



People Living with Disabilities

Activity-Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations

What are activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations?

Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations are connections that let people safely and easily walk, bike, or move actively using an assistive device to reach key locations, such as homes, workplaces, parks, grocery stores, schools, and other community amenities. Activity-friendly routes look different in every community, but can include sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, or access to transit stops.

Learn more about activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html>



Photo: Dr. Scott Crawford

Many communities are difficult or impossible to navigate without a car, either because there are no safe places to walk or move actively with assistive devices, because destinations are too far apart, or both. This makes it especially difficult for people living with disabilities to independently access the resources they need to thrive.

Land use interventions, such as building mixed-use places and reducing parking requirements, bring destinations closer together. Transportation interventions, such as building wide, level sidewalks and protected crosswalks, ensure that safe, accessible routes connect those destinations. Together, they create activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations that result in a more equitable, accessible landscape for people living with disabilities.

Living with a disability in a car-dependent country¹



1 in 3 people age 18-59 living with disabilities **rarely or seldom drive**.



4 in 5 people age 18-59 living with disabilities say it would be **difficult to find alternative transportation options** if they stopped driving.



Of people age 18-59 living with disabilities who do not drive, half experience **isolation or loss of enjoyment** as a result. Additionally, just over half report **feeling trapped** due to not driving.

Activity-friendly routes for people living with disabilities

Photos: Mike Gifford, NCSC, Vtrans, Oran Virivinyo, Andrew Justus, PDX



Curb cuts provide access to sidewalks for people who use walkers, wheelchairs, or prosthetics, with **tactile paving** for people living with blindness.



Smooth, maintained sidewalks are easier to navigate for people using walkers, wheelchairs, or prosthetics than bumpy brick pavement.



Signage with high-contrast colors is more legible to people living with partial blindness or colorblindness.



Crosswalk timing should ensure that people living with mobility disabilities can safely cross at their own pace without rushing.



Pedestrian-scale lighting helps people living with partial blindness to navigate and allows members of the Deaf community to communicate using sign language.



Wide sidewalks provide more space for members of the Deaf community to form conversation circles.

As many as 1 in 4 adults in the United States live with some kind of disability.² This includes people living with partial or complete blindness, members of the Deaf community, and people who use wheelchairs, walkers, prosthetics, white canes, or other assistive devices to get around.

Activity-friendly routes must be designed with and for people living with disabilities by practicing universal design. **Universal design** means designing for disability not as a special characteristic of a small group, but rather recognizing disability as an ordinary experience that impacts many people at various points in their lives.³ Universally designed streets are easy to understand and navigate for people of all ages and abilities. Information about how to use and navigate the space is communicated clearly through multiple means, such as through a combination of visuals, sounds, and touch. Crucially, universal design does not provide “alternative accommodations” for people living with disabilities, but rather provides them with equitable access to and use of facilities wherever possible.

By practicing universal design as a matter of routine, activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations can dramatically improve independence, quality of life, and access to key services and resources for people living with disabilities.

CALL TO ACTION

Adopt a Complete Streets policy that ensures projects consider the needs of people living with disabilities as a matter of routine. Adopt street design guidance that emphasizes universal design to ensure people living with a variety of disabilities benefit from activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations. When planning and implementing activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations, ensure that people living with disabilities have a meaningful role in guiding priorities and design.

1. National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (2018) Transportation Needs and Assessment: Survey of Older Adults, People Living with Disabilities, and Caregivers. Available from: https://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/KRC-nadtc-Survey-Report-120718-FINAL_for-web508.pdf.

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) Disability Impacts All of Us. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>.

3. Art Beyond Sight (2014) Universal Design Principles and Guidelines. Available from: <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/dic/module-4-museum-access-accessible-physical-space/universal-design-principles-and-guidelines/>.

Icons courtesy of Tucker FitzGerald and James Keuning of the Noun project.