



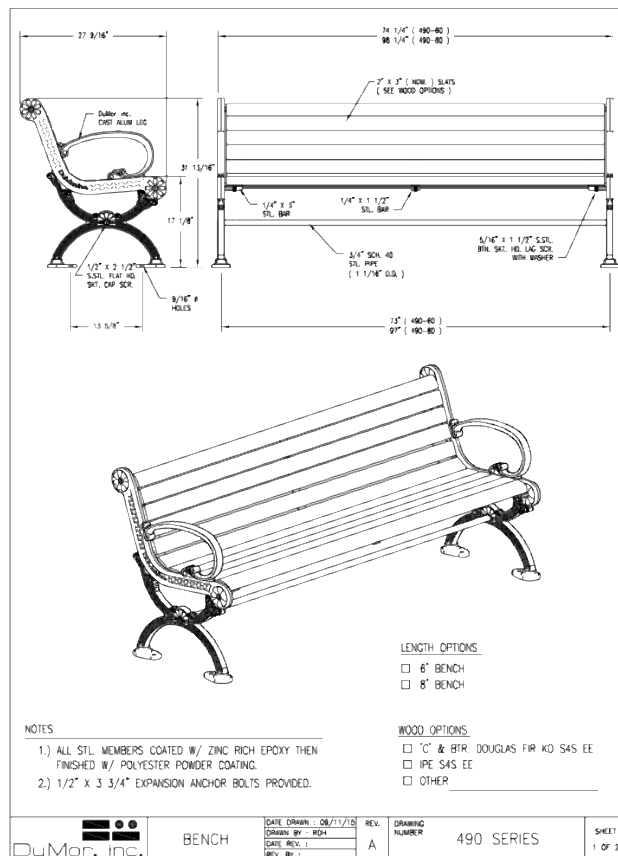
Occupational Therapy Accessibility Review of the Proposed Riverwalk Bench

City of Naperville & North Central College Department of Occupational Therapy

Purpose

This evaluation is part of the ongoing collaboration between the City of Naperville and the Department of Occupational Therapy at North Central College. The purpose of this review was to evaluate the proposed bench from an occupational therapy perspective, looking beyond ADA compliance to determine whether the design supports accessibility, independence, inclusion, and usability for individuals of all ages and abilities.

Preferred Bench



Following their review, the occupational therapy team identified and agree that the **Dumor Bench Model 490** is the preferred option over the standard Victor Stanley model.

The OT team Recommendations

1. Bench Placement

The location of the bench is as important as the bench itself. The OT team recommended that the bench be:

- Installed on a firm, level, and stable surface.
- Located along a smooth, accessible pathway that is free of tripping hazards.
- Positioned where there is adequate space for wheelchair maneuvering and caregiver assistance.
- Placed in areas with natural shade when possible.
- Installed in locations that are not prone to flooding.

2. Seat Design and Safety

The OT team recommended that the bench include:

- A firm, level seat surface that does not slope or sink inward, allowing individuals to safely sit down and stand up.
- Smooth wooden slats with minimal gaps to improve comfort and reduce the potential for finger pinching.
- A slip-resistant finish that remains safe during wet weather.
- Eliminate tripping hazards around the bench.

3. Armrests

The OT team noted that the armrests appear sturdy and appropriately positioned. They suggested that slightly wider armrests could further improve push-off during transfers for older adults and individuals with upper extremity weakness while continuing to meet current design guidelines.

4. Back Support

The OT team recommended maintaining stable back support and noted that additional lumbar support could improve comfort during prolonged sitting.

5. Wheelchair and Caregiver Accessibility

The OT team emphasized the importance of:

- Providing adequate adjacent space for wheelchair users without obstructing the pathway.
- Allowing sufficient space for caregivers to assist with transfers when needed.
- Supporting companion seating and inclusive use.

Occupational Therapy Perspective

The OT team discussed how the proposed bench would function for a variety of community members.

They noted that older adults and individuals with decreased strength or balance may have difficulty standing from a seat that slopes or sinks inward. Individuals with Parkinson's disease and those using

walkers or canes would benefit from a firm seat surface and sturdy armrests to assist with sit-to-stand transfers. Wheelchair users require adequate adjacent space for positioning and transfers without blocking the pedestrian pathway. The OT team also emphasized that sufficient space should be available for caregivers assisting individuals with mobility limitations.

Overall, The OT team agreed that the bench should promote comfort, independence, dignity, and participation while supporting use by people with **diverse physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities**.

Overall Recommendation

While the proposed design appears to meet accessibility guidelines, the OT team recommend careful attention to bench placement and the minor modifications outlined in this report to further enhance safety, accessibility, independence, and inclusion. Based on their evaluation, the occupational therapy team support the implementation of the **Dumor Bench Model 490** and identified it as the preferred.

These recommendations are intended to maximize usability and promote safe, independent participation for community members of all ages and abilities.

The Department of Occupational Therapy at North Central College appreciates the opportunity to continue collaborating with the City of Naperville on initiatives that promote accessible, inclusive, and community-centered public spaces.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Sincerely,

Dr. Makoni OTR/L, CHT, MA

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