

City of Madison
Guidelines for Installing ADA Compliant Sidewalk Ramps
June 5, 2006

Background

General.

The design criteria for the construction and alteration of facilities covered by law were developed by the U.S. Access Board and are the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). These guidelines serve as the basis for standards and are the minimum criteria for designing public right-of-way space.

The Access Board is currently developing Accessible Public Rights-of-Way Guidelines, which will supplement ADAAG. A draft version of these guidelines was made available for public comment, but as of March 2006, a final rule had not been issued.

Diagonal Ramps.

ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) currently allows the use of a single ramp that opens diagonally onto an intersection. The draft version of Accessible Public Rights-of-Way Guidelines has a preference for two separate curb ramps at a corner. The two separate ramps direct people across the street instead of towards the middle of an intersection.

Since a final rule is not available The City of Madison believes it prudent to install 2 ramps per corner when the cost is incidental (new construction) but continue to make use of diagonal ramps when appropriate in order to avoid substantial additional expense. In general, if new curb & gutter is being constructed, 2 ramps will be installed. If existing curb & gutter is to remain in place and already contains a curb cut for a diagonal ramp, in most cases the diagonal ramp will be utilized.

City of Madison Policy on Ramps for Various Types of Projects

1. New Construction of Streets

- A. Two separate curb ramps will be constructed per corner rather than a single ramp that opens diagonally onto an intersection.

2. Reconstruction of Streets

- A. Two separate curb ramps will be constructed per corner rather than a single ramp that opens diagonally onto an intersection. The emphasis is to provide a pedestrian access pedestrian route through the intersection.
- B. Ramps will not be installed at intersections where a sidewalk network does not exist. A new ramp will not be installed if sidewalk has not been installed on the other side of the street unless sidewalks are under consideration and the probability of approval is high.
- C. Existing streets and intersections with steep grades often have steps and/or ramps that are not ADA compliant. In these instances each intersection will be evaluated to determine if a pedestrian access route can be provided. Sidewalk ramps within intersections that cannot be made accessible may be removed. The goal shall be to provide a pedestrian access route. The route may or may not include the intersection being reconstructed.
- D. If individuals request specific routes for improvements, staff shall evaluate the request and determine if the request can be accommodated.

3. Street Resurfacing

- A. At locations where ramps do not exist, two separate curb ramps will be constructed per corner rather than a single ramp that opens diagonally onto an intersection unless there are issues with inlets, structures or utility poles.
- B. If a diagonal ramp exists at a corner and does not require repair, the ramp will remain in service unless it directs wheelchairs into the vehicular lane of an arterials or major collector street or the curb is also being replaced, in which case two separate curb ramps will be considered.
- C. If a diagonal ramp requires repair, the ramp will be replaced as laid out unless it directs wheelchairs into the vehicular lane of arterials and major collectors or the curb is also being replaced in which case two separate curb ramps will be considered.
- D. Ramps will not be installed at intersections where a sidewalk network does not exist. A new ramp will not be installed if sidewalk has not been installed on the other side of the street unless sidewalks are under consideration and the probability of approval is high.
- E. Existing streets and intersections with steep grades often have steps and/or ramps that are not ADA compliant. In these instances each intersection will be evaluated to determine if a pedestrian access route can be provided. Sidewalk ramps within intersections that cannot be made accessible may be removed. The goal shall be to provide a pedestrian access pedestrian route. The route may or may not include the intersection being resurfaced.
- F. Locations which are determined to represent major challenges due to topography and existing street grades shall be documented for further evaluation, design, and cost determination.
- G. If individuals request to access specific routes, staff shall evaluate the request and determine if the request can be accommodated.

4. Sidewalk Repair Program

- A. If a diagonal ramp exists at a corner and does not require repair, the ramp will remain in service unless it directs wheelchairs into the vehicular lane of an arterials or major collector street or the curb is also being replaced, in which case two separate curb ramps will be considered.
- B. At locations where ramps do not exist, two separate curb ramps will be considered per corner rather than a single ramp that opens diagonally onto an intersection. The goal shall be to provide a pedestrian access pedestrian route.


- C. If a diagonal ramp requires repair, the ramp will be replaced as laid out unless it directs wheelchairs into the vehicular lane of arterials and major collectors or the curb is also being replaced in which case two separate curb ramps will be considered.
- D. Ramps will not be installed at intersections where a sidewalk network does not exist. A new ramp will not be installed if sidewalk has not been installed on the other side of the street unless sidewalks are under consideration and the probability of approval is high.
- E. Existing streets and intersections with steep grades often have steps and/or ramps that are not ADA compliant. In these instances each intersection will be evaluated to determine if an pedestrian access route can be provided. Sidewalk ramps within intersections that cannot be made accessible may be removed. The goal shall be to provide an pedestrian access pedestrian route. The route may or may not include the intersection being evaluated.
- F. Locations which are determined to represent major challenges due to topography and existing street grades shall be documented for further evaluation, design, and cost determination.
- G. If individuals request access for a specific route; staff shall evaluate the request and determine if the request can be accommodated.

5. Installation of new drive aprons at existing T-intersections

T-intersections often involve conflicts with drive aprons and ramps. The options are as follows and in order of preference.

- a. Relocate the driveway and preserve the standard ramp location.
- b. Relocate the ramp slightly.
- c. Remove the ramp on both sides of the street. This is only allowed where the ramp still exists on the opposite corner so there remains a way to cross the street.

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Fiscal Note: The actual cost of this policy will vary with the location of the sidewalk program, the number of special requests for accommodation and specific location of the ramps. The cost of installation of two curb cuts and ramps in the quadrant of an intersection is \$2,000. The cost of the policy is expected to exceed the sum of \$250,000 per year.