

# *Visitability* Train the Trainers Webinar

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Concrete Change

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*[www.visitability.org](http://www.visitability.org)*

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**Note: See the transcript that accompanies these slides on the [visitability.org](http://www.visitability.org) website.**

# Greetings and Overview

# *Part I*

-- Definitions

-- Four major persuasion points

# *What is Visitability?*

Visit-ability (Inclusive Home Design, Basic Home Access, Core Universal Design, or by any other name) is a campaign for **meaningful policy** requiring a **few** essential access features in **every** new home.

In the next slides I'll be expanding on the topic of the "**few**", the "**every**", and "**meaningful policy**".

# Visitability involves “a few essential access features” :

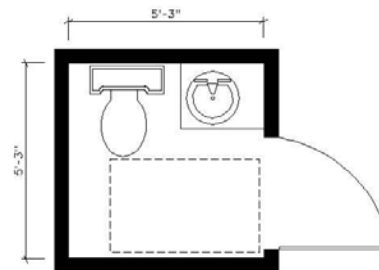
- One zero-step entrance on an accessible route—at the back, side or front of the home, or through the garage



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



- A main floor bathroom with basic maneuvering space.



# Visitability Involves “access features in *every* new home....”

In new houses intended for all,  
not just houses specifically designated for older people or PWD....

In whole neighborhoods, whole towns, eventually whole states....

and whole countries (for example, the United Kingdom, has required  
basic access in every new home since 1998).



Visitable houses from the United Kingdom

**Visitability involves “meaningful policy requiring access features...”**

**These mandates can be laws.**

**Or, the mandates can be policies that are not laws.**

**I will say more about laws and policies in the second part of this presentation.**

# ***What is Not Visitability?***

***(even though each of these is important)***

- **Access to parking, hotels, tourist sites, etc.**
- **A new home designated for PWD.**
- **A retrofit adding access to an existing home for a PWD.**
- **A single, individual home such as a “Universal Design show home” which has numerous access or UD features, but is not replicated by additional homes with basic access in the development or neighborhood.**

# ***Four Persuasion Points***

- **Negative health results of basic home barriers**
- **“The numbers”**
- **The low cost of basic access for new homes**
- **The high financial costs of continuing to build basic barriers in homes)**





**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, by one measure of disability 25% and by the more likely measure **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.***

## Cost: Basic Access in New Homes 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	<u>\$ 10.00</u>
	<b>\$110.00</b>

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	<u>\$ 10.00</u>
	<b>\$260.00</b>

(sources of cost data available on request)

**Continuing to build as we are is unaffordable:**

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

***End of Part I - Pausing Midway for Questions***

# *Part II*

**Success Examples**

**Policy Types – The Good, as well as The Unadvisable**

**Finding Allies and Audiences**

**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 2010.**

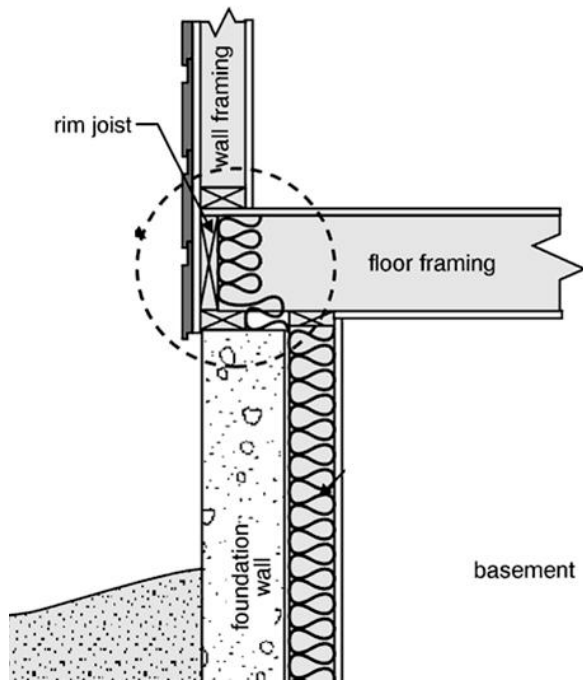


**Law: Every new house with access.  
Bolingbrook IL, near Chicago (2002)  
4,000+ Visitable houses up as of  
2012— nearly all with basements.**

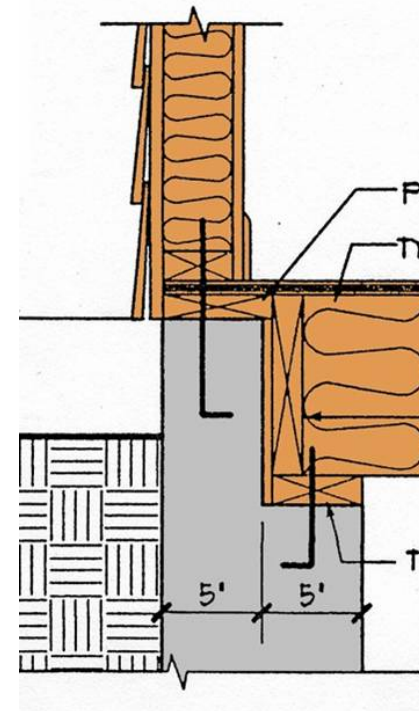
# *Houses on Steep Terrain*



## Inset Floor Joist Method for Houses with Basements or Crawl Spaces



Conventional method: All of the framing is on top of the foundation.



