

## 11 Tips for Getting it Right



# Introduction

At Toole Design Group, we're working to embrace a new approach to transportation planning and design by placing [empathy, equity, and ethics](#) at the center of our work. Being more deliberate about engaging people that have been historically underrepresented in street planning and design processes is an important part of that effort.

» **People with disabilities are among those who have often been left out.** «

This resource synthesizes some of the key lessons we've learned about engaging people with disabilities. It is divided into two sections:

- 1** An overview of why it is essential to engage people with disabilities in street planning and design processes, and
- 2** Basic principles and **eleven practical tips** for engaging people with disabilities.

## ELEVEN PRACTICAL TIPS FOR ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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## Why Engage People with Disabilities?

The following points are intended to help agency staff and citizens make the case for why it is important to dedicate the necessary time and resources to meaningfully engage people with disabilities in street planning and design processes.

### Disability Rights are Human Rights

The decisions that come out of street planning and design processes affect the lives and well-being of people with disabilities just as much as other people, and frequently more so. As planners and designers, we have both legal and ethical obligations to people with disabilities. Our legal obligations relate, in large part, to non-discrimination. (See textbox at right.) Our ethical obligations go beyond this and include our duty to expand opportunity for all people and to specifically plan and design for the needs of the disadvantaged—this includes meaningful engagement of people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

### To Serve People with Disabilities is to Serve the Whole Community

Approximately 26 percent of the population (one in four people) have a long-term disability, including disabilities that affect vision, hearing, mobility, and cognition.<sup>2</sup> In addition, almost every person will have a disability at some point in their lives (e.g., an injury that requires the use of crutches or a sling). This is a fact that many of us ignore because it is a reminder of our own limitations and mortality. Recognizing and acknowledging the universality of disability is one way for us to connect with, and take seriously, the needs of people who have disabilities—even when we do not currently have a disability ourselves.

**The ADA turned 30 on July 26, 2020.**

## Legal Requirements in the United States

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 requires city governments to ensure that all of their programs, services, and activities are accessible to people with disabilities, including any activities related to street design and planning processes. Title II also requires that the city ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that city governments must provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services for people with disabilities (e.g., qualified interpreters, notetakers, computer-aided transcription services, assistive listening systems, written materials, audio recordings, large print, and Brailled materials) to ensure that individuals with disabilities will be able to participate. In addition, electronic content created or procured by the federal government must follow Section 508 standards. Many states, metropolitan planning agencies (MPOs), and local communities have also adopted Section 508 standards for their own electronic documents.

—Adapted from ADA.gov

<sup>1</sup> Although the specific Code of Ethics varies by profession, this sentence is paraphrased from the American Institute for City Planners Code of Ethics (<https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/>). Engineers have similar ethical clauses in professional codes (e.g., ASCE Code of Ethics: <https://www.asce.org/code-of-ethics/>)

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see these resources provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Prevalence of Disabilities and Health Care Access by Disability Status Type Among Adults—United States, 2016
- Disability Impacts All of Us



## Avoid relying on the following shortcuts

Transportation professionals often face time and budget pressures, which create the need to find efficiencies in our work. This is especially true now, with COVID-19 placing increasing pressure on community budgets and priorities.

Common efficiencies or short cuts that can lead to poor outcomes for people with disabilities include:

### Looking No Further than the Standards

One short cut is believing that everything we need to know and do is captured in existing standards and guidelines. Planners, designers, and engineers are required to follow national, state/provincial, and/or local standards and need a detailed knowledge of these requirements. However, simply following industry standards is unlikely to result in plans and designs that truly address the needs and interests of the full spectrum of people with disabilities. There are several reasons for this:

- In existing standards, the emphasis is on minimum requirements, and doing the minimum may not be desirable or ethical in any given situation. This is especially true in cases where there is the capacity to do more. For example, the minimum ADA standard for sidewalk width is 3 feet, which is not wide enough to enable two people using wheelchairs to pass each other. If there is sufficient room in the public right of way to build a wider sidewalk, then a wider sidewalk should be built.<sup>3</sup>
- Existing standards provide more guidance on some types of disabilities and less guidance on others. For example, roadway design manuals often include considerable detail on how to accommodate people in wheelchairs. However, guidance on accommodating people with hearing and vision disabilities is relatively limited, and guidance on accommodating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is virtually non-existent.



Figure 1. Toole Design helped develop this FHWA document on designing shared streets that are accessible to people with vision disabilities. It recommends additional next steps, including design guidance and standards.

