

## **DESCRIPTIVE TRANSCRIPT: Design with Disabled People Now Presentation by Alexa Vaughn-Brainard**

**2021 LAF Innovation + Leadership Symposium  
Day 2: June 17, 2021, 12pm-1:30pm PT**

This presentation is pre-recorded and streamed via Zoom on June 17, 2021. The Zoom platform includes a small window at the side, with the speaker (Alexa Vaughn-Brainard) and another small window with the ASL interpreter. The Zoom platform also includes a presentation of slides created by the speaker at center.

**Description of Alexa, in her Zoom window:** Alexa Vaughn-Brainard is a white woman, with predominantly Western European and Argentinean roots, born and living in Southern California. She has blue eyes, light pinkish skin, and long golden brown hair with bangs, darker at the roots and lighter brown at the ends, gently curling. She wears an emerald green top under a black blazer, with three dainty, layered gold necklaces at her collar bone. She has natural makeup with a muted pink lipstick, she appears happy to be here. She sits at her desk, relaxed, for her presentation. In the background is her living room with a white wall. To her right (viewer's left) is the edge of a gray couch with a Mexican-style blanket, a wooden side table with a vase and candle. Further behind that is a small mixed-sized black photo frame, a brown floor shelf with a record player and speakers on top of it, and hanging above is a small yarn tapestry in black and white colors. Behind her left side (viewer's right side) is a dragon tree in a basket pot, a piece of art showcasing plants painted like people on the wall in a brown frame, and the edge of a built-in wooden set of drawers.

### **[Beginning of presentation.]**

**Slide 1 Image Description:** The title slide is a famous black and white image of a protest that took place at UC Berkeley in the 1970s. There are disabled protestors chanting and holding protest signs. A large sign to the right stands out and reads (in handwriting): Every Body Needs Equal Access. Overlaid on top of the black and white image are the words: design with disabled people now, bold, white outlined text in the famous Helvetica font, which is crisp and reminiscent of protest typography. Helvetica is used as the font for the entire presentation. At the bottom in smaller white letters, reads: Alexa Vaughn-Brainard, 2020-2021 LAF Olmsted Fellow.

Alexa begins her presentation introduction in American Sign Language (ASL) with her own voiceover. Alexa: "Hello, my name is Alexa Vaughn-Brainard. I am a late-Deafened landscape designer. My work focuses on how to design with disabled people. I have lived my life adapting myself to the built environment, however, the built environment

has not adapted itself to me. Today, I'm here to tell you, enough is enough." (end signing and voice over, Alexa switches to voice): "We've waited long enough. The disabled community is tired of fighting the same battle for access, 30 years after the passage of the ADA and long before it. Now is the time to create a more accessible and inclusive public realm. Not 30 more years from now, but today."

**Slide 2 Image Description:** A text-only slide with white background and black Helvetica text, reads, a note on language: identity-first (underlined) Disabled people, Deaf people, Blind people, Autistic people, etc.

Alexa: "Throughout this presentation, I use identity-first language to describe people who identify with any type of disability. Likewise, I will refer to those who don't have a disability as non-disabled people. Person first language, such as people with disabilities, is also perfectly acceptable, but I personally prefer identity-first language. Disability is not something to be ashamed of. 'Disabled' is not a bad word."

**Slide 3 Image Description:** A text slide which reads, identity & community & empowerment & pride (as a list). To the right is an image from the National Museum of American History. It is a solid black fist on a white background, with white text at the wrist reading "support disability rights." Above the text is a universal symbol of a wheelchair user raising its fist.

Alexa: "Disabled identity is very important to the disabled community. I came into a sense of pride as a Deaf person and before taking on that identity, I held a lot of internalized ableism against myself and hid my disability from nondisabled people, for their comfort. Being a member of the Deaf and disabled communities empowers me, and it empowers many disabled people who share lived experiences. We live full and joyful lives and we deserve recognition as a cultural entity. We deserve to be proud of who we are, and we have a profound contribution to make to society."

**Slide 4 Image Description:** Two black circles side by side, illustrating the concept of the medical model vs social model of disability. The left circle has white text inside reading, "the person is the problem," with four small black arrows facing inwards towards the circle. Underneath the left circle reads, "the medical model." The right circle has white text inside reading, "the built environment is the problem," with four small black arrows facing outwards away from the circle. Underneath the right circle reads, "the social model."

