

STOCKHOLM - A GRAND CITY FOR EVERYBODY



Photo: Göran Selstedt

By improving and adjusting walks and promenades, pavements, entrances and gates, outdoor lighting, playgrounds and public conveniences, we want to make the city and its amenities available to everybody. Flights of stairs and steps will have contrast markings and railings will be mounted. Comfortable benches with arm-rests will be provided and plants suitable for allergic persons will be set out.

The Project of Easy Access

The city of Stockholm has set a goal, to be achieved at the latest by 2010, to be the most easily accessible capital of the world. The Project of Easy Access plays an important part in reaching this goal. The gains in adapting Stockholm to meet the needs of disabled persons, thereby making it possible for them to participate fully in the social life of the city, are numerous. A society that extends a welcome to everybody to participate in the city's life, becomes a community that inspires all and sundry to care for her/his fellow-beings. Increased accessibility for disabled persons to points and places in the city also means ease-of-access for everybody.

The project of Easy Access started in January 1999. By resolution in the Stockholm City Real Estate and Traffic Committee 100 million Skr per year during 1999-2002 were earmarked to increase the accessibility within the area of responsibility of the Real Estate and Traffic Committee.

Recommendations of Action

Contact was established with all the City District administrations and organisations of disabled persons requesting them to point out suitable objects and corresponding actions in order to facilitate accessibility.

Instances of steps to be taken:

- Walks, promenades and cycleways
- Lifts, escalators and public conveniences
- Playgrounds; also those in parks
- Level differences, ramps
- Parkbenches
- Improvements in parks
- Railings and banisters
- The lowering of kerb-stones, zebra-crossings and traffic lights
- Flights of stairs, contrast markings on steps, etc

Outline of measures to be taken

A plan for the work during 1999-2002 has been drawn up for the Project of Easy Access together with a handicap-programme within the area of responsibility of the Committee and conforming with the city's programme for disabled persons.

Out-door surroundings and environment

In 1987 the Stockholm City Council adopted a "Programme for the adjustment of the out-door surroundings and environment for the benefit of disabled persons". The programme is now being revised and amplified. The disabled persons contribute to this through the representatives of their associations. The work consists of a survey of all elements and

objects in the out-door surroundings. The purpose is to improve designs in respect of accessibility for the disabled and at the same time to establish and adopt uniform standards for the whole city. The broad knowledge and experience the the organisations of disabled persons and the officials of the Administration possess, greatly facilitate this work.

The lowering of kerbstones and zebra-crossings

During the first year the activity has focused on attending to problems that had been recorded earlier. The lowering of kerb-stones at crossings is an example of this. "The Stockholm model" is, as far as the design goes, a compromise solution between the needs of the visually handicapped and wheelchair users.



Photo: Pernilla Johnni

Walks, Promenades and Pavements

The city district councils together with the organisations of disabled persons have started to record walks and promenades that are to be given priority. Along these walks a thorough stock-taking, as to accessibility, will be made. This will facilitate longterm planning of areas that connect to each other.

Toilets and Public Conveniences

Investigatory work together with the organisations of disabled persons and manufacturers has begun in order to ascertain the size and nature of furnishings and fixtures needed in the lavatories for the disabled.



Photo: Ingegerd Fors

Ramps

A commission has been assigned the task to take stock of existing ramps and to present technical suggestions in respect of ramps leading to entrances and doorways of premises used by the general public.



Photo: Ingegerd Forss

Parkbenches

People are happy to take a walk or stroll in the city, especially if there are places where they can rest, once in a while, during their walk. To meet these wishes different types of comfortable parkbenches - also one- and two-seaters with sturdy armrests - have been designed and manufactured, in cooperation as to design, with the manufacturers and the Real Estate and Traffic Committee's Disability Council.



Photo: Ingegerd Forss

In addition an armrest has been designed and developed in cooperation with the Real Estate and Traffic Committee's Disability Council. These armrests are to be fitted onto parkbenches already in use but still lacking this comfort.

Railings and Contrast Markings



Photo: Ingegerd Forss

Work to improve existing exterior flights of steps and ramps has commenced. Railings have been fitted and the first and last steps have been marked in differing colours.

Drains

A third-generation flag-stone for transporting rainwater from the drainpipes of the housefronts straight across the pavements to the gutters have been designed and developed by the Administration and installed for testing. These flagstones have been received positively by both wheelchair users and those visually impaired or handicapped. As of now this "City of Stockholm drain flag-stone" is to be used at all times when rebuilding, new construction, maintenance and restoration work is taking place.



Photo: Lennart Dannelind

Guided Passages

Those visually impaired or handicapped need perceptibly guided passages. Suitable tactile tiles are being developed.

Lighting

Work continues with substituting defective light fittings with models of a design that produce antidazzle and directional lighting in order to further easy-access and raise the level of accessibility.



Photo: Ingegerd Forss

Open-Air Cafés

Schemes and recommendations with general outlines for the design and arrangements of open-air cafés and outdoor eating spots have been presented in order to further increased accessibility.

Signs to replace the prohibited swing or oscillating ones, have also been developed.



Photo: Ingegerd Forss

Playgrounds



Photo: Göran Sehlstedt

In a number of playgrounds adaptations and adjustments to meet the needs of disabled persons are presently being carried out.

Bathing

Three bathing-places, one each in the southern, northern and central parts of the city are being adapted in order to be accessible for disabled persons too.

Cooperation

An intensified cooperation with SL (Stockholm Transport) has been initiated, aiming at, on the one hand, to install more lifts connecting with the underground system and on the other hand, to increase the accessibility at the feeder-bus stops.

A "Through-ticket project" is being planned in cooperation with Stockholm Transport, transportation service for the disabled (Swed: "färdtjänst") and two city district administrations in Södermalm.

Cooperation has also been started with Hammarby Seaside Town (Hammarby Sjöstad).

In-service staff training

A seminar about accessibility has been held for the officials of the authority and members of the board. On four occasions the participants have had to get about in wheel-chairs and with feigned impaired eyesight. There will be continuous training.

What makes the physical surroundings accessible?

For disabled persons:

- Differences in level are successfully overcome with ramps, escalators, lifts
- Thresholds and edges removed
- Ample widths applied
- Opportunities to rest available
- Parking lots adapted for persons with disabilities
- Spacious restrooms and toilets
- Hard level surfaces

For the visually handicapped:

- Effect of contrast between vertical and horizontal surfaces - colouring
- Marking of differences in level
- Tactile surfaces which alert and inform
- Reduced number of obstacles
- Improved possibilities for familiarizing oneself
- Information signboards
- Antidazzle lighting
- Magnetic loops
- Guided passages
- Information by cassette magazines about changes in the outdoor surroundings (e.g. in connection with limited access due to the occasional temporary land utilization, because of big events and functions)
- Security

For everybody else:

- Clear and legible information displays - symbols
- Non-allergic material and plants
- Good indoor climate
- Hearing loops in public meeting-halls

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