- Universal design standards don't exist for many things that impact accessibility, including designs that are growing in popularity, such as separated bike lanes and shared streets. Toole Design authored a study for the US Highway Administration on Accessible Shared Streets, and acknowledge that further work is needed to establish design guidance and standards at the Federal level (Figure 1).

<sup>3</sup> In the United States, the Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right of Way (Proposed PROWAG) requires a minimum sidewalk width of 4 feet but has not yet been adopted at the federal level. Both the ADA Standards and the Proposed PROWAG require passing spaces every 200 feet (60m) on sidewalks that are less than 5 feet (1.5m) wide.



**While empathy and intuition are incredible powers worth cultivating, they are no substitute for actual lived experience.**

## Trusting Our Own Intuition as a Proxy for the Perspectives of People with Disabilities

Another shortcut is thinking we can intuit the needs and interests of people with disabilities. We might have had a disability ourselves or have a family member or friend who has one. Or we might be tempted to think that our efforts to be empathetic in our planning and engineering work mean we can accurately intuit the needs of the public we seek to serve. While empathy and intuition are incredible powers worth cultivating, they are no substitute for actual lived experience.

Our perception of just about anything invariably includes unconscious gaps and biases. For example, we tend to focus on the disabilities we can see. As a result, in our mind's eye, a person with a vision disability might look like a person with a cane or a guide dog, even though many people with vision disabilities do not use canes or guide dogs.

We may also make false assumptions about the types of plans and designs people with disabilities may use or be impacted by. For example, we may think that it's not important to consult with people who have disabilities about bike lanes or bike networks because we believe people with disabilities do not ride bikes. However, people with disabilities are not only impacted by bike lanes, but they are also actual users (Figure 2). Plans and designs should take this into account.

## Overlooking the Costs of Skipping this Work

When we fail to engage people with disabilities in street planning and design processes, we miss out on the benefits of their participation. These benefits include better plans and designs and, ultimately, a built environment that better serves our community and makes it possible for everyone to fully participate and contribute. Skipping this type of engagement can also mean costs related to expensive post-construction retrofits, lawsuits, and inefficiencies. For example, it may be cheaper to enable people with disabilities to use public transit by making bus stops accessible than to continue providing more expensive paratransit service. We also need to consider the human and financial costs to people with disabilities and to our larger society when streets are inaccessible. An inaccessible street can deprive a person with a disability of opportunities for work, healthcare, education, recreation, and social interaction that undermine their quality of life and deprive us of their contributions.



Figure 2. This guide by the UK non-profit Wheels for Wellbeing provides guidance on designing inclusive bicycle facilities and recognizing people with disabilities as bicyclists.

# How to Engage People with Disabilities

This section includes basic principles and practical tips for engaging people with disabilities in street planning and design processes.

## Basic Principles

### Aim for engagement, not just accessibility

People with disabilities can and should be included in planning and design processes at all phases of a project. At a minimum, meetings and online materials must be accessible to people with disabilities. This is a legal requirement. However, “engaging” people with disabilities involves going beyond the baseline. It means proactively reaching out to people with disabilities to understand their experiences, solicit their input, and involve them in decisions.

### Engage people with different types of disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities

There are many different types of disabilities and many ways of living with disability. For instance, in the category of people with vision disabilities, there are people with reduced visual acuity, peripheral field loss, central field loss, total vision loss, night blindness, and color blindness, to name

just the major subcategories. In addition, some people with vision disabilities use a cane (of which there are several types), some use a guide dog, and some rely on a human escort. Others may use no specialized mobility aids at all. Also, income, race/ethnicity, gender, neighborhood context and other attributes influence the experience of disability. Street plans and designs need to account for this diversity. The best way to ensure this is by proactively engaging people with a range of disabilities, coping strategies, and backgrounds in street planning and design processes, and by engaging people or organizations that have a deep familiarity with this diversity and can offer their expertise. It's also important to be aware that not everyone with a disability is willing to acknowledge that they have one. This may be especially true for older adults, who may be inclined to interpret their disabilities through the lens of age, making it all the more important to reach out to groups that represent older adults as means of understanding the accessibility challenges older adults face.



Figure 3. Toole Design staff led a series of stakeholder workshops for the FHWA Innovative Street Design and Accessibility project. A key goal was to gain insights from people with a range of disabilities.

## Engage people with disabilities throughout the entire process

People with disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities should be engaged throughout the transportation planning, design, and implementation process. They should be involved in crafting the project vision and goals, evaluating existing conditions, identifying and prioritizing alternatives, reviewing designs, and evaluating outcomes. Some of these steps are highlighted in greater detail below.

