Design for Life Montgomery

A Program of Montgomery County, MD & Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association
..., for All Ages & Stages of Life

A Voluntary Certification Program for Visit-Ability and Live-Ability in Single Family Attached and Detached Homes

New Construction & Renovation of Existing Homes
Goal

To voluntarily bring basic access into the mainstream of building design in both new construction and renovation.
Basic Home Access Is Convenient For Everyone….

• new mom with a baby stroller
• football player on crutches
• injured soldier or Veteran
• moving furniture into your home
• welcoming to all guests, young and older, who cannot negotiate steps
• all who desire to stay in their own home – who don’t want to move due to changing physical conditions
• convenient for ALL, essential for MANY…

Photo Courtesy of Concrete Change ©

Photo from iStockPhoto
Basic Accessibility...

Not Fair Housing, Not Universal Design!

• Not intended to meet the requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAAG) of 1988, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or of Universal Design.

• Accessibility not required throughout the house.

• Features generally follow principles in the national Visit-ability movement, Georgia’s EasyLiving Home© Program, and some aspects of Universal Design.

• Federal legislation only applies to multifamily dwelling units.
Today’s Typical Home Design: New Construction

Montgomery County Homes – what do these all have in common?

Photos from iStockPhoto
What do they all have in common?

Steps, steps, and more steps!!!
Typical, Not Accessible Design: Existing Older Property

Two steps at entry and within garage

Gaithersburg, MD – Built in 1988
Accessible: But Probably Not Attractive to Average Homebuyer…
Ramps

- Ramps can provide access for new and existing construction
- Ramps can be eliminated with proper site preparation
- In these photos, white stain on the spindles to match these homes and some shrubs would help blend the ramps in with the exterior of this new, and one older renovated home…
- If not done properly, can overwhelm the entrance

*Potomac, MD*  
*District of Columbia*

*Photos Courtesy of Louis Tenenbaum [www.louistenenbaum.com]*
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

A Visit-Able home has...

1. An accessible route from a sidewalk or driveway to a no step entry.

Myth: Most people think the accessible entry must be at the front door.

Fact: Instead, consider any and all entries for accessibility. The entry can be at the front door, back door, side door (any door), deck or through the garage.

Balancing aesthetics and design: Level entry through garage

Rendering Courtesy of Winchester Homes®
Anticipated Delivery Date – Summer, 2008
Example #2:

Front Door No Step Entry: Single Family Home

Boyds, MD –
Photos Courtesy of www.DisabilityGuide.org
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

Example #3:
Front Door No Step Entry: Single Family Home Renovation

Takoma Park, MD

Before

After – retaining wall, lower driveway added garage, windows changed – all design features are on Design for Life website

Accessible entry under porch. Elevator from basement to all levels.

Photos Courtesy of Ken Wyner (photographer) and www.UniversalDesign.com
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

Example #4:
Side Door No Step Entry: Single Family Home Renovation

Montgomery Village, MD

Montgomery Village, MD - Photos Courtesy of Jackie Simon
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

Example #5

Garage No Step Entry: Even though the front entry is level, the garage entry alone meets the level entry requirement.

Boyds, MD – Photos Courtesy of www.DisabilityGuide.org
Back Door/Lower Accessible Entry: Has gate to an accessible walkway off the driveway.
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

Example #7
Front Door/Garage No Step-Entry: Townhome – New Construction

This Visit-Able home has steps to the front door, but also has an accessible route through the garage with the lift behind the partition in front of the car spaces.

The Brownstones at Park Potomac, Photos Courtesy of www.EYA.com
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

Example #8
Front Door No Step Entry: Existing Older Townhome

What We Have Today…
What We Hope for Tomorrow

• Existing County accessible townhomes have typically been built with builders using the increase in density for housing for seniors or persons with disabilities, as defined in Section 59-A-2 of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.

• For future design, the goal is to bring access in the mainstream of building design, hopefully, for all design of new construction and renovation.
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

2. A minimum of 32 inches nominal width for every interior door, on the accessible floor, including bathrooms. Note the 32 inch bathroom door width.
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

3. A circulation path (hallway) that is a minimum of 36 inches nominal width and connects to a powder room / bathroom and one other room that can accommodate visits.

The Brownstones at Park Potomac, Photo Courtesy of www.EYA.com
Design Elements of A Visit-Able Home

4. A powder room/bathroom with sufficient maneuvering space. A 5’ clear floor space is *not* required. By swinging door out, a clear space of 30” x 48” meets the requirement.
Design Elements of A Live-Able Home
Have all the design features of a Visit-Able home plus, a circulation path that connects the accessible entrance to a …

1. Full kitchen

The Brownstones at Park Potomac, Photos Courtesy of www.EYA.com
Design Elements of A Live-Able Home

2. At least one bedroom on an accessible floor.

The Brownstones at Park Potomac, Photo Courtesy of www.EYA.com
3. A full bathroom with sufficient space to allow maneuvering with accessible shower or tub.
4. Or, an elevator to these rooms.

The Brownstones at Park Potomac, Photo Courtesy of www.EYA.com
Influence the Market

• Tell friends and family to request basic accessibility in renovation or new construction. The market will drive this, if the buyer requests it.
Benefits to Builders & Realtors

• By 2009, about 1/3 of the U.S. population will be 50 or older
• Builders will need to step up to meet the needs of buyers
• Enlarged pool of buyers benefits both builders and realtors
• Promotes basic accessible building design, attractive to homebuyers
Benefits to Homeowner/Homebuyer

- Welcomes all visitors
- Safer and easier to live in
- Provides home for life, eliminating the need to move due to changing physical needs of yourself, family or friends
- Increases potential buyer market for your home: a typical home lasting 50 to 75 years will house nine or more different families with differing needs
1. Administered by the County as part of the regular permitting process, not special process:

- A checkbox for review and certification is on the standard application for building permit.
- There are no additional permitting costs, beyond the standard fees.
- For existing homes that already have either features, and choose to be certified, please apply to Permitting for an Alteration Permit. A minimum fee will be charged, inspection completed and will include issuance of a certificate. Accessibility features should be shown on the normal application process site plan drawing and must be shown to scale.

2. After final building inspection, the Department of Permitting Services will issue the Montgomery County Design for Life Montgomery Voluntary Certificate.
The technical guidelines are available online:


and from Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services.

For all design/permitting questions regarding Design for Life Montgomery please contact:

Hemal Mustafa, Permitting Services Manager

240-777-6226 (V)

Hemal.Mustafa@montgomerycountymd.gov
To Get A Similar Program Started In Your Community

1) Need to review local zoning laws.
   ● 2006 – Montgomery County’s Zoning Text Amendment permits access modification in setback areas “by right” rather than zoning variance.

2) Need to include both new construction and renovation for greater impact.
   ● Program implemented in March 2007, and as of March, 2011, Montgomery County Permitting had issued 45 permits. Renovation is where we anticipate the most growth, over time.

3) Duplicate this program using our guidelines.

For history and all related forms and guidelines, go to the Design for Life Montgomery website. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DesignForLifeMontgomery
Endorsed By

League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD
Montgomery County Civic Federation

Housing Opportunities Commission
Montgomery County Commission on Aging
Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities*

Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Montgomery County Office of Human Rights

*Founding Organization
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Logo Design: Jamez Appel and John P.S. Salmen, AIA www.UniversalDesign.com • PowerPoint Design Layout: Carly Clem and Betsy Luecking
We gladly share with all who might want to duplicate this voluntary program in their community, with credit given for portions used.

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www.montgomerycountymd.gov/designforlifemontgomery

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