Alexa: "One of my primary goals is to change the way we think about and describe disability, particularly in relationship to the built environment. Today, the medical model is the dominant worldview; it views the disabled person as the problem, and as a result, disabled people are forced to adapt themselves to the built environment. If a disabled

person is not able to fit into or access a space, it's on them to figure it out or otherwise "fix" or cure themselves. Oftentimes, nondisabled designers limit their thinking of disabled people's use of space to healthcare, medical centers, and therapeutic spaces, not broader, public space. There is a false assumption that disabled people aren't out and about using everyday spaces, but this is far from the truth."

**Slide 5 Image Description:** The same image as the previous slide with the illustration of the medical model vs. the social model, this time with a white X over the medical model at left.

Alexa: "In stark contrast, the social model of disability views the built environment as the problem. As landscape architects, we need to adopt a social model worldview. Disabled people should not be forced to adapt themselves to our designs. We must begin to view disabled people as human beings, deserving of spaces not only to access at a bare minimum, but to thrive in and enjoy, beyond medical spaces. We can no longer design landscapes that do not accept, include, nor embrace disabled people. We need to focus on fixing the built environment, not the people who use it."

**Slide 6 Image Description:** A text only slide, with a white background and black Helvetica font reads: access to public space is a civil right, not a privilege.

Alexa: "I believe access to public space is a civil right, not a privilege. But today, disabled people's very rights to exist and to use public space are still being questioned. If we continue to choose to exclude disabled people in our designs (both process and product), we continue to commit a serious injustice towards these people."

**Slide 7 Image Description:** The same image as the title slide, with disabled activists protesting at UC Berkeley in the 1970s. Again, the prominent protest sign stands out, reading, "every body needs equal access." The image was taken by Raymond Lifchez, professor emeritus at UC Berkeley.

Alexa: "The Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s-70s took place in large part on UC Berkeley's campus, my alma mater. But the disabled community's rich, parallel history is often forgotten and erased. The Disability Rights movement was spearheaded by disabled people and the community continues to fight for our rights to public space. This movement is still very much alive, it is not past, but present, and drives my work. I am grateful to those who came before me and fought for my rights, and I am continuing this fight in their honor and for future generations."

**Slide 8 Image Description:** A black and white image of a university architecture studio at Wurster Hall (now Bauer-Wurster Hall), UC Berkeley, in 1972. Nondisabled architecture students (of university age) sit around a table that has cardboard

architecture models, with physically disabled stakeholders giving feedback. In the background are studio desks, large pieces of paper, and other architecture models. The photo was taken by Raymond Lifchez.

Alexa: “This movement was further ingrained within the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, under the guidance of Professor Emeritus Raymond Lifchez, who led a studio course with Barbara Winslow in the early 1970s. This studio brought physically disabled people into the classroom, as stakeholders and experts, to provide guidance and feedback to nondisabled students’ architecture projects. This is not common practice today in the classroom nor in our profession. We need to return to this inclusive design process.”

**Slide 9 Image Description:** A black and white photo of the Section 504 protest in 1977, inside a federal building in San Francisco. The room is full of disabled activists with a diversity of cultural backgrounds, many in wheelchairs. In the middle is a white woman signing in ASL and to the right is a man standing with a video camera. Image taken by AP Images.

Alexa: “In 1977, Judy Heumann and Kitty Cone led the largest non-violent occupation of a federal building in US history in San Francisco, where over 100 disabled protestors and their allies occupied a federal building for just under a month to push for implementation of Section 504. These federal access regulations would lay the groundwork for the more comprehensive ADA 13 years later.”

**Slide 10 Image Description:** An image (in color) of the Capitol Crawl in 1990, in which physically disabled protestors crawled up the Capitol Steps in D.C. to push for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Most of the protestors wear blue t-shirts and crawl backwards up the stairs, sitting on their bottom. A few crawl forwards on all fours. Carers and assistants help to transfer some folks out of their wheelchairs at the front, bottom of steps. Image by AP Images.

Alexa: “In 1990, disabled people marched on Washington D.C. to spur congress to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act. To illustrate their struggles with inaccessibility to the built environment, physically disabled people took to the Capitol building steps and crawled their way up. The ADA was passed on July 26, 1990 and directly influences our legally-binding accessibility standards, requiring public, state, and federal construction to be accessible to disabled people.”