## Allow enough time and budget

Engaging people with disabilities is not something that can be done at the last minute or cheaply. You need to plan ahead and ensure that your budget will enable you to accommodate people with disabilities as part of the process. Potential costs including paying for interpretation services (American Sign Language, Deaf-Blind, CART<sup>4</sup>), and paying for materials that are accessible to people with vision disabilities, such as websites and documents that can be read by a screen reader, braille documents, or tactile graphics.

## Use inclusive language and imagery

As planners and designers, our choice of words, and the way we portray (or fail to portray) people in our work, can send a powerful signal about who our plans and designs are for and how we think about them. When referring to people with disabilities, it is generally recommended to use “people first” language, e.g., “a person who is deaf” not “deaf person.” In the United States, the term “disability” is also generally preferred over the terms “handicap” or “impairment.” For example, it’s better to say “mobility disability” and “vision disability” than “mobility handicap” or “vision impairment.” Imagery also matters. Showing images of people with disabilities in the materials that are developed for a project can help convey that people with disabilities are valued and encouraged to participate, and that the process and its outcomes are designed to serve their needs.

## Key Stakeholders for Accessibility Issues

### For people with vision disabilities

- Orientation and Mobility Specialists
- National Federation for the Blind ([click here](#) for state and local affiliates)
- American Council of the Blind ([click here](#) for state affiliates)
- Canadian Federation of the Blind ([click here](#) for affiliates)
- Guide dog user groups

### For people with hearing disabilities

- National Association of the Deaf ([click here](#) for state affiliates)
- Hearing Loss Association of America ([click here](#) for local chapters)
- Canadian Association of the Deaf ([click here](#) for affiliates)

### For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

- Arc ([click here](#) for local chapters)
- American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)—[click here](#) for local chapters.
- People First of Canada ([click here](#) for affiliates)

### With an enhanced focus on accessibility

- AARP ([click here](#) for local chapters)
- Council of Canadians with Disabilities ([click here](#) for affiliates)
- Senior centers/senior groups

Additional local organizations specializing in support and services for people with disabilities, or communities or demographics that include high numbers of people with disabilities, exist in most places and should be involved in street planning and design processes.



# Practical Tips

## 1

### Lay the groundwork for engaging people with disabilities

As planners and designers, there are several steps we can take to lay the groundwork for planning and design processes that successfully engage people with disabilities. These steps can and should happen outside of specific projects. They include:

- Continually working to improve our knowledge of inclusive public participation processes and effective engagement of people with disabilities.
- Reviewing current planning practices and the roles that people with disabilities play in key decision-making. Tools such as the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation can be useful in this review. (See next page.)
- Incorporating best practices for inclusive public participation and engagement of people with disabilities in agency/organization standard procedures, e.g., by developing a public participation plan for the agency/organization.
- Developing a list of key community stakeholders who represent people with disabilities or have an enhanced focus on accessibility (see textbox on page 7).
- Cultivating ongoing relationships with key community stakeholders on accessibility issues.



Figure 4. People with disabilities are not only impacted by new street designs like separated bike lanes, they are also users of this infrastructure and should be engaged on both counts.

# IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

One tool that agencies and organizations can use to review and reflect on their current public participation processes is the [International Association for Public Participation's \(IAP2\) Spectrum of Public Participation](#).

The IAP2 Spectrum provides a matrix agencies and organizations can use to identify the roles that the public or particular groups can have in projects (from being informed to being decision-makers). Once a community has reflected on its past practices and their influence on decision-making, it will be better positioned to identify opportunities and set expectations for how people with disabilities can be included in future projects.

The IAP2 Spectrum is based on seven core principles, which can inform our thinking about how to engage people with disabilities:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Figure 5. Source: International Association for Public Participation



## 2

## Include engaging people with disabilities in the project scope, budget, and timeline

The parameters for engagement are set well before any meetings or outreach take place. The project scope, budget, and timeline are key determinants. If the project scope fails to highlight engagement of people with disabilities, or if the timeline and budget make real engagement infeasible, then it likely won't happen on the level it should. The project scope, budget, and timeline should:

- Clearly state that improving access for people with disabilities is a project goal.
- Include engagement of people with disabilities as an explicit element of the public outreach and engagement scope throughout the project.
- Allow enough time and resources (both financial and staff) for effective engagement of people with disabilities.
- Allow for flexibility based on input from people with disabilities and organizations that represent them.

