



Port Authority's Values:

Equitable, Accessible, Safety

Overview

"Every transit rider is ultimately a pedestrian, walking at the very beginning or end of their commute. Therefore, pedestrian infrastructure improvements will positively impact users of all modes at some point in their trip." – PAAC First and Last Mile Program Plan

Sidewalk accessibility and pedestrian safety play a critical role in transit. Riders who walk to and from transit stops and stations need access to safe pedestrian connections, ideally on direct paths which maximize comfort. Pedestrian safety involves reducing conflicts between sidewalk users and road users. Improving pedestrian safety increases pedestrian access to destinations by making it easier to get to transit.

The U.S. Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities. This law mandates that all public accommodations must be accessible to persons with disabilities by providing equal access. Once installed, pedestrian facilities must also be maintained, or they will degrade to state where they cannot be used, losing their functionality and ADA-compliance.

Analysis

Transit agencies play a critical role in pedestrian accessibility and safety at and around transit stops. However, because they typically do not own the streets and roads along which pedestrian paths are located, they usually will have to coordinate municipal, county and state governments and other organizations to implement pedestrian improvements.

To best serve persons with disabilities and provide equal access for all, the infrastructure surrounding transit stops, and stations must be evaluated. New pedestrian facilities must meet ADA standards and existing pedestrian structures must be retrofitted with ramps and other accessible improvements. Amenities may include ADA-accessible ramps with detectable warning surfaces, such as truncated domes, at sidewalk intersections. These ramps provide access between the sidewalk and roadway for persons using wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, handcarts, strollers, or who generally have mobility issues. The detectable warning surface pattern serves as an indicator of an adjacent street to persons with visual impairments. Sidewalk and ramp improvements are also highly useful for all segments of the population, such as for deliveries, strollers, luggage, and other wheeled devices.

According to PennDOT's 2019 Pennsylvania Crash Facts & Statistics, Allegheny County had the second largest percentage of traffic-related fatalities after Philadelphia County. Installing certain traffic calming measures can help to reduce traffic accidents and fatalities by protecting pedestrians and reducing speed. Curb bump-outs and medians can help to slow the speed of vehicles as well as improved the pedestrian experience with shortened crossing distances. Curb bump-outs extend the sidewalk or curb into the parking lane, creating a pinch-point on the street. Medians are raised islands that separate opposing lanes of traffic and help to facilitate pedestrian crossing by slowing the speed of vehicles, improving pedestrian crossing visibility, providing a space for lighting, and decreasing crossing distances by splitting into two segments.

Peer Examples

Broward County, FL

In 2013, Florida's Department of Transportation launched a pedestrian and bicyclists awareness program called "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow." The program was created to educate the public on safety and includes road safety improvements, as well. 2021 marked the seventh year that Broward County's Sheriff's Office has participated in the program. Deputies in the sheriff's office engage in on-street education by informing motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians about traffic safety laws on County roads. The goal is to reduce the number of traffic crashes and fatalities involving pedestrians and bicyclists by educating the public.

New Brunswick, NJ

The New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety awarded the New Brunswick Police Department a grant to assist with a Street Smart NJ campaign. It includes increased patrols at high-volume crosswalks and intersections, high-visibility signage throughout the city, and community education within schools, churches, and community agencies. The campaign's goal is to further make streets safer for all ages and modalities while utilizing its 2012 City's Complete Streets Policy as a guide to making the city safer and more accessible for all modes of travel.

Chicago's RTA

Chicago's Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) launched the Access to Transit program in 2012. The program supports small-scale projects that improve pedestrians' and bicyclists' access to public transit. For certain project types, federal funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) is leveraged with RTA and local funding. Benefits for both local communities and the RTA system include increased transit ridership (reducing congestion and vehicle emissions), better first and last mile connections (making it safer and

easier for riders to access transit service), lower parking demand, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and support for walkable, transit-oriented development.

Level of Effort for Implementation: High

- o Construction and streetscaping would be required
- o Coordination with municipalities, PennDOT and private property owners

Resources

[U.S Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Transportation National Cooperative Highway Research](#)

[Program](#)

[UNC Highway Safety Research Center](#)

[Mineta Transportation Institute](#)

[Broward County, FL](#)

[City of New Brunswick, NJ](#)

[Regional Transportation Authority \(Chicago Area\)](#)