**Slide 11 Image Description:** A timeline, made by Alexa, of a selection of disability rights laws and guidelines. It begins at 1961 with ANSI 117.1, Design for All Americans in 1967, Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) in 1968, Section 504 in 1973, MGRAD in 1982, UFAS in 1984, Fair Housing Act Amendments in 1988, ADA in 1990, ADA Standards for

Accessible Design in 1991, UFAS Retrofit Manual and ADAAG, the Landscape Architectural Graphic Standards in 2007, and Guidance on the ADA in 2010. Each of these includes a small image of the cover of the standards or snapshot of the law. Some include buttons (“Sign 504” yellow button, blue ADA button). And some also include a snapshot of what the graphics look like.

Alexa: “Access is not new to our field. We have a plethora of legally-binding standards to refer to. BUT all of these documents are very overwhelming and the majority of them were developed without the direct contributions of disabled people. The ADA Standards for Accessible Design was published in 1991, a year after the passage of the ADA, and its most recent version was released 11 years ago. Despite its age, the ADA is treated as a catchall for any site accessibility needs throughout the country.”

**Slide 12 Image Description:** Two black and white graphics with minimal shading from the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010) side by side. The left is Figure 308.3.1: Unobstructed Side Reach, with a person in a wheelchair illustrating a 15’ min height off the ground and 48” max height for unobstructed side reach. The right is Figure 307.2: Limits of Protruding Objects, which illustrates a Blind person using a tactile cane and a 4” max protrusion.

Alexa: “The ADA Standards are problematic because they focus in a very limited capacity on the needs of wheelchair users and Blind and low vision folks; there is little to no mention of other disabilities. Guidelines are standard measurements, often for architectural interiors, that are assumed to cover the basic needs of every disabled person. This is not the case.”

**Slide 13 Image Description:** A graphic created by Alexa and Courtney Ferris in 2018 for Ground Up Journal Issue 7, for use with Alexa’s article, DeafScape: Applying DeafSpace to Landscape. The image is simple and clear, with a white background and is a graphic of a streetscape, a bird’s eye axonometric view. The two main colors are a bright cyan blue and a dark magenta. The image illustrates 8 different DeafScape principles (outlined and numbered at the top left of the graphic): Textured Transition, Shoulder Zone, Degree of Enclosure, Night Lighting, Flexible Seating, Wider Pathway, Rhythm, and Visual Cue. The graphic includes applications of these principles in different ways on a busy and successful urban street. It includes a variety of bright cyan blue silhouettes using the sidewalk and street, including nondisabled people, a wheelchair user, Deaf people signing, a Blind man with a guide dog, families with kids, elderly people, and a woman with a stroller. To the left of the graphic reads “DeafScape” in bold black letters, with fingerspelled ASL letters overlaid in bright cyan blue. Underneath reads the title of the article.

Alexa: “As a Deaf woman and member of the post-ADA generation, I do not believe the ADA Standards are enough. Other than requirements for visual fire alarms and captioning at large stadiums, there is no mention of my needs in public space. In 2018, I began to discover ways to fill this gap in my article titled DeafSpace: Applying DeafSpace to Landscape.”

**Slide 14 Image Description:** A text-only slide that reads: DeafSpace Design Guidelines applied to landscape: 1. Space and Proximity 2. Sensory Reach 3. Mobility and Proximity 4. Light and Color 5. Acoustics and Electromagnetic Interference (grayed out). Underneath in bold black letters again reads DeafSpace with fingerspelled ASL letters overlaid in bright cyan blue.

Alexa: “DeafSpace was created by and for the Deaf community through extensive community engagements at Gallaudet University. DeafSpace is a design guide that implements human-centered design principles, leveraged specifically to create spaces where the Deaf community can thrive and flourish. Like the ADA, the principles focus primarily on interiors, but I discovered many ways to apply the first four sections of the guidelines to the broader landscape.”

**Slide 15 Image Description:** Two images illustrate the concept of a Degree of Enclosure, to create a secure, semi-private space to see and be seen. In the top right is a screenshot of the principle (which is labeled with a number 3, as the third in the DeafSpace graphic from the last slide), which shows a semi-walled parklet at the edge of the street. The two images are pictures of OLIN built projects. The left is at Director Park in Portland Oregon, of a high-backed wooden bench with men, women, and children sitting at the bench and chairs there, with tables. The right image is at Canal Park in Washington, D.C., which shows a black woman sitting on a typical sized bench (not high-backed), but surrounded by lush planting including bright yellow brown-eyed susans in the foreground.