## 3

## Develop a public participation plan that explicitly includes people with disabilities

A project-specific public participation plan can help clarify how people with disabilities will be included in a project. The plan should include:

- Goals and metrics for engaging people with disabilities.
- A strategy and timeline for soliciting input from people with disabilities at every stage in the process.
- Milestones for determining whether people with disabilities are being effectively engaged and changing course if something isn't working, e.g., reviewing participation levels after each public meeting or at regular intervals during an online survey.
- A methodology for evaluating how well a project engaged people with disabilities and lessons learned at project closeout. This should include gathering direct feedback from people with disabilities about how the process worked for them, which might be solicited through targeted surveys, focus groups, and interviews.



Figure 6. The decisions that come out of street planning and design processes affect the lives and well-being of people with disabilities just as much as other people, and frequently more so. This is why it's so important to proactively engage people with disabilities in planning and design processes.



## 4

## Involve people with disabilities in project oversight and decision-making

Truly engaging people with disabilities involves going beyond simply making it possible for them to participate. It requires involving them in decision-making. One practical way to do this is to establish a project oversight or steering committee that includes people with disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities. It is important, however, that the committee have real power and influence over the direction of the project. Otherwise, including people with disabilities in the committee amounts to tokenism.

## 5

## Involve people with disabilities in existing conditions analyses

Existing conditions analysis establishes the foundation for project recommendations. If this analysis fails to identify the barriers to access that people with different types of disabilities face, then those barriers are unlikely to be fully addressed by the project recommendations. When done thoroughly and completely, with a deliberate focus on the needs of people with disabilities, existing conditions analysis can help identify accessibility barriers that would not have been considered otherwise, resulting in project outcomes that better serve people with disabilities and the broader community. Best practices include:

- Consult directly with people with disabilities about existing conditions. It is important to understand the transportation needs of people with a range of disabilities as well as the barriers they face in the transportation system. What destinations do they need to access in their daily lives? What modes are they likely to use to get there? What barriers and other considerations shape their transportation decisions? How does this experience vary depending on disability type, income,

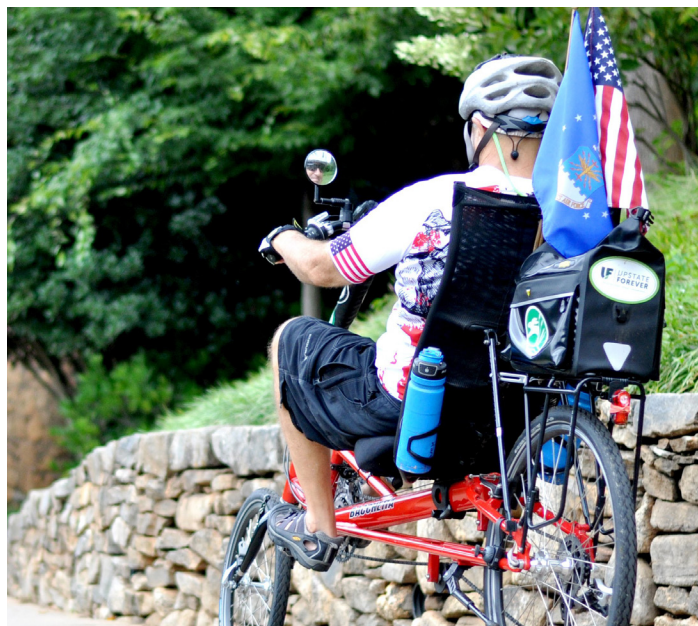


Figure 7. Cyclist using an adaptive bicycle.

race/ethnicity, gender, and other attributes? One of the best ways to collect the answers to these questions is to consult with people with disabilities directly.

- Conduct a walk or bike audit in the project area that includes people with a range of disabilities and their advocates. People with disabilities and their advocates are much more likely to notice accessibility barriers than people without disabilities. Observing these barriers in the field makes them more tangible and immediate to all involved, and this shared experience can help build consensus about what the needs are and possible ways of addressing them.
- Review data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other locally available sources to determine where people with disabilities are concentrated and where to focus planning and design efforts. A 2016 CDC study found that the likelihood of having any type of disability was three times higher for adults with incomes below the poverty level compared to adults with incomes twice the poverty level. This likelihood goes up to five times higher in the case of

mobility disabilities. At the same time, people in lower income neighborhoods are less likely to have access to a private car and more likely to rely on walking, bicycling, and public transportation, amplifying the need for these modes to be accessible.

