



Technical Memorandum

To: FILE

From: SDOT ADA Committee

Date: July 11, 2018

Re: Companion Ramp Requirements Under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

Overview and Purpose

Currently, Washington State Law (RCW 35.38.075 *et seq.*), the WSDOT Design Manual, and the Seattle Standard Plans for Municipal Construction require that every curb ramp installed must have an accompanying companion curb ramp serving the opposite end of the crosswalk unless there is no curb or sidewalk on that side. Guidance from WSDOT indicates that existing companion curb ramps are not required to meet the current ADA design standards, provided they are not otherwise triggered by alterations. Currently, there are no federal requirements for companion ramps.

Regulations and Standards

1) Revised Code of Washington 35.68.075

(1) The standard for construction on any county road, or city or town street, for which curbs in combination with sidewalks, paths, or other pedestrian access ways are to be constructed, shall be not less than two ramps per lineal block on or near the crosswalks at intersections. Such ramps shall be at least thirty-six inches wide and so constructed as to allow reasonable access to the crosswalk for physically handicapped persons, without uniquely endangering blind persons.

(2) Standards set for curb ramping under subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to any curb existing upon enactment of this section but shall apply to all new curb construction and to all replacement curbs constructed at any point in a block which gives reasonable access to a crosswalk.

(3) Upon September 21, 1977, every ramp thereafter constructed under subsection (1) of this section, which serves one end of a crosswalk, shall be matched by another ramp at the other end of the crosswalk. However, no ramp shall be required at the other end of the crosswalk if there is no curb nor sidewalk at the other end of the crosswalk. Nor shall any matching ramp constructed pursuant to this subsection require a subsequent matching ramp.

2) WSDOT Design Manual

1510.09 Curb Ramps. Every curb ramp must have a curb ramp at the other end of the crosswalk it serves unless there is no curb or sidewalk on that side (RCW 35.68.075).

3) Seattle Standard Plans for Municipal Construction

Standard Plan No. 422k, Note 3: Curb ramp shall be constructed with companion ramp on the opposite side of the roadway where no ramp is provided unless otherwise directed by the engineer.

Guidance

**Washington Department of Transportation, Local Technical Assistance Program
ADA – Self Evaluation and Transition Plan for Public Rights-of-Way Training**

Instructor: Akmal Siddiqui, Traffic Services and ADA Specialist, WSDOT

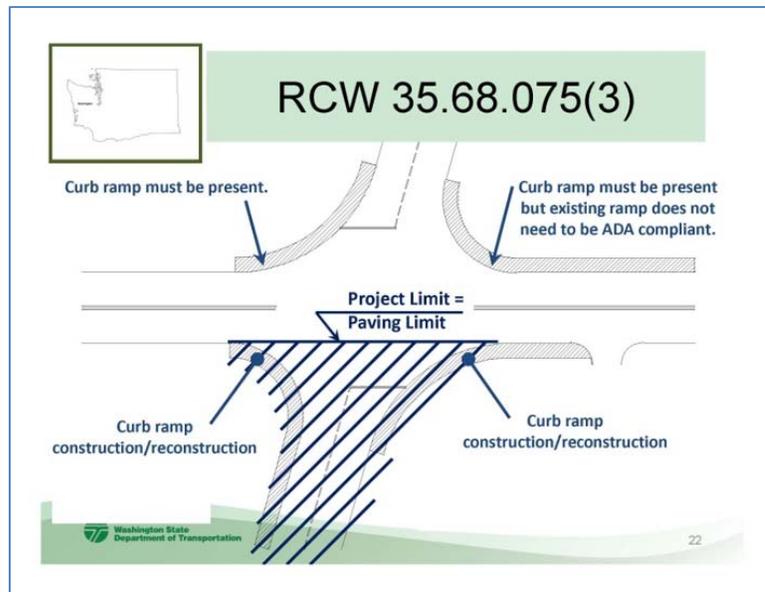
May 20, 2015 in Camas, Washington

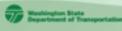
Attended by SDOT ADA Coordinator, Mike Shaw

This training session served primarily to educate local agencies on how to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for transition plans within the public right of way. During the presentation, some items were discussed that pertain specifically to accessibility requirements within the state of Washington.

The instructor explained that existing companion curb ramps, as required by RCW 35.68.075 *et seq.*, are not required to comply with the current ADA design standards provided they are not part of the given scope of work for a project or are not within the project's "construction impact zone." The intent of the law, as explained, is to prevent stranding a wheelchair user in the roadway. If alterations are limited to one corner or curb ramp, and there is an opposing companion ramp, but no alterations are planned for the opposing companion ramp and no other alteration(s) trigger the required improvements to the existing companion ramp, the existing ramp may remain in place even if it does not comply with current ADA design standards. At a minimum there must be a ramp or a cut or opening at the curb to allow for the passage of a wheelchair.

The presentation slides shown below and on the following page illustrate this determination. The slides attached were provided by WSDOT upon request.



<p style="text-align: center;">RCW 35.68.075(3), Cont'd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Upon September 21, 1977, every ramp thereafter constructed under subsection (1) of this section, which serves one end of a crosswalk, shall be matched by another ramp at the other end of the crosswalk. However, no ramp shall be required at the other end of the crosswalk if there is no curb nor sidewalk at the other end of the crosswalk. Nor shall any matching ramp constructed pursuant to this subsection require a subsequent matching ramp."• This law intends to prevent stranding a user of a wheelchair out in the road.  <p style="text-align: right;">23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RCW 35.68.075(3), Cont'd. How to Implement It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curb ramps outside of the project limits do not have to be ADA compliant.• Suggest cutting away enough of the curbing to allow a wheelchair to pass through and continue on their path of travel along the shoulder.  <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>
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Approach for the City of Seattle

The Revised Code of Washington requires that when a curb ramp is constructed at one end of a crosswalk it must be matched by another ramp, i.e. a companion ramp, at the other end of the crosswalk. There are no specified technical criteria provided in the RCW that establish the required characteristics of the companion ramp, other than that "Such ramps shall be at least thirty-six inches wide and so constructed as to allow reasonable access to the crosswalk for physically handicapped persons, without uniquely endangering blind persons." RCW 35.68.075(1).

This language, coupled with guidance obtained at a training provided by the Washington Department of Transportation, suggests that **existing** companion ramps are not required to meet the current ADA design standards and that they may remain in place.

SDOT has developed additional minimum requirements that must be met for an existing companion ramp to be considered usable or passable for people living with disabilities. Refer to the [SDOT Policy for Companion Ramp Requirements](#) for additional information.