Alexa: “One of my personal favorite DeafSpace principles is a degree of enclosure. This principle allows me to feel safe from the back. As a Deaf woman, I am very reliant on sight and 360 degree sensory reach to understand what’s going on around me. If someone comes up from behind me, out of my sightlines, it startles me! A simple walled parklet, high-backed bench, or benches surrounded with plantings are good examples.”

**Slide 16 Image Description:** One image illustrates the concept of a Wider Pathway, which is a minimum of 10 feet to provide space for conversation and circulation. In the top right is a screenshot of the principle (which is labeled with a number 6, as the sixth in the DeafSpace graphic), which shows a wide pathway with two men signing to each other, and on either side of the wide path are tactile cues. The image is of an OLIN project, Columbus Circle in New York City, showing a busy urban sidewalk that is very

wide. There are taxis to the far left, and metal bollards at the right. Many people are walking on the sidewalk.

Alexa: “Another favorite and much-needed principle is a wider pathway. We need a minimum of 10-12 feet on busy urban sidewalks. This provides enough space for me to walk while signing with my Deaf friends or lipreading my hearing friends and family, to keep the necessary line of sight. This concept of having enough space to move, as well as a variety of options, is relevant to all disabled identities. The principles of DeafSpace have creatively informed my work and illustrate how we can go beyond the bare minimums of the ADA to create more access.”

**Slide 17 Image Description:** A text slide reads in very bold, large letters: 1 billion. Underneath it reads, disabled people globally, WHO, 2011. At the bottom of the text are four simple clip art vector symbols, black circles with simple white vector drawing. The first at left is a wheelchair user symbol on a small triangle illustrating slope symbolizing physical disability, second is an ear crossed out symbolizing deafness, the third is an eye crossed out symbolizing blindness, and the fourth at right is the silhouette of a genderless head with question marks inside symbolizing neurodivergence.

Alexa: “We need to start thinking more deeply about accessibility because there are over 1 billion disabled people globally, as of 2011, and that number continues to rise with general population growth and aging population growth. If a design is not accessible, we are excluding many, many people.”

**Slide 18 Image Description:** A text slide reads in very bold, large letters: 1 in 7. Underneath it reads, people are disabled globally. Below the text are 7 silhouettes of vector illustrations of people. Six are black silhouettes (featureless / cultureless), and one of seven, the third to left, is in color of a male silhouette with purple hair and pants and red sweatshirt, to denote 1 in 7.

Alexa: “To put this into perspective, that is 1 out of every 7 people in the world identifying with some sort of disability.”

**Slide 19 Image Description:** A text slide reads in very bold, large letters: 1 in 4-5. Underneath it reads, people are disabled in the U.S. Below the text are 5 silhouettes of vector illustrations of people. Four are black silhouettes (featureless / cultureless), and one of five, the second to right, is in color of a female silhouette with red hair and purple dress, to denote 1 in 5.

Alexa: “In the United States, that is 1 in 4 to 1 in 5 people identifying with a disability. This is roughly 20-25% of the entire US population!”

**Slide 20 Image Description:** A black and white diagram graphic, with the same symbols from the previous slide, blown up larger across the top. This slide illustrates disability as a spectrum, and text at top above the symbols reads physical, sensory, neurocognitive from left to right. Underneath the symbol of the wheelchair for physical disabilities reads a list: paraplegia, quadriplegia, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, dwarfism, amputees, ehlers danlos syndrome, diabetes, & more. Underneath the sensory symbols of crossed out ear and crossed out eye read: deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, blind, low vision, deafblind, anosmia, aguesmia, & more. To the right, under the neurocognitive symbol of silhouette of a head with question marks inside read: autism, a.d.d., a.d.h.d., dyslexia, down syndrome, dementia, alzheimers, learning disabilities, psychological disabilities, & more.

