

Summary of information on Accessible Ramps

Building Permit:

My reading of the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC) infers that a building permit could be required. City Council can decide for the Building Official whether or not a permit is required if they so desire.

Part of an exit system – exit systems are regulated by the IRC

Regulation of similar structure in 2012 IRC. Decks can be exempt from a building permit if they are 200 s.f. or less, not more than 30" above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve an exit door. Ramps would be attached to a dwelling and would normally serve an exit door.

Visitability:

Visitability only applies to new construction of single family residential homes or duplexes and these accessible ramps are retrofitting existing single family homes or duplexes for the disabled.

Walkways ("sidewalks" on private property):

Walkways would be allowed anywhere on a private property and in required yard setbacks. A walkway would be discouraged from impacting an easement; however, flatwork such as a walkway does not require a building permit.

Limitations:

A signed affidavit verifying that at least one person in the single family home or duplex is disabled.

Ramps shall not be wider than 36" and switchbacks are prohibited.

Ramps shall meet the provisions in the currently adopted IRC and LDC.

Codes & Ordinances Draft

RESOLUTION NO. 20130808-060

WHEREAS, non-profit organizations such as the Texas Ramp Project build accessible ramps that enable individuals to enter and exit their dwelling units safely; and

WHEREAS, in many cases, individuals cannot transition from institutional care to home care because they do not have ramp accessibility to their homes; and

WHEREAS, the existing permitting process for ramps can delay an individual's access to his or her home; and

WHEREAS, staff have implemented expedited review processes for certain applications, such as those related to windows and siding; and

WHEREAS, the individuals who receive assistance from the Texas Ramp Project are referred from agencies such as Meals on Wheels and Hospice Austin and have significant financial need; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Ramp Project uses volunteer teams to build ramps in Austin at no cost to the ramp recipient; and

WHEREAS, most ramps can be constructed for less than \$700, and the city permit cost represents a large percentage of the overall cost relative to other construction projects; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to consider the following revisions as they would apply to non-profit organizations that use 100% volunteer teams to construct accessible ramps at no financial cost to the ramp recipient. The revisions would only apply to existing single family and duplex residential dwelling units.

The City Manager is directed to consider a revised process that would expedite each required review so that applications to construct access ramps to dwelling units by non-profit entities could be reviewed in five business days or fewer. The City Manager is further directed to report back to Council by August 29, 2013 about the proposed process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to review potential amendments to the 2012-2013 Planning Development Review Department fee schedule to reduce or eliminate fees for the construction of ramps for dwelling units built by nonprofit entities for income-eligible individuals. The reduced fees will only apply to an applicant who complies with applicable City regulations. The City Manager should present staff recommendations regarding fees to the Council by August 22, 2013.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council initiates an amendment of Title 25 to exempt ADA-compliant ramps for dwelling units from rear, side, and front setback requirements and directs the City Manager to process the amendment and present it to Council on or before October 3, 2013. The exemption does not apply if the director determines that ramp construction would violate health and safety provisions or interfere with easements or infrastructure.

ADOPTED: August 8, 2013 **ATTEST:** 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk