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**Pittsburgh-based PathVu creates app to increase accessibility for pedestrians**

By [Julia Mericle](https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/bio/40147/Julia+Mericle)  –  Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times

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Pittsburgh-based startup PathVu, a company that uses data collection technology to map sidewalks, created a real-time navigation app aimed at making pedestrian navigation both more accessible and more enjoyable.

PathVu, founded in 2014, uses a tool that looks like a baby stroller to collect data about city sidewalks and then digitally map it. The company has worked with cities to use that data to prioritize improvements to city sidewalks.

“Even Google doesn’t show where sidewalks are and what the best routes to go are,” [Eric Sinagra](https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/search/results?q=Eric%20Sinagra), CEO and co-founder of PathVu said. “And for people with disabilities that is especially important to them to understand if there is a curb ramp, rough sidewalks or steep hills.”

Now, Sinagra said PathVu is finalizing pilot programs on its app, which aims to offer users with real-time pedestrian navigation and safe travel routes. In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Transportation, PathVu spent about the last three year developing the app, and Sinagra said the company plans to officially launch the app within the next couple of months.

An app user would start by entering their “comfort settings,” or things like how comfortable they are with navigating hills, tripping hazards and narrow paths, among other details. Then the app creates an optimal route of the user based off of those settings and provides step-by-step directions to follow the route.

Sinagra said the app also features crowdsourcing capabilities that allow users to report things like a temporary hazard in the pedestrian way or details like what side of a particular building the accessible entrance is located on.

PathVu also worked with Washington, Boston, Louisville, Portland and other cities to implement its tech. The company will implement the app predominantly in Pittsburgh first, but Sinagra said eventually he imagines PathVu technology being used in all major cities.

“We want to see Pittsburgh be the staple for what other cities can be as far as accessibility and mobility,” Sinagra said.

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However, Singara said the app is for all pedestrians, not just those with specific accessibility needs. He said PathVu’s technology can put emphasis on things like connectivity or real-time access to bus routes.

“If you are designing for the wheelchair user, you are designing for the parent pushing a stroller and the UPS guy with his dolly and the entire population,” Singara said.

PathVu so far raised $100,000 and bootstrapped the rest, Singara said. He said he expects the company’s 2020 revenue to total about $750,000, with $500,000 of that contracted out already.

The company, based in Uptown, has two full time employee and plans to hire another person soon.

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