Alexa: “Although the face of disability is often the wheelchair user, disability is a very broad spectrum, ranging from physical to sensory, to neurocognitive and mental disabilities. Many folks identify with more than one disability across this spectrum. And many of these disabilities are what we call “invisible.” Some disabled folks use wheelchairs, some use other assistive devices like canes, hearing aids, prosthetics, or glasses, and others use none, so disability is not always visible or easily identifiable. The disabled community is actually the most diverse and intersectional minority group, globally and it is a community that anyone might join at any time. We must begin to account for this cultural intersectionality, diversity, and variance in our designs as much as possible, and not assume that only one type of disabled person is using a space at a given time.”

**Slide 21 Image Description:** A text-only slide with black background and bold white Helvetica text displays two different quotes, justified to the left side of the slide. The top quote, by Erin J. McCauley, MED, MA, 2017 reads: more than half of Black disabled people in the United States will be arrested by the time they reach their late 20s. The second quote below by Ruderman Family Foundation, 2016, reads: & one third to one half of people killed by police have a disability. To the far right corner reads, italicized: Black disabled lives matter.

Alexa: “In addition to inaccessibility in the public realm, our black disabled siblings disproportionately experience discrimination and violence. As a white woman, I want to take a moment to recognize my privilege in this community and to mourn all of the Black disabled lives lost this past year, alone. (PAUSE). I hope that my voice serves to amplify and to encourage others to share their valuable lived experiences and expertise with our profession and with the world.”



**Slide 22 Image Description:** A text-only slide, back to typical white background with black Helvetica text, lists the Universal Design Principles created by NC State University, The Center for Universal Design, 1997. Top to bottom: 1. Equitable use, 2. Flexibility in use, 3. Simple & intuitive use, 4. Perceptible information, 5. Tolerance for error, 6. Low physical effort, 7. Size & space for approach & use.

Alexa: “But how can we even begin to work towards dismantling these massive barriers and injustices in our world? I believe Universal Design has the potential to change the way we view access to the public realm, far beyond the ADA. The seven principles were created in 1997 by Ronald Mace, a disabled architect, consultant, and professor at North Carolina state. They are very open-ended principles and are not legally binding - we find universal design principles in many resources. Surprisingly, Universal Design is not treated as common sense today.”

**Slide 23 Image Description:** An image of typical detectable warning, truncated domes. They are bright yellow, contrasting with surrounding sidewalk, at a curb cut or curb ramp, next to the street asphalt. In the far background is a little snippet of grass and soil.

Alexa: “Landscape architects tend to equate any accessible design principles with the ADA, and so we grumble about it. None of us want to incorporate the standards into our designs because we start off thinking about them and treating them like a limitation; as a law we must follow and as an ugly, untasteful blight. So it comes as no surprise that designers begrudgingly apply the standards as an afterthought. But in reality, the costs are much higher when we are sued later for not complying. So there is no creative input coming into this.”

**Slide 24 Image Description:** A text-only slide reads: public space can be. Underneath lists: radical & accessible & inclusive & beautiful & joyful.

Alexa: “Universal Design, on the other hand, can be used as a creative tool to drive our designs beyond the bare minimums of the ADA standards. However, Universal Design is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and that is not what I’m aiming for here. It is virtually impossible to design with every single person’s needs in mind, but we can definitely work towards meeting more people’s needs than we currently are, today, by challenging our assumptions. We need to critique all standards and principles given to us, unlearn them and grow them, with direct feedback from the disabled community. Only then can we design immersive, adaptive, and accessible designs, where disabled people can thrive and experience joy. This is a radical process and a conscious choice that can be made by each of us as designers, landscape architects, and planners.”

**Slide 25 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process. Underneath is a series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow to the right. Starting at left, the text in the circle reads: pre-design inventory & analysis. The second reads: schematic design. The third reads: design development. The fourth reads: construction documentation. The fifth reads: construction administration.

Alexa: “In order to design with disabled people, we need to rethink our design process.”

**Slide 26 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process with disabled people. Underneath is the same series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow to the right. Now, between pre-design inventory & analysis and schematic design circles is text below reading: identify disabled stakeholders and experts, with a bright magenta pink arrow pointing up to the area between the two circles.

Alexa: “We must begin to identify stakeholders, as well as disabled community members, at the very beginning of the process. This means reaching out to government organizations, non profits, and other local community groups in a timely manner.”

