

# Visitability: Every New Home



**CDC DISABILITY AND HEALTH  
STATE GRANTEE AND PARTNERS CONFERENCE**

**LIVABLE COMMUNITIES  
MