

Demographic statistics:

These statistics are drawn from a variety of sources including the American Community Survey, the Oregon Office of Disability and Health 2010 annual report, Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services, the Institute on Aging at PSU, and other sources.

The number of adults with disabilities in Multnomah County is 82,350 or 11.4% of the population. For the 65 years and over demographic in Multnomah County, the overall rate of disability is 40.6% (30,263), with the Hispanic population having the highest rate at 48%.

Approximately 10% of Portland/Multnomah County residents (all ages combined) use some kind of mobility device (wheelchair/scooter, walker, or cane), which equates to about 75,000 people.

Disability and poverty are highly correlated. People with disabilities experience poverty at twice the rate of their nondisabled peers. The combined average rate for all age groups is 27.4% for people with disabilities and 14.9% for the nondisabled population. The difference in the rate of poverty is most pronounced for people with disabilities in the 35 to 64 -year-old age group at 3.5 times the rate of the nondisabled population (33% v 9%). The young adults with disabilities demographic, age 18 to 34, has the highest rate of poverty at 37%.

Issues brought to the PCOD accessibility subcommittee:

Re: the parks system:

Playground equipment is inaccessible.

Restroom facilities, particularly temporary facilities for events, are often inaccessible.

Re: pedestrian infrastructure:

People with mobility impairments are often unable to safely reach transit, shopping or other services from their homes due to lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

Standard crossing signal duration is often insufficient for people with mobility impairments, including older adults.

Bicycle facilities, such as the cycle track along PSU on Broadway, can present significant safety issues for people with disabilities. Such facilities can also interfere with paratransit services and wheelchair modified vehicle parking.

Re: storm water/bio swales:

Certain designs that affect right side on-street parking can potentially disenfranchise anyone using a wheelchair modified vehicle.

Certain designs can be confusing or difficult to navigate for people with blindness or low vision. Some surface materials are better than others for those using a cane to navigate.

PCOD/ABE recommendations:**For pedestrian infrastructure:**

People with disabilities, including older adults, need safe routes to transit and services. This means that adequate sidewalks, lighting, and safe street crossings are essential. Benches and shaded areas to rest greatly increase usability for pedestrians with disabilities.

For wider street crossings, safe midpoint pedestrian islands/refuge zones are desirable for people with disabilities and older adults. Audible crossing signals also increase usability and safety for people with visual impairments and should be used whenever possible.

For parks:

Paved walking paths drastically increase usability of a park for people with disabilities and older adults.

Local nonprofit initiatives are seeking to address the inaccessibility of our playgrounds, but affirmative action by the Parks Bureau will be essential to meaningful widespread upgrading of our facilities. The Parks Bureau should partner with nonprofit initiatives such as Harper's Playground and Everybody Swings to upgrade our playground facilities to be inclusive of children, parents and grandparents with disabilities. Everybody Swings presents a relatively low-cost option for increasing accessibility of our playground equipment by adding an accessible swing option for children with severe mobility impairments.

Movies in the Park need to be captioned upon request whenever possible.

For storm water infrastructure:

We need to be mindful of the affect on people with disabilities, especially those using modified vehicles with ramps or lifts, when making changes to on-street parking amenities for storm water upgrades. Users of wheelchair vans virtually always exit their vehicle on the right side and a minimum of 4 feet of clear space is needed to safely exit the vehicle. A similar amount of space is needed for those who use walkers, regardless of vehicle modification.

Thought should be given to both the overall design and the choice of surface materials to minimize potential negative impact on folks with visual disabilities.

In general:

The number one problem for people with disabilities in Portland is the availability of accessible housing. While housing is admittedly not the focus of the infrastructure PEG, affordable accessible housing development is usually subsidized and often times that development is done in areas that have incomplete or inadequate pedestrian infrastructure connecting the housing with needed transit, shopping, and other services.