- Understand that systems for establishing existing conditions and needs based on resident reporting are likely to be biased. It is common for agencies to rely on resident reporting systems, such as 311, to identify locations where there may be a safety or accessibility issue such as a heaved sidewalk or missing curb ramp. Overreliance on such systems for understanding existing conditions and needs is likely to result in a bias toward wealthier neighborhoods where people have more time, greater access to cell phones, and greater comfort and confidence engaging government institutions for their benefit. At the same time, it is likely to miss lower income neighborhoods where people with disabilities are more likely to be concentrated.

## 6

### Encourage people with disabilities to participate in the public participation process

- Reach out directly to people with disabilities and their advocates to invite them to participate in public participation activities.
- Advertise meetings and other public participation activities through organizations that serve people with disabilities (e.g. Easter Seals, Lighthouse for the Blind, etc.) and organizations that represent communities or demographics where people with disabilities are more prevalent.
- Establish a Section 508-compliant project website.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 8. Scenes from an accessible design workshop Toole Design assisted with in Vancouver, BC.

<sup>5</sup> In the United States, Section 508 guidance requires Federal agencies, and state agencies who choose to adopt this guidance, to provide accessible versions of all websites and materials provided digitally to the public. However, even in cases where Section 508 does not apply, most websites are still required to be accessible. See [Do Section 508 Accessibility Standards Apply to My Website?](#) for additional details.



## 7

## Choose locations and times for public outreach activities that are accessible to people with disabilities

- Hold public outreach activities, such as public meetings, focus groups, walkabouts, pop-up tabling and other in-person events in locations that are served by public transit and accessible to people with a range of disabilities. Ask yourself, could a person in a wheelchair access this location? How about a person with a vision, hearing, or cognitive disability?
- Make sure activities are scheduled at times when public transit and paratransit systems are operational and can be easily used for access to and from the activity.
- Make sure there are no physical barriers at the activity location that may impact a participant's ability to get to and move around the space freely. Arrange tables, chairs, and other objects to facilitate access by people who have mobility assistance devices, personal care devices, care team members, service animals, etc.
- Give people the option of participating in the meeting remotely or move the entire meeting online.

## 8

## Engage people with disabilities during all public outreach activities

Ask what special accommodations people may need to fully participate in meetings and other public outreach activities. Do not assume that no accommodations are needed unless you ask.

- Provide advance copies of meeting materials in accessible electronic formats, including detailed presentation notes with descriptions of images and graphics or "alt text." See *Provide Accessible Materials below for additional information.*
- Print enlarged copies of presentations for people with low vision, who may be able to read close up but not at a distance.
- Use tactile maps or 3-D models to help illustrate key design concepts (Figure 9). Allow enough time for review.
- Provide detailed verbal descriptions of visual elements that are important for understanding, such as presentation graphics or images.
- Provide and use microphones. All presenters should use a microphone, and microphones should be available for participants to use during group discussion periods.
- Hire interpreters for deaf and deaf-blind attendees.
- Speak slowly and clearly, using simple, direct language.
- Actively engage people with disabilities in planning processes. Ask them about their experiences navigating the built environment and their thoughts on plans and designs.

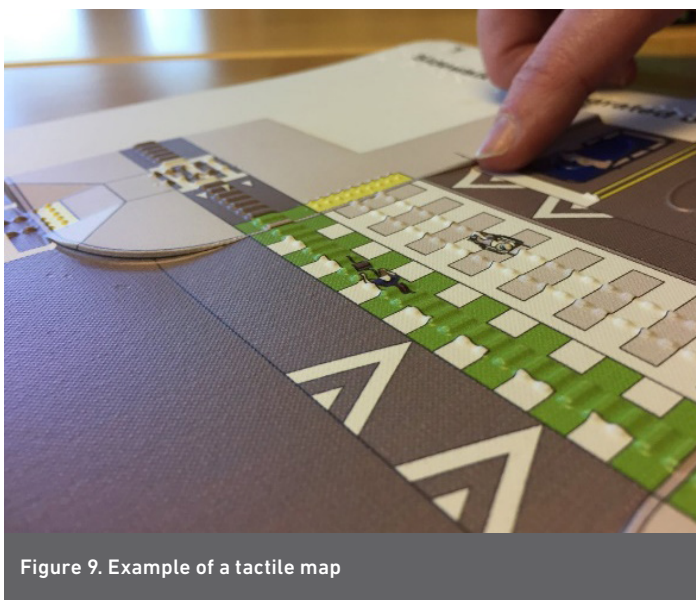


Figure 9. Example of a tactile map



## Accessible Virtual Meeting Best Practices

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most public engagement for transportation planning and design projects has shifted to online, virtual spaces. The growing comfort with these spaces among facilitators and participants presents an enormous opportunity to engage historically underrepresented groups. In the case of people with disabilities, common barriers such as travel to meetings, physical barriers within meeting spaces, and lack of access to interpreters, either do not apply or are more easily addressed. However, the shift to virtual spaces also comes with new barriers and challenges, including the need for Internet access, lack of familiarity with online engagement tools, and poor audio-visual quality.