**Slide 27 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process with disabled people. Underneath is the same series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow to the right. Now, between schematic design and design development circles and between design development and construction documentation circles is text below reading: accessible general stakeholder meetings, with two bright magenta pink arrows pointing up to the area between the three circles in a v-shape.

Alexa: “Throughout development, we must host general stakeholder meetings that are accessible to all community members and take responsibility to provide accommodations such as captioning, descriptive materials, and physically accessible locations.”

**Slide 28 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process with disabled people. Underneath is the same series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow to the right. Now, between design development and construction documentation circles is text below reading: disabled stakeholder focus groups & disabled experts, with a bright magenta pink arrow pointing up to the area between the two circles.

Alexa: “As we continue to develop our designs, we should begin to forge even more specialized disabled focus groups and accumulate disabled experts and consultants’ feedback.”

**Slide 29 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process with disabled people. Underneath is the same series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow

to the right. Now, between construction documentation and construction administration circles is text below reading: prototyping of accessible design elements, with a bright magenta pink arrow pointing up to the area between the two circles.

Alexa: “We should also begin to take the process a step further with prototyping new accessible design elements and test them with disabled stakeholders and experts. But, this process does not end with construction administration.”

**Slide 30 Image Description:** At the top reads: the design process with disabled people. Underneath is the same series of black circles with white text, along a line with an arrow to the right. Now, above the construction administration circle at the far right is text reading: access audits, with a bright magenta pink arrow pointing down to the area after the last circle.

Alexa: “We must continue to test our designs by conducting access audits with local disabled community members and experts. The most difficult part of this process is being open to unlearning. Being open to the fact that our assumptions about disabled people’s needs might just be incorrect, that our designs may not be as perfect as we envision. We have much to learn from disabled lived experiences.”

**Slide 31 Image Description:** At top reads: disabled stakeholder group meeting. There are two photos of a disabled stakeholder meeting hosted in Eugene Town Square, in Eugene, Oregon, in March 2020, at a local YMCA. The image at left shows the disabled stakeholders around 3 tables formed in a U shape. There are wheelchair and scooter users present, Blind and low vision folks present, a hard of hearing man, and a woman who is the mother of an autistic child. The table is covered in printed site plans in color of the town square. In the background are windows with blue curtains, and a copy of the plan and perspective renderings propped up. The room has a hearing loop installed on the floor with green tape, and the captioner sits in the background with a laptop. The right image is a snippet of a simple tactile plan created by OLIN for Blind and low vision attendees. The plan is printed out with linework, and pieces of cardboard, dried hot glue, and cut strips of sandpaper denote different textures, placement of trees, and design elements. Small structures on site are made of cardboard.

Alexa: “This process, if prioritized, is very much possible, and this is what it looks like. I helped facilitate an accessible, disabled stakeholder focus group meeting for Eugene Town Square with OLIN and Cameron McCarthy in March 2020. We came together with printed site plans, a simple tactile plan and Braille materials, live captions and a hearing aid loop, an accessible location, and material samples.”

**Slide 32 Image Description:** This slide includes text and an image. The image is of a non-disabled white man leading another non-disabled white man with a yellow rubber

band-like string. The man he is leading is wearing black-out goggles and has his other arm outstretched, as if feeling the space in front of him that he cannot see due to the goggles. Overlaid above the image (mostly the left side over the man with goggles) is a black circle with a diagonal line through it, crossing out the image. To the right reads: forthcoming: “The Insensitivity of Sensitivity Studies” Ground Up Journal Issue 10. Below, at the right corner reads: disability simulations.

Alexa: “We also need to rethink our process of assessing site accessibility, pre- and post-construction. Today, we are still practicing outdated and inappropriate methods of measuring access, known as disability simulations or sensitivity studies. I recently wrote an article about this for Ground Up Journal, Issue 10, which will be released soon and which I recommend you check out. Rather than trusting in disabled people’s lived experience, we should not be mimicking or “trying out” disability, no matter how good the intention.”

**Slide 33 Image Description:** At the top reads: design with disabled people now. Below is a series of four black circles with white text within. Each has a bright pink magenta dashed bracket above and a text label. The left circle reads: ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Above it is the pink dashed bracket, and is labeled: law. Below the circle is a bright pink arrow pointing upwards to the circle, and text below it reads: quantitative bare minimum. The second circle reads: Universal Design Principles. Above it is the pink dashed bracket, and is labeled: creative tool. The third circle reads: disabled stakeholder feedback, and the fourth circle reads: disabled expert feedback. These two circles share a pink dashed bracket, and it is labeled: participation. Below these two circles is a bright pink arrow pointing upwards to the space between the two circles, and text below it reads: qualitative control.

