

Commission on Disability

COUNCIL INFORMATION

July 23, 2002

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Commission on Disability

Subject: DETECTABLE WARNINGS ARE AGAIN REQUIRED FOR NEW CURB
RAMP INSTALLATIONS

STATUS:

On May 6, 2002, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration issued a memorandum informing Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers and other agencies that detectable warnings, in specific truncated domes, are required when curb ramps are constructed or altered. Truncated domes are the standard design requirement for detectable warnings for determining the boundary between the curb ramp and the street by people with visual disabilities.

Detectable warnings were required in 1991 by the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessible Guideline (ADAAG) for hazardous vehicular ways, transit platform edges, and curb ramps. A suspension was placed on requiring detectable warnings at curb ramps and hazardous vehicular ways. The reason for the suspension was to conduct research on the performance of their detectability. The Department of Justice continued the suspension through July 26, 2001, which allowed 10 years for conducting research. The research determined that other designs used in place of truncated domes such as grooves, striations, and exposed aggregate, were not detectable in the sidewalk and roadway environment because of the similarities to other surface textures and defects. Truncated domes have a unique design that can be detected underfoot and with a cane, and other surfaces are not considered ADA equivalent and therefore do not comply with the ADA requirements.

The Department of Justice had the option of allowing the suspension to expire on July 26, 2001 or publish a Federal Register Notice to continue the suspension. They decided to let the suspension expire. Consequently, since July 26, 2001 detectable warnings are again required.

While questions remain as to whether curb ramps constructed during the time the suspension was in place will have to be retrofitted with detectable warnings, curb ramps that were newly

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constructed or remodeled after the date the suspension was lifted will be required to have detectable warnings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

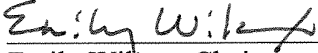
It is estimated that the cost of installing truncated domes on new and remodeled curb ramps will be approximately \$500 per installation, depending upon the method and materials chosen. This estimated cost should drop over time as materials and supplies are purchased in bulk. Currently, it costs approximately \$650 to install a curb ramp, so the addition of truncated domes will substantially increase the future cost of the program.

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Approved by:



Emily Wilcox, Chairperson