



# Bridging The Gap: Accessibility for All

Auld, Bailey, Harnois, Morris  
Longwood University - HONS 295



## Introduction

- The dictionary definition of a disability is “a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions.” This class explored the idea of Places as Text in the city of Pittsburgh.
- Our group decided to view the city through the lens of accessibility and disabilities. We sought to bridge the gap between a big city, Pittsburgh, and a small town, Farmville. We hope to provide awareness to disabilities in general, both physical and invisible.

## Pittsburgh

What we noticed:

- Talking crosswalks that vibrate when touched
- Detectable warning pavers in front of crosswalks
- Priority seating on public transportation
- Bus height can lower to accommodate the elderly and people with disabilities
- Free 24/7 crisis hotline (*Crisis Text Line*)
- *Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children*
- Demographics 2013-2017:
  - 9.9% of Pittsburghers under the age of 65 have a disability
  - Overall population: 301,048 (as of 2018)

**"...there is no one [specific] office/person designated as working on accessibility [in Farmville]."**

~ Jen Cox

Director of Local & Community Relations

## Commonalities

- Detectable warning pavers in front of crosswalks
- College centered areas

**“Disability Rights Pennsylvania protects and advocates for rights of people with disabilities so that they may live the lives they choose, free from abuse, neglect, discrimination, and segregation.”**

~ Mission Statement  
Disability Rights Pennsylvania

## Farmville

What we noticed:

- Longwood Disability Resources
- Crosswalks with visual cues on streets that have heavy foot traffic
- Demographics 2013-2017
  - 5.8% of Farmville citizens under the age of 65 have a disability
  - Overall population: 7,872 (as of 2018)

## Conclusions

- Disabilities are not only physical, they are invisible as well.
- There is a stigma in society regarding individuals with mental and physical disabilities that stems from ignorance. We believe this stigma needs to be challenged.
- While every individual has their own lens in which they see the world, those with a disability have unique life experiences that provide them with differing perspectives in which they see the world.
- Overall, Pittsburgh is more accommodating towards people with disabilities.

## Future Directions

- Study other cities including Washington D.C. and mid-sized cities to see if the size of the city affects the level of accessibility in the city.
- Crisis hotline poster: bridging the gap by bringing the poster found in Pittsburgh to campus for the benefit of students and Farmville citizens.

## References

- Mission & Vision Statement. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/what-we-do/mission-vision-statement/>.
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Pittsburgh city, Pennsylvania. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/pittsburghcitypennsylvania>.
- Cox, J. (2019, Oct 28). Personal interview.

## Evidence

