

IN THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY OREGON

RESOLUTION AND ORDER NO.) **IN THE MATTER OF URGING THE**
) **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**
) **TO INCLUDE A RAMP IN THE FRONT**
) **ENTRANCE TO THE WAYNE LYMAN**
) **MORSE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE,**
) **EUGENE, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

WHEREAS, equal access to public facilities located within the boundaries of Lane County is a matter of critical concern to Lane County government, and

WHEREAS, the General Services Administration is in the process of designing a new Federal Courthouse to be built in Eugene, which lies within Lane County, and

WHEREAS, according to U.S. Census, 57,582 (over 17%) of our Lane County citizens age 5 or older are identified as having some form of disability, and

WHEREAS, in 1997 Eugene was named “most accessible city in the USA” by the 1997 Americans with Disabilities Act Oregon Celebration Committee, and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Eugene was named as one of the top ten most accessible cities by the National Organization on Disabilities, and

WHEREAS, citizens from all over the world travel to Lane County to witness how we have met our community’s high standard for access, and

WHEREAS, Lane County and the City of Eugene stand as a beacon of hope to people with disabilities as we continuously strive to meet and exceed the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and

WHEREAS, two of Lane County’s committees, the Lane County Commission on Children and Families and our Human Rights Advisory Committee have adopted resolutions and sent letters to the General Services Administration urging that the courthouse design include an access ramp for the front entrance of the new Federal Courthouse, and

WHEREAS, the General Services Administration has conducted two fact finding hearings and learned firsthand the need and public support for a front entrance ramp, and

**IN THE MATTER OF URGING THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TO INCLUDE
A RAMP IN THE FRONT ENTRANCE TO THE WAYNE LYMAN MORSE FEDERAL
COURTHOUSE, EUGENE, LANE COUNTY, OREGON**

WHEREAS, the General Services Administration has indicated that the new Eugene Federal Courthouse is to be a landmark public facility, which may be replicated in other cities in the United States of America, and

WHEREAS, in 1990, when the United States Congress enacted the Americans with Disability Act, they stated as one of four purposes of the act:

(3) To ensure that the Federal Government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this act on behalf of individuals with disabilities, (emphasis added) and

WHEREAS, it is time for the Federal Government to honor this commitment as actions speak louder than words, and

WHEREAS, we know from the practical experience of retro fitting our own facility rooms, it is far less expensive, far more aesthetically pleasing and vastly more functional to design access features from the beginning, rather than after the building is constructed, and

WHEREAS, we know this community and we know this Federal Courthouse will eventually have a front entrance ramp,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lane County Board of Commissioners urge the General Services Administration in the strongest possible manner that they include a front access ramp in the design of the Wayne Lyman Morse Federal Courthouse in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Lane County Board of Commissioners convey this resolution along with a letter substantially similar to the draft attached hereto.

DATED this ____ day of September 2003.

Peter Sorenson, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

IN THE MATTER OF URGING THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TO INCLUDE
A RAMP IN THE FRONT ENTRANCE TO THE WAYNE LYMAN MORSE FEDERAL
COURTHOUSE, EUGENE, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

September 4, 2003

Jon Kvistad
Regional Administrator
General Services Administration
400 15th Street SW
Auburn WA 98001

Re: Front Entrance Access Ramp – Wayne Lyman Morse Federal Courthouse
Eugene, Oregon

Mr. Kvistad:

As stated in the enclosed resolution adopted on September 10, 2003, Lane County Board of Commissioners urge you in the strongest possible manner to direct that the new Federal courthouse in Eugene be designed and constructed with a front entrance ramp. We also wish to supplement the resolution with the following additional considerations:

1. A ramp is important in order to comply with the intent and purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We note in section 12.101 B. Purpose of Americans with Disabilities Act, the following statement:

“To ensure that the Federal government plays a central role in enforcing standards established in this act on behalf of individuals with disabilities.”

This is an opportunity for the Federal government to show leadership, not minimal compliance with this law, granting our disabled community rights and privileges the rest of us enjoy on a daily basis.

2. There is complete community consensus that the Federal courthouse have a front access ramp. Eugene and Lane County are well known for their numerous public policy debates, often quite rancorous and often quite controversial. Here, in contrast to that, our entire community is united behind our intense desire that the courthouse be designed with the front ramp. We would point out that the Register Guard, the local major paper in our community has issued four editorials urging the installation of a front access ramp. We also note that officers in your own department have conducted two fact-finding hearings to overflow crowds on this issue. All this without a single word of disagreement.

3. We believe very strongly that our disability community deserves a Federal courthouse with a front access ramp. As stated in our resolution, over 17% of our citizens over age five may have a form of disability. In addition, we all know that any of us could be injured and become disabled. Installing this ramp is not just for the current disabled, but the potential that any of us could become disabled. This fact along with the reality

of an aging population simply means that a front entrance ramp is not an extra feature for a few citizens but a basic architectural feature for all of us.

4. We know this community well. We know that the Wayne Lyman Morse Federal Courthouse will have a ramp. If it is not designed and installed now, it will be installed at a later time. From our own experience, retro fitting our own facilities like Harris Hall and numerous workspaces, counters, bathrooms, etc., it is far more expensive to do it after the fact than before. In addition, retrofit facilities are never quite as functional as original designs nor or they as aesthetically pleasing.
5. Minimal compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act is not the standard applicable in Lane County and the City of Eugene. As put forth in our resolution, Eugene and Lane County are nationally recognized for their compliance above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Designing a Federal courthouse without such a ramp will not meet our community's standards.
6. We would also note that on several occasions, representatives of the General Services Administration have indicated that this Federal courthouse is to be a landmark feature and something the community can be very proud of. Unfortunately, if the General Services Administration proceeds without including a ramp, it will be very hard for our community to accept it and feel the pride your organization anticipates. Please

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construct a beautiful building that the entire community can embrace, support and
be proud of.

Before closing, we do want to note our appreciation to your agency for the two fact-finding
hearings that you have had. We believe that the testimony was quite compelling and if you
have tapes or transcripts, we urge you to personally review those so you get a feeling for
how strongly our community believes a front entrance ramp is critical to the success of this
project.

In conclusion, we urge you in the strongest possible manner to direct the architectural team
designing the Wayne Lyman Morse Federal Courthouse in Eugene, Oregon to revise the
design to include a front entrance ramp.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Sorenson, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

Bill Dwyer
Lane County Board of Commissioners

Bobby Green
Lane County Board of Commissioners

Anna Morrison
Lane County Board of Commissioners

cc: Oregon Congressional Delegation