**Rooted in Rights**, a Seattle-based non-profit organization that focuses on amplifying the voices of people with disabilities, recently released two best-practice resources on accessible virtual meetings that address some of these challenges. The guidance considers accommodations for people with vision, hearing, and intellectual and developmental disabilities in online meeting spaces.

- “**Make Your Video Calls Accessible**” produced in partnership with King County: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrc/wtd/capital-projects/active/coal-creek-sewer-upgrade.aspx>
- “**How to Make Your Virtual Meetings and Events Accessible to the Disability Community**” <https://rootedinrights.org/how-to-make-your-virtual-meetings-and-events-accessible-to-the-disability-community/>



Figure 10. Toole Design organized an “accessibility walk shop” for the Washington, DC-area chapter of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professions. The walkshop was an opportunity for planners and designers from across the region to hear the perspectives of people with disabilities and build their understanding of accessibility challenges.

## 9

## Provide accessible materials

- Use plain language in written materials. Avoid jargon.
- Make sure that electronic documents can be read by screen readers. This is critical for materials that have complicated layouts. Flow logic and text hierarchy checks in Adobe Acrobat are great first steps for checking not only if a document is screen-reader compliant, but also that it makes sense when read through a screen reader.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 11. Toole Design Graphic Design Manager (and contributor to this resource guide) Shailah Handy with her daughter.

## 10

## Set up phone, online, and mail-back feedback opportunities

- Regardless of where and when public outreach activities are scheduled, or whether meetings are in-person or virtual, some people will not be able to attend due to scheduling conflicts and other reasons. To address this, planners and designers should provide feedback opportunities outside scheduled activities. Examples include online surveys and feedback forms sent by direct mail with pre-stamped envelopes. Individual interviews by phone may also be an effective strategy, particularly while physical distancing is required due to COVID-19.
- Encourage participants to share these feedback opportunities with their community contacts to expand the reach of meetings.

## 11

## Involve people with disabilities in post-construction evaluation

It is important to evaluate street designs post-construction to determine whether they are performing as intended and to identify any needed tweaks. It can be particularly helpful to involve people with disabilities in this work, since they are best positioned to identify accessibility barriers. Involving people with disabilities at this stage is particularly important for newer street designs, such as separated bike lanes and shared streets, since official guidance on how to make these designs accessible is limited.

<sup>6</sup> Additional resources on Adobe's steps and checks for accessible PDFs are available online from Adobe at <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html>.





**Figure 12. Toole Design developed the design for the Westlake Cycle Track in Seattle, WA, which includes accessibility features for people with vision disabilities. It's critical to engage people with disabilities in projects that involve innovative street designs like separated bike lanes.**

## Conclusion

On July 26, 1990, United States President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, a landmark civil rights law that made it illegal to discriminate against people because of disability. Today, 30 years later, the United States is a more accessible place for people with disabilities, but there's still much to do. A summary of Canadian laws related to accessibility [can be found here](#).

In the world of multimodal transportation, we need to do a better job of proactively engaging people with disabilities and other historically underrepresented groups in street planning and design processes. This Resource Guide shares some of what Toole Design has learned about engaging people with disabilities, but our practice continues evolving. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement are changing how we engage with people in substantive and equitable ways. Virtual meetings have become a necessity, and are likely to play a larger role after the pandemic is over, but bring their own unique challenges.

Fulfilling our ethical obligation to engage and seek input from the people our work impacts requires recognizing the barriers to participation different people face and working to overcome them. Planners and designers should look to their colleagues, advocates, and community members, including those with disabilities, to identify local needs and resources, and reflect on the successes and challenges of past engagement efforts.

This resource is not meant to be comprehensive. We hope it sparks a conversation about additional principles and strategies, or modifications to what we have suggested, especially as communities seek to better incorporate public health and racial and social-justice into planning efforts and design projects. If it does, then we look forward to connecting with you to continue the conversation.

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