Accessibility Considerations for Urban Planning

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Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)
MOPD Mission and Services

- Goal: Chicago as the most accessible city in the nation
- Opportunity and inclusion
- Key Services
  - Independent Living
  - Disability Awareness/Outreach
  - Policy
  - Compliance
Who is the Disability Community?
Population 18 to 64 years (Chicago 2010 Census)

- 1.8 Million adults age 18 to 64 in the City of Chicago
- 165,926 or 9.2% have a disability
Numbers by Disability

- 21,690 or 1.2% have a hearing difficulty
- 29,763 or 1.7% have a vision difficulty
- 71,923 or 4.0% have a cognitive difficulty
- 91,948 or 5.1% have a ambulatory difficulty
Key Disability Rights Legislation

- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
Pedestrian Accessibility

- What do the laws require?
Key Legislation

- **Architectural Barriers Act of 1968**
  - First law passed by Congress to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities
  - Covers facilities built, altered or leased with federal funds
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Broad anti-discrimination covering any entity receiving federal funds.

- It addresses:
  - Programs, services benefits
  - Employment and education protections
  - Accessibility requirements for federally funded projects
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

- Most sweeping civil rights law covering public and private and public sectors:
  - I. Employment
  - II. Government programs and services
    - Streets and Sidewalks and Public Transit
  - III. Public Accommodations
  - IV. Telecommunications
Public Rights of Way

- ADA covers new constructed or altered public streets and sidewalks
- If federally funded, the ABA and 504 also apply
- Addresses accessibility of those with mobility impairments or use of mobility devices
New Public Rights of Way Requirements Propose to Cover:

- Sidewalks, crossings, curb ramps
- Detectable warning surfaces
- Parking
- Pedestrian signals (where route is non-linear/roundabout)
- Transit stops/access to shelters
- Street furniture in the public way
What are the Challenges People with Physical Disabilities Face?

- **Issue:** Physical access
- **What’s important?**
  - Accessing sidewalks
  - Deploy vehicle lifts onto sidewalks
  - Access for existing and temporary paths of travel, surface material, slopes
What are the Challenges People with Blind/Low Vision Face?

- **Issue:** navigation by senses other than sight

- **What’s important?**
  - Tactile domes
  - Audible signals
  - Traffic cues
  - Detectable Warnings
  - Color contrast
What are the Challenges People who are Deaf Face?

- **Issue:** cannot hear audible signals

- **What’s important?**
  - Instructions must be visual
City of Chicago Curbramp Project

- Important Because:
  - It’s the law as of January 26, 1992 (“Program Access” applies if built before 1992)
  - Allows people using wheelchairs to safely transition from sidewalk to street
  - Provides safety cues for blind/low vision via tactile domes
Chicago Curbramp Compliance Project

- Set out:
  - New Directives regarding compliance
  - New designs given site constraints
  - Quality Control, Quality Assurance
  - 10M Priority Areas for high use areas
  - Advisory Committee established
    - Set priorities and monitors progress
Key Required Features of compliant curbramps:

- **Slope**
- **Transition** *(from street to sidewalk)*
- **Tiles with truncated domes** for cane and foot detection
- **Color Contrast** warning those with low vision
Curb Ramps Features
Alternative Curbramp Design

- Curbramp design
Curbramps Required When:

- Program Access is Needed
- Sidewalk altered/replaced
- Adjacent street torn up due to:
  - Road resurfacing
  - Water, sewer cable lines
  - Streetscaping
  - Bridge work
  - Other construction
Curbramp Compliance Project

- Challenges:
  - Costs
  - Vaults
  - Site impracticality
  - Quality materials/Tiles
City of Chicago Accessible Infrastructure Initiatives
Accessibility Initiatives in Chicago

- Blind community input
- Scaffolding requirements address:
  - Protruding objects
  - Cane detection
Accessibility Initiatives in Chicago

Sidewalk Café
Requirements:

- Table Height and clear floor space
- 36” Routes
- 6’ boundary from barrier to City property
- Protruding or hanging objects
- Service Animals allowed
Streetscaping and Furniture Placement can impact parking with vehicle ramps
Pedestrian Access Committee Issues

- Bloomingdale Trail (606) and Parklets
Pedestrian Access Committee Issues

- Audible Pedestrian Signals –
- What type and where?
Diagonal Crosswalk
Diagonal Crosswalk Considerations

- Crosswalk visibility
- Audible cues for diagonal crossing
- Timing to cross for slow walkers
- Using a guide dog
Public Transportation accessibility

- Low floor ramps on all CTA busses
- 69% of rail stations now accessible
- Use of “gap fillers” to assist wheelchair users on and off
- Audio/Visual stop Announcements (in all busses and some rail trains)
Accessibility Features

- Public Transit Audio Visual Announcements
Bus Rapid Transit

- Considerations:
  - Audible crossing signals
  - Light timing
  - Level boarding with no gaps
  - Detectable warnings on platform
  - Accessible fare machines
Protected Bike Lane Access Issues

Van Ramp deployment into bike lane

Wheelchairs must travel in bike lane to access curb ramp/sidewalk

Safety for cyclers and wheelchairs
Pedestrian Access Issues

- Protected Bike Lanes and access
Questions and Answers
Thank You!

- Contact Information
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- Questions?