Diagonal curb ramps often put pedestrians in danger and confuse drivers about pedestrian intentions

- Diagonal curb ramps force pedestrians descending the ramp to proceed into the intersection before turning left or right to cross the street. The wheelchair user or the baby carriage can be placed in the path of moving vehicles. Local examples include Mission @ Laurel and Laurel @ Front.

- Although diagonal curb ramps save construction costs, they create potential safety hazards and mobility problems for pedestrians including reduced maneuverability and increased interaction with turning vehicles. This danger is especially acute on arterial and collector streets.

- Diagonal curb ramps can make it more difficult for visually-impaired people to determine the correct crossing location and travel direction.

- Diagonal curb ramps confuse drivers. They do not know which direction the pedestrian is planning to cross until the pedestrian turns at the bottom of the ramp.

- Directional (perpendicular) ramps direct pedestrians to the correct alignment of the crosswalk. This is much easier to accomplish if the curb radius is small and where there are planting strips.

This curb ramp at Laurel @ Front in Santa Cruz places a pedestrian in a wheelchair in the travel lane when they come down the ramp.

This intersection in San Francisco uses two directional curb ramps.

The FHWA recommends:

"In new construction, the installation of two ramps should be the norm. Two curb ramps should also be the norm when alterations are performed:

- In urban areas;
- At signalized intersections;
- On arterials and other roads with moderate to heavy traffic volumes; and
- Where the placement of utilities does not interfere with the installation of two curb ramps.

A diagonal curb ramp or a single parallel curb ramp may be acceptable in retrofitting situations to help conserve resources. For example, if sidewalk width is limited, a single parallel curb ramp will often be the best design. Situations in which diagonal curb ramps may be considered include:

- Some residential areas, where traffic volumes are very low and intersections do not require signalization; and
- Where utilities prevent the installation of two perpendicular curb ramps."

Prepared 7/07 by Debbie Bulger. Sources include Oregon DOT, *Main Street Handbook*; *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, Best Practices Design Guide*, USDOT, FHWA.