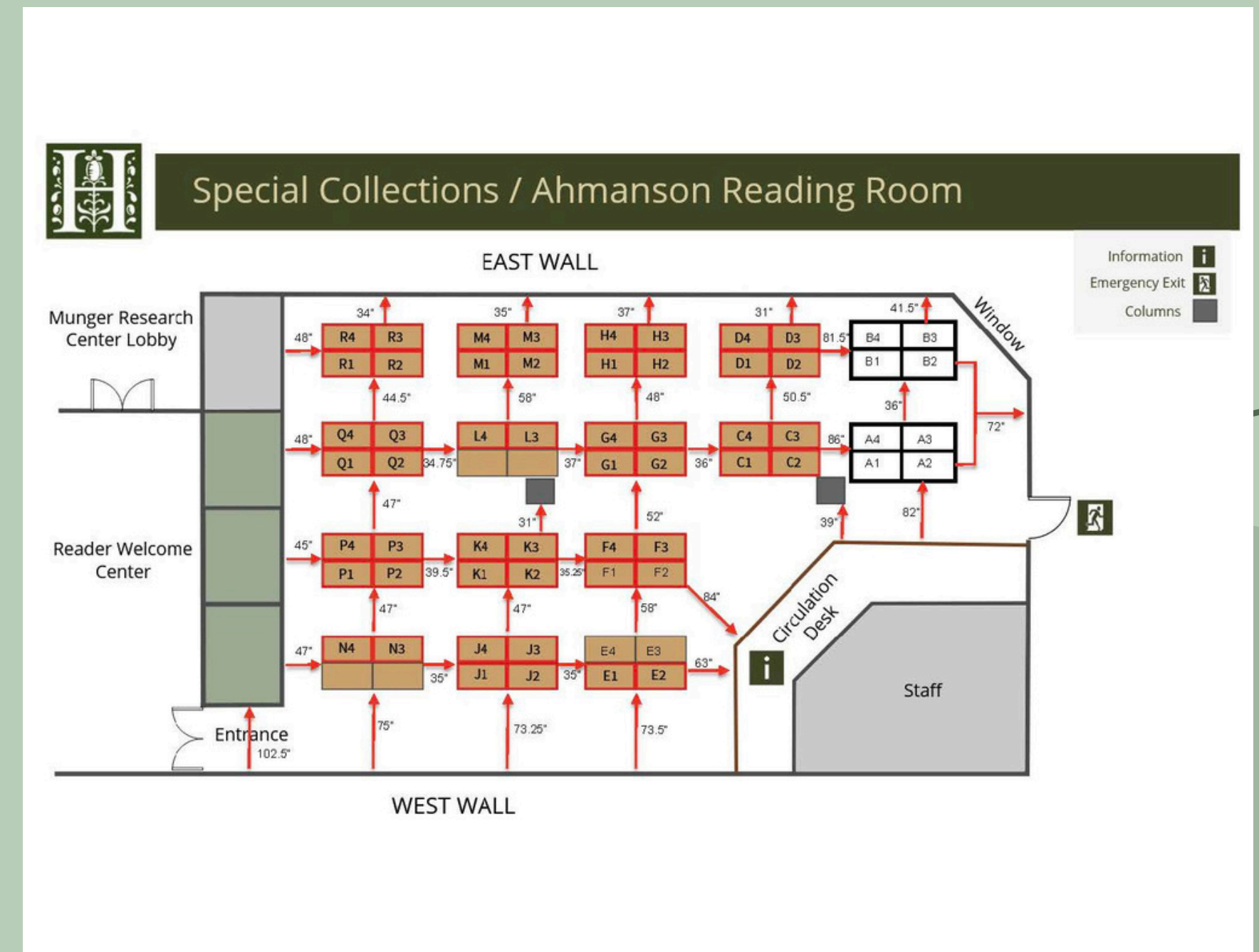
Summary of Recommendations

- Alterations to the Reading Room:
  - Designate accessible seating
  - Adjust of the height of the service desk
  - Potential use of the emergency door as an accessible entrance
- Implement Accessibility Accommodations libguide and request form
- Include appropriate language and links to the libguide throughout the library's website

Next Steps

This project opened the door to a wider conversation about accessibility at The Huntington Library.

Next steps include expanding the physical accessibility audit to other parts of the library, the creation of an accessibility team that conducts semi-regular audits, and receiving feedback from users on implemented recommendations.

Acknowledgements

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