

Date: March 6, 2024

To: Mayor and Members of City Council 202400742
From: Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager
Subject: ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN AUDIBLE SIGNALS WITH ADDENDUM

Reference Document #202302161

The Council at its session on October 15, 2023 referred the following item for review and report.

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Jeffreys, WE MOVE that the Administration report back within ninety days on a plan to require audible indications for newly constructed facilities, altered portions of existing facilities, and elements added to existing facilities for pedestrian circulation, recommended by Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines; recommendations on distinguishing pedestrian call buttons that will not produce an audible indication; recommendations on the use of the high pitch sound that is currently used rather than a verbal cue that says “walk;” the feasibility of including tactile demarcation in crosswalks that help guide people with visual impairments across the street in the Complete Streets checklist; the administrative procedures that ensure pedestrian call buttons are accessible to people with differing abilities; the City’s policy on the direction/angle curb ramps face at intersections.

The following report by the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) summarizes the plan to upgrade existing and proposed pedestrian traffic signals with audible indications recommended by Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

SUMMARY

The Final Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (Final PROWAG) was published in the Federal Register on August 8, 2023, and will not become enforceable until United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) adopt accessibility standards that are consistent with the PROWAG.

The USDOT has announced that it intends to adopt the PROWAG into regulation with accessibility standards in 2024. DOTE intends to work with the Law Department to revise our design standards to meet the requirements, as specifications are released by the USDOT or Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

EXISTING DOTE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

While Federal and State DOT design standards are updated to be consistent with PROWAG, DOTE has design standards currently in place to assist pedestrians with visual impairment. New and rebuilt curb ramps include tactile demarcation or detectable warnings and will be installed with a

directional orientation to the opposite side of the street, which will provide a directional cue for a pedestrian visually impaired.

Pedestrian pushbuttons are installed in accordance with the specifications of the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) that place pushbuttons reachable by all pedestrians. Currently, audible pushbuttons are installed per OMUTCD that do not require locator tones or verbal cues for pedestrians.

ADDENDUM

Question 1. Prior to the implementation of new federal guidelines, what would it take to proactively implement audible signals in upcoming projects that include intersection improvements?

Answer 1. Since the final Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (Final PROWAG) was published in the Federal Register on August 8, 2023, DOTE is currently designing all new traffic signal projects to meet the new PROWAG audible signal requirements.

Question 2. What types of audible signals are best or most effective? We are open to being creative here.

Answer 2. All new audible signals will have a push button with a continuous locator tone and when pushed, will provide instructions e.g. "WALK" and "WAIT" instead of the current "chirp" sound.

cc: John S. Brazina, Director, Transportation and Engineering