EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

Curb-Cut Effects

Summary:
Simply put, a curb cut is the sloping portion of a sidewalk which provides an easy access ramp from the street to the sidewalk for people with disabilities. In the early 1970s, a movement was set in motion to push for this kind of access that seems so common today. Angela Glover Blackwell coined the term *Curb-Cut Effect* to identify laws and programs designed to benefit vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or people of color, which often end up benefiting all of society.

Who Benefits:
- People in Wheelchairs
- Parents Pushing Strollers
- Workers Moving Heavy Carts
- Travelers Wheeling Luggage
- Runners
- Skateboarders
- And More *

* A study of pedestrian behavior at a Sarasota, Fla., shopping mall revealed that nine out of 10 “unencumbered pedestrians” go out of their way to use a curb cut.

Timeline:
- **1945** Kalamazoo, Michigan installs curb cuts as a pilot project to aid employment of veterans with disabilities
- **1968** The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires government buildings to make themselves universally accessible
- **1970** A group of protesters pour cement in Berkeley to create their own curb cut
- **1972** Berkeley installed its first official curb cut at an intersection on Telegraph Avenue
- **1990** President George H.W. Bush signs the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits disability-based discrimination and mandated changes to the built environment, including curb cuts