

The City continues to install outmoded and dangerous curb ramps

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Gadfly,

Last year the city contracted with someone to do new curb ramps on several 4th street intersections. Since then they've done lots of them on the north side.

Many of them (both on the north side and here on SouthSide) are the style that was common 30 years ago, where the ramps aim out into the intersection at a 45° angle. The preferred designs maintain a straight line of travel for people walking down the sidewalk or in a wheelchair. Steve Schmitt had called the problem to the city's attention over 10 years ago and even gone out to specific intersections to show the right way. Last year, I contacted both the city and Senator Boscola's office; Senator Boscola's office even supplied PennDOT publications that pointed out the danger.

They are only supposed to depart from these designs when a physical obstacle makes it impossible. The 45° design is the least-preferred design, because it is more dangerous — not only does it make it more likely for a person in a wheelchair to roll into traffic, but it also allows people to flatten their turn and run over the end of the ramp.

That's the short version of why the Federal Highway Administration and PennDOT both point out the increased danger.

Why does the City continue to install these outmoded and dangerous curb ramps. Does the city that likes to think it's "walkable" care so little about safety for pedestrians and people with disabilities? Apparently, they are incapable of learning from their mistakes.

Peter