

Inclusive Home Design

A Visitability Ordinance for
Tucson & Pima County, USA



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Topics of Discussion

- Development of the Inclusive Home Design Ordinance
 - The Need for Accessibility
 - Defining a Standard
- Adoption of the Ordinance
 - Timeline of Events
 - Drafting the Details
 - The Community's Input
- Implementing the Standards



Development - The Need for Accessibility

- Tucson is a popular destination for retirement
- More than 17% of the population of Pima County is over the age of 65
- Medical advances and improved access to health care contribute to increased life expectancy
- Approximately 70% of people experience some form of disability during their lifetime (including temporary conditions)
- Housing must be inclusive of the needs of all the citizens in the community including the disabled and the elderly



Development – The Need for Accessibility

- Not everyone that is disabled uses a wheelchair
 - Steps are a road block to a person in a wheelchair but are also difficult to maneuver for people who use a cane or a walker
 - Round door handles are often difficult to operate for those that suffer from anemia, arthritis, bone cancer, Crohn’s disease, cystic fibrosis, lupus, Lyme disease, gout, tendinitis and many other ailments
- Not everyone that benefits from accessibility is disabled
 - The task of caring for a disabled person becomes far more complicated without basic accessibility features
 - Broken bones and other temporary conditions can make the simplest of daily activities extremely difficult
- Often those who are in the greatest need of accessibility are the least likely to afford it



Departmentally, we have become mindful to the needs of occupants in both commercial and residential buildings. It's based on the philosophy that even small and inexpensive upgrades can make a significant improvement to the path of travel for a disabled person.



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Development – Defining a Standard

- Different National Standards Available
 - American's with Disability Act (ADA)
 - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
 - Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS)
- Full compliance to these standards is not cost effective for standardized building plans and tract housing



Adoption – Drafting The Ordinance

- Two draft ordinances were prepared and titled the Inclusive Home Design Ordinance
- Drafts were comprised of five basic elements:
 - Zero step entrance provides accessible route from a public way
 - Accessible doors with 32 inch net width and lever type hardware
 - Minimum 36” width accessible route inside home
 - Reinforcement installed inside bathroom walls around bathtubs, showers and water closets for future installation of grab bars
 - Receptacles, switches and controls located within accessible reach ranges (15-48 inches above finished floor)
- Drafts included an exemption from the ordinance under extenuating circumstances



Adoption - Deciding on the Details

The differences in the two draft proposals included:

1. Applicability

- Applies to all new one, two and three-family dwellings or
- Only applies to residences constructed with government funded assistance

2. Mandatory features

- Accessible bathroom on first floor
- Fully accessible bathroom with turning radius
- Maximum threshold heights at accessible doorways

3. How many and which elements were subject to exemption

- Only one accessible element capable of being waived or
- Entire ordinance waived if significant cost burden determined



Adoption – Ordinance Timeline

- Feb. 2000 – Elezabeth Cameron gives a presentation to community leaders titled Enable 2000
- Apr. 2000 – The Tucson Commission on Disability Issues (CODI) proposed a Visitability Ordinance
- Feb. 2001 – The Tucson City Council established a Visitability Task Force
- Oct. 2001 – Local coalition presents to Board of Supervisors
The coalition included among others: The Tucson Commission on Disability Issues, Pima Council of Aging, Arizona Center for Disability Law, Professional Caregivers Association, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Disability Resource Centers at University of Arizona & Pima Community College
- Feb. 2002 – Pima County adopts the ordinance
- Oct. 2007 – City of Tucson adopts the ordinance



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Adoption – Communication is the Key

- Form coalitions, task forces and committees to discuss the details
- Work with the building community and listen to their concerns
- Use all available resources to determine the impact and benefit to the community



“The most successful way to adopt an ordinance that affects the home builders is to hear their voice. Constituents become far more receptive when they have a seat at the table and the proposal is more meaningful with public discussion.”

–Ernie Duarte
City of Tucson
Director of
Planning & Development



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Implementation

- Inform the building community
 - Architects, draftsmen and other designers
 - Contractors and developers
- Train plan review staff and inspectors
- Provide information that is readily accessible about the ordinance and how to meet the regulations



“While these requirements were at first resisted by builders based on the fact that they would require costly changes to conventional design and construction practices, it became evident that with appropriate planning, the construction could result in no additional cost.”

–Yves Khawam, PhD

Pima County

Chief Building Official



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Internet Links

- The Inclusive Home Design Ordinance as adopted by the City of Tucson

<http://pdsd.tucsonaz.gov/files/pdsd/codes-ordinances/InclusiveHomeDesignOrdinance.pdf>

- Inclusive Home Design Ordinance: Synthesis & Commentary

<http://pdsd.tucsonaz.gov/files/pdsd/codes-ordinances/Inclusive Home Design Commentary.pdf>

- Homes built in Pima County

<http://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=61629>