Alexa: “In addition to transforming our design process, we can transform our actual designs. My formula is of a more qualitative nature than quantitative. I believe we can start the process of designing with disabled people by treating the ADA Standards as the bare minimum, the foundation from which to build upon. The next step is to creatively input Universal Design principles, as an adaptive tool. And the final step is to bring in disabled stakeholders and experts through the design process, as a qualitative control, which goes beyond our typical QAQC. Trial and error are completely necessary to achieve the best results.”

**Slide 34 Image Description:** The slide layout remains the same. Now, the top reads: accessible public pathway. In the first circle, the text now reads: Section 403.5.1: Clear Width [36”]. The second circle reads: 7. Size & space for approach & use. The third circle reads: minimum of 10 feet needed. The fourth circle reads: minimum of 15 feet desired. Brackets and arrow text remain the same as the previous slide.

Alexa: “I want to use an accessible public pathway as an example of this process. In this case, we assume the path is at the proper graded slope, and focus on width, space, and amenities on the path: elements that make it both accessible by bare minimum, as well as beautiful and joyful at maximum.”

**Slide 35 Image Description:** The top reads: accessible public pathway. In the top right corner is the first circle with text: Section 403.5.1: Clear Width [36”]. In the middle of the slide is a snippet of the ADA Standards guideline for 403.5.1 in plan view, which shows “Clear Width of an Accessible Route.” It is black and white, thick lines showing edges of a building, with a wheelchair user at center. It is marked with 36” minimum dimensions and other minimums. Below is a section cut showing a sidewalk at 3’ wide and a street with a car next to it. On the sidewalk is a photo cutout of the back view of a woman in a wheelchair. Below in the left corner reads: quantitative bare minimum and a pink line runs along from left to right like a spectrum, ending at the far right side. (Most images of disabled people were sourced from Didsabled & Here by Affect the Verb, and cut out by Alexa for these section renderings).

Alexa: “So, we might begin by taking Section 403.5.1 of the ADA Standards, which requires a clear, minimum 36” width on accessible routes. The bare minimum is very boring and quite sad. Only one wheelchair user can fit comfortably if no obstructions arise.”

**Slide 36 Image Description:** The top reads: accessible public pathway. In the top right corner is the second circle with text: 7. Size & space for approach & use. In the center of the slide is a more exciting section rendering of a sidewalk and street. It shows 10 feet of space allotted for the sidewalk. It is flanked with tactile cues. Off of the sidewalk to the right is a shoulder zone with a bench and light post. To the right of the shoulder zone is a planted area with grasses and a tree. To the right of the planting is a bike lane and street. The sidewalk is full of a diverse array of people, including a disabled person on a scooter, a disabled person using a cane, two Deaf people signing, a woman sitting on the bench, and a man on his bike in the bike lane. A pink line runs along the bottom of the slide, delineating the middle of the spectrum, with no text. (Most images of disabled people were sourced from Didsabled & Here by Affect the Verb, and cut out by Alexa for these section renderings).

Alexa: “In the next step, we can consider the seventh Universal Design principle, which requires size and space for approach and use. Universal Design principles are broad, so we can begin to think about what this means with materials, placement of additional design elements, and usability beyond the ADA.”

**Slide 37 Image Description:** At the top reads: accessible public pathway. In the top right corner is the fourth circle, with text: minimum of 15 feet desired. In the center of the

slide is an even more exciting, rich section rendering of a sidewalk and street. It shows 15 feet of space allotted for the sidewalk. It is flanked with a tactile cue at the left, and a larger textured transition space to the right. Off the sidewalk to the right is a shoulder zone with room to park bikes, a high-backed bench to create a degree of enclosure, and a street light. To the right of the shoulder zone is a planted area with grasses, a light hedge or screen of plants that serves as a sensory buffer, and two trees, one of which is a pink flowering tree. To the right of the planting is a formal double bike lane, with a buffer between the bike lane and the car lane at the street. The buffer is a tall concrete planter with small plants. To the far right is a car. The sidewalk is full of even more, diverse people, including a man walking with an ice cream cone, three Black disabled people with assistive devices and a wheelchair, a blind man with a tactile cane and guide dog, a kid with a skateboard, a woman sitting, and a man parking his bike. In the far background is a group of people laughing. In the double bike lane is a woman casually riding her bike, and a physically disabled person in an adaptive bike, pedaling with hands. Below in the right corner reads: qualitative control and a pink line runs along from left to right like a spectrum, ending at the edge of the text with a pink arrow. (Most images of disabled people were sourced from Didsabled & Here by Affect the Verb, and cut out by Alexa for these section renderings).

