

Experience of Disability in America

**Visit-ability
Accessibility in Your
Community**

Visit-ability





Visit-ability (Inclusive Home Design) is a campaign for **meaningful policy** requiring a few essential access features in *every* new home.

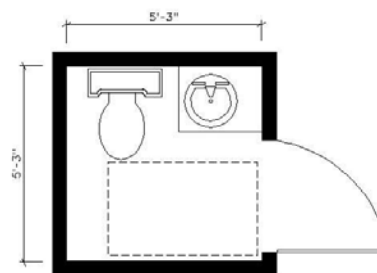
- One zero-step entrance on an accessible route—at the back, side or front of the home, or through the garage



- All main floor interior passage doors with 32 inches *clear passage space*.



- A main floor bathroom with basic maneuvering space.





“They must not have thought about this when they invited me to the party!”



Many people lack resources to modify their home. They spend years unable to exit independently or get through their own bathroom door.





Public Health Effects of Barriers in Home Design

- **Falls**
- **Inability to exit**
- **Bladder/kidney health**
- **Caregiver health**
- **Mental/emotional health**

How many houses?

Of new houses built in 2000, **60%** will have a resident with a long-term, severe mobility impairment at some point during the lifetime of the house itself.*

- *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Summer, 2008

It is not possible to predict in which houses disability will occur.

“Thinking Ahead - We are all just 1 accident away from needing basic access features in our home!

Did you know that:

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the number of persons age 65 and older will grow to 70 million by 2030 (2004 figures)
- Approximately 2 million individuals use wheeled mobility devices (NHIS and Census Bureau, 2004) Even more use them now!!
- A recent study noted that more than 1/3 of older adults reported feeling concerned about being forced into a nursing home as a result of barriers in their home (Hammel et al. 2005).



Cost: Basic Home Access is Extremely Affordable

Added Cost of the 2 most important features on new houses built on a concrete slab:

Zero step entrance: \$100.00

5 wider main floor doors @ \$2 \$ 10.00

\$110.00

Added Cost of the 2 most important features on new houses built over a basement:

Zero step entrance: \$250.00

5 wider main floor doors @ \$2 \$ 10.00

\$260.00

(sources of cost data available on request)

But continuing to build as we are is unaffordable

- **Costs of Renovations (retrofits)**
 - **Medical costs due to injuries resulting from barriers**
- **Increased Institutionalization**

Visit-ability (Inclusive Home Design) is a campaign for **meaningful policy requiring a few essential access features in *every* new home.**

Broad policies have already been put in place in some locales.



**Law: Every new house with access.
Pima County/Tucson AZ (2002)
21,000+ Visitable houses up as of 2012.**



**Law: Every new house with access.
Bolingbrook IL, near Chicago (2002)
3,700+ Visitable houses up as of 2012—
nearly all with basements.**





The fact remains: The great majority of new single-family detached houses and town houses still have steps at all entrances and narrow bathroom doors.

Progress does not occur because time passes.

Progress occurs because people take action.

Visitable Townhouses



East Lake Commons Townhouse Development in DeKalb County, GA







Alexan Village Apartments, 1205 Metropolitan Ave. SE, Atlanta, GA









Achieving Visitability in Rehabs

Renovating Dwellings for Basic Access: A Guide for Construction Professionals

2013, Eleanor Smith and the Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia



Many properties lend themselves naturally to a step-free entrance without using a ramp



Option A. **Fill Dirt** which permits a sidewalk to tie directly in to the porch or stoop. This dirt may be taken from the site itself, or brought in.

See the two examples below:



Option B. . Sometimes the porch is so close to grade that no fill dirt or added grading is necessary.

A thickened sidewalk segment is created so that the sidewalk ties to the porch. See the two examples below:



Option C. The zero-step entrance ties into **the side of the front porch** and runs parallel to the front face of the dwelling. Landscaping such as bushes can be installed near the edge of the ramp or sloped sidewalk to soften the appearance. To achieve this option, existing bushes can be removed from the area adjacent to the foundation of the dwelling; the sidewalk --or a ramp—then constructed; and then new landscaping installed along the ramp or sidewalk. See the two examples below:



The complete renovation tool is available in a free download, in print as a white paper or handy booklet to take to the job site. Get yours today at:

The Statewide Independent Living Council at www.silcga.org or call 770-270-6860