Alternative method: Set the floor joists into a notch at the top of the foundation.

# The Inset Floor Joist Method with basements permits a sidewalk to tie to the porch



# Is a zero-step entrance **ALWAYS** practical?

**Not always.**

**Not if the site offers all  
3 of these challenges:**

**--is steep**

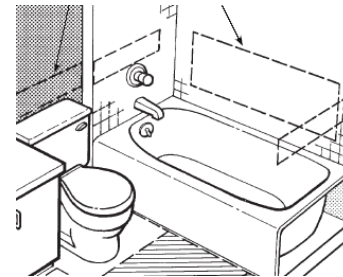
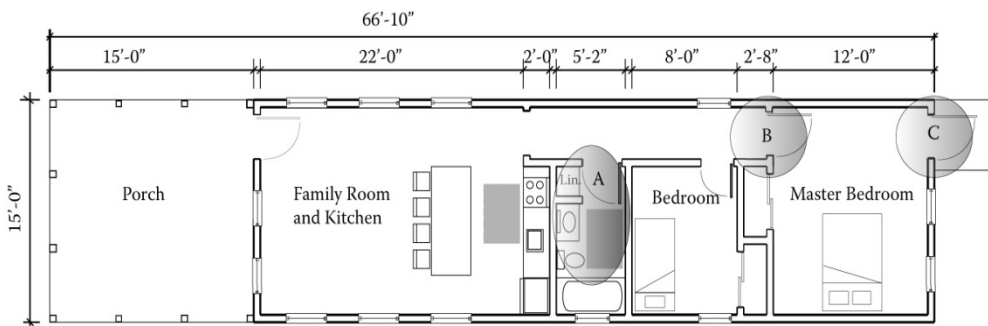
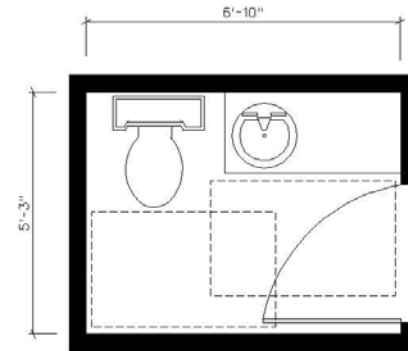
**--AND has no driveway**

**--AND has no back approach.**

**But a zero step entrance has  
been demonstrated to be  
practical in more than 95%  
of cases.**



If you go the route of adding features to the 3 basics of Visitability: You might use the Fair Housing Act as your guide. Several features are required by federal law since 1991 in **all** new multifamily residential buildings with four or more units: public or private, rental or condo.



# Forces opposing Visitability mandates

- The National Association of Home Builders and its state and local affiliates.**
- Often along with them, the National Association of Realtors.**
- The general public at times, because of misunderstanding; philosophical opposition; or ageism and ableism.**

# *Law Initiatives/Examples*

## Examples of Good Visitability Law initiatives:

--Every new house, period.

--Every new house for which the developer or buyer receives any form of federal, state or local Financial Assistance (construction funds, funds for infrastructure such as streets or sewers, first time homeowners down payment assistance, etc). **In other words, laws that tie access requirements to EXISTING benefits which the developer or buyer chooses to take advantage of.**

--Inclusive Home Design Act.

--Laws that allow the developer to receive certain non-financial benefits such as zoning changes for increased density, provided that the must incorporate Visitability.

## Unadvisable Visitability Law Initiatives :

--Laws that give developers NEW financial benefits such as tax breaks

--“Laws” that merely educate and have no actual construction requirements

# *Policy Initiatives: Positive Examples*

--Habitat for Humanity Affiliate Board decisions to Build every new house Visitable—Birmingham AL



--HUD Hope VI -- Extra point for developers' applications for funding—Macon GA



## *Policy Initiatives/Examples, continued*

Ohio Housing Finance Authority:  
Board decision that developers who  
receive the Low Income Tax Credit  
Must incorporate Visitability



Dekalb County (Georgia) Housing  
Authority— Paul Pierce -- approx.  
100 homes whose owners received  
first-time home owners' down  
payment assistance .



# *Policy Initiatives/Examples, continued*

**East Lake Commons--  
Co-housing community  
(Decatur GA): All 67  
homes Visitable.**



**For-profit developer of  
high-end, single-family  
homes:  
All homes visitable.  
(Decatur GA)**



# Alternative to Town Houses



# Potential Allies for Visitability mandates

--Medicare/Medicaid savings groups, whether from the political left or the right, who understand the relationship between Visitability and fewer people in nursing homes.

--EMT's and Fire marshals

--Package delivery companies

--Workers Comp

--Home insurance companies

# ***Good Places for You to Give Presentations***

**Local/state Habitat for Humanity Affiliates**

**Realtors**

**Local/state AARP**

**Affordable Housing boards/developers**

**Chapters of AIA**

**Planning Agencies (e.g., state and local affiliates of the American Planning Association)**

**Green building groups**

**City Councils/Mayors**

**Boards of foundations that give money for home construction**

**Conferences of many types, especially on panels whose topic is not just on disability or aging! (i.e., to new audiences who would not be drawn to aging/disability category)**

***Best wishes for your ongoing  
Visitability Advocacy.***