Alexa: “Furthermore, we can take another step by incorporating direct feedback from a variety of disabled community members, who might just suggest even more space. And so we can adjust our assumption for 10 feet up further to 15 feet and provide even more amenities. Because we have achieved access (our primary goal) and gone beyond those bare minimums, we have also created a better and more beautiful pedestrian-oriented accessible public pathway.”

**Slide 38 Image Description:** A screenshot of the design with disabled people now website. The background is black with white text. The text in the middle of the screenshot reads: a living resource for landscape architects, designers, & planners to practice a more inclusive design process & create a more accessible public realm. To the right in the upper corner is a menu, including: toolkits, resources, about, contact, donate, and instagram. The Toolkit menu shows a drop down with several different toolkits, including: How to Talk to And About Disabled People, How to Design Beyond the ADA, How to Include Disabled People in the Design Process, How to Conduct an Accessibility Audit, Disabled Design History and Rights 101, Conversations with Disabled Experts, and Case Studies. The Contact menu is outlined with a pink rectangle, with a pink arrow pointing to it, with pink text underneath saying: subscribe to newsletter here.

Alexa: “To supplement this work, I have created a living resource website, which includes a growing series of written and graphic toolkits highlighting all of these

concepts I've touched on today, and more. My goal is not to create another guide to follow like a checklist, but to encourage and help nondisabled designers to get started on their way to design with disabled people. This website will continue to grow over time. Please sign up for the newsletter to stay tuned for updates."

**Slide 39 Image Description:** A black and white image of disability rights activists marching down Madison Avenue, New York City, 1993. Judy Heumann can be seen in her wheelchair, grinning, at the left side of the image, with other disabled activists. Two activists carry a large white banner that reads: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. -Martin Luther King, Jr. Image by Tom Olin.

Alexa: "I realize I have only chipped at the tip of the iceberg of what all this means for our profession, but I know if we put this into practice, treating the ADA as bare minimum, Universal Design as a creative tool, and incorporate direct participation by disabled community members through a rich, inclusive design process, we can really transform our designs. By doing this, we deeply illustrate through action that we respect and honor the needs of our disabled community members. Every day, you have the power to consciously choose to create justice for the disabled community. You have the power to be an ally, on the right side of history, to create a public realm that no longer forces disabled people to strenuously adapt themselves. If we adapt our process and practice to disabled people, we will create a better world."

**Slide 40 Image Description:** A final "thank you" slide. The background image is a black and white image of disabled activists, most in wheelchairs, in 1990, demanding curb cuts in Los Angeles. They hold signs, from left to right, reading: I'd hammer out justice; curb cuts not fines; asking did not work. Photo is by Tom Olin. In the top right corner in bold white outlined letters is: thank you. Underneath and also to the right of the slide reads: & a special thank you to: Dr. Wanda Liebermann, & Dr. Victor Pineda, & Danielle Toronyi, & Corbett O'Toole, & Karen Braitmayer, & Dr. Aimi Hamraie, & Joshua A. Halstead, & Chris Downey, & Ace Tilton Ratcliff, & Haben Girma, & Elizabeth Guffey, & Miles Rowe-Love, & Daniel Frey, & Robert Sirvage, & Derrick Behm-Josa, & Sean Maiwald. At the left to center of the slide, in large white outlined text, reads: to check out toolkits & resources, visit: [www.DesignWithDisabledPeopleNow.com](http://www.DesignWithDisabledPeopleNow.com). The website is in bold white text over a black band. Underneath reads: & subscribe to newsletter for updates. To the right corner is a black and white Instagram logo, with two instagrams listed: @DesignWithDisabledPeopleNow and @DeafScape.

Alexa: "Thank you."

[End of presentation.]