



City of Pittsburgh

Department of Public Works

Mobility Assisting Devices on City Trails Policy

The City of Pittsburgh has adopted the following policy concerning the general public and individuals with mobility impairments and their use of City-designated trails. (This policy is in accord with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), revised regulations for Titles II and III, and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design of 15 September 2010.)

1. Mobility devices may be used provided that the following conditions are met:
 - motors on electric devices are 250 watts or fewer;
 - device weighs fewer than 100 pounds (43kg);
 - device is no more than three feet wide;
 - device is not powered by an internal combustion engine; and
 - no device shall be operated at a speed greater than 15 miles-per-hour on unpaved trails (porous surface) or 20 mph on paved (non-porous surface) trails.

2. In addition, the Director of the Department of Public Works may prohibit specific mobility devices based on actual risks associated with:
 - the type, size, weight, dimensions, and speed/power of the device;
 - the volume and mix (pedestrians, cyclists, strollers, dog walkers, etc.) of traffic;
 - the facility's design characteristics (width, grade, obstructions, and surface);
 - whether or not legitimate safety requirements can be established to permit the safe operation of the device; and
 - whether or not the use of the device creates a substantial risk of serious harm to the immediate environment or natural or cultural resources.

Rationale for the Above Policies

(Based on a rationale first articulated by the Regional Trail Corporation, March 26, 2011)

The City's network of riverfront and park trails was designed and constructed for bicycling, walking, skating, and in some instances cross-country skiing. The popularity of the trail is verified by heavy volume of local, regional, national, and international visitors. Trail users have come to expect a safe, pedestrian friendly, and exclusive environment without the concerns related to automobile centric spaces and the hustle and bustle of an urban environment.

Trail users range in age from infants to young children, adults and seniors. Walkers use the trail singly and in company with others. Families walk or bicycle together including parents with baby strollers and seniors. Outdoor enthusiasts cycle, jog, and roller blade regularly. The trail has become a part of the fabric of the City and its neighborhoods.

Accommodating the full range of motorized mobility assisting devices would allow many who may not now be able to enjoy the pleasures of the facility a chance to experience what others have found to be an exceptional asset in the City of Pittsburgh. At the same time, to preserve the safety and trail experience of all users, the City is obligated to limit the sound, potential emissions, size, weight, power and speed of trail use devices.

The City has established the above policy to meet the intent of the prevailing ADA regulations in regard to mobility devices, and, at the same time, maintain the existing trail experience and the safety of all users. In regard to the City's policies, the following should be noted:

1. **Mobility Assisting Devices** The ADA regulations define wheelchairs, and similar devices, as devices designed specifically for mobility disabled individuals. These devices are allowed on public trails, and are allowed and welcomed on City trails. Wheelchairs and like vehicles are designed specifically for mobility disabled individuals. Other power driven mobility devices that are not designed specifically for mobility disabled individuals, may also be used by others without disabilities. Such devices include but are not limited to Segways, cycle cars, electric bikes, electric ride-ons, powered scooters, velomobiles, and trikes. These devices are allowed, if they meet specific requirements.
2. In keeping with the policy guidance drafted by the Regional Trail Corporation and adopted March 26, 2011, the following provides specific rationales for the above listed policies.

Motors are 250 watts or less (Federal regulations include speed as a parameter for regulating mobility assist devices. Because speed is impossible to assess from vehicle specifications, the power of the motor can be used as an equivalent, with higher power translating to higher top speed.) Average human power on a bicycle is approximately 125 watts. It is proposed here to allow mobility disabled individuals the use of devices equal to the power of a tandem bicycle – 250 watts. There may be mobility assisting devices with motors of 250 watts and above, but they are excessive for trail use and potentially dangerous to other trail users.

Vehicles weigh less than 100 pounds (43kg) Bicycles are in the 20 - 40 pound range. Considering the heaviest vehicle now allowed on the trail to be a tandem tricycle pulling a fully loaded trailer, that combination is nearly 90 pounds. Thus a 100 pound limit appears reasonable for all mobility assisting devices on the trail. (City authorized maintenance and emergency response vehicles are not included.)

Vehicles are no more than three feet wide Much of the City's trails are 10 to 12 feet wide. A three foot wide device would comfortably allow two individuals to travel on the path either side by side or opposing each other. Bicycles easily fit this width requirement. Trikes and trailers are also within that width. In addition, bollards at trail access areas and road crossings have openings around three to four feet and thus could be barriers to wider vehicles, or difficult to navigate.

Internal combustion powered devices, gasoline, diesel or propane, are inherently loud and emit unpleasant, often noxious fumes. Historically, motorized vehicles, including internal combustion powered, have not been allowed on City trails with the exception of City authorized maintenance and emergency vehicles. The noise and fumes do not fit in with the natural qualities of the trail, and present a potential danger to users as well as the adjacent vegetation and wildlife. Unauthorized internal combustion vehicles have been and will remain prohibited.

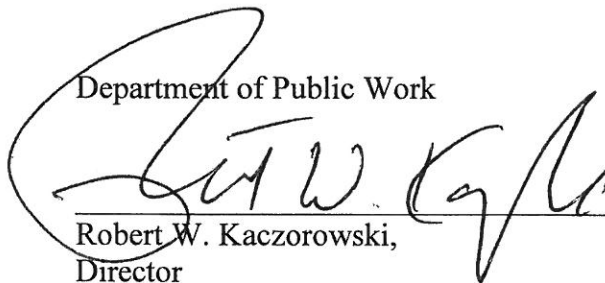
Speed limits on the City of Pittsburgh's trails are an important safety consideration and need to recognize the different travel speeds of the various trail users. For example, walking speeds vary from 5 to 10 mph, roller bladers from 10 -15 mph, and cycling speed from 10 to 20 mph. AASHTO standards suggest a 15 mph speed limit for unpaved trails and a 20 mph limit for paved trails.

These policies and associated rationale are adopted July 20, 2011, by the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Public Works.

Witness:



Department of Public Work



Robert W. Kaczorowski,
Director