

DEFINING “WALKABILITY”

Urban planners have habitually used a 1,000 foot-radius circle (or larger) when designing urban neighborhoods, which has created problems for those of us who can only walk up to 50 feet comfortably. Jeff Speck’s 2018 book, *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*, advocates for practices such as changing city codes to allow new apartment buildings to provide their parking 1,000 feet away (28.5 school buses!), potentially creating more problems. In this issue, we tackle what if that planning circle had a **50 foot radius** instead.

Encourage New Members!

The larger our Alliance is, the more effectively we can advocate.

Invite friends and family to join!

Changes Needed to Urban Design Practices

The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) has just released an *AllAccess Toolkit* to support the implementation of Ontario’s Design of Public Spaces Standard (DoPS) to make public spaces accessible. The *All Access Toolkit* does an excellent job of outlining the range of urban design issues with accessibility implications. **Not surprisingly, though, there is no mention of distance or time standing as accessibility barriers.** Instead the mobility access issues that are addressed have to do with maneuverability for persons using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, or walkers.

In June 2019, Dorothy Riddle will be presenting again (with an influential urban designer, Rick Phillips) at the International Making Cities Livable conference on “A Healthy City for All.” The presentation will be titled “**50 Foot Circles – Empowering Persons with Hidden Mobility Disabilities in the City of Short Distances.**” This presentation will focus on elements missing from five of the aspects of public space design addressed in the *AllAccess Toolkit*: parking, stairs, paths of travel, outdoor eating spaces, and obtaining services.

Please email us your feedback on the questions below – do you agree? what is missing?

- Parking:** Should any movement to restrict car use and off-site/on-street parking be offset by requiring handicap parking spaces within 50 feet of services? Should on-site parking be required to provide handicap parking spaces within 50 feet of access to the building?
- Stairs:** Should flights of stairs be required to have landings, with seating (to rest), after seven stairs?
- Paths of travel:** Should seated rest areas be required at 50 feet intervals? Should signage indicating the *distance* to the destination be required (including in airports)?
- Outdoor eating spaces:** Should the seating be no more than 50 feet from the entrance to the area and from the location of food acquisition?
- Obtaining services:** Should at least one service counter be low enough for seated service, with a chair, and be monitored in order to provide such service? Should queuing situations have the option to take a number and be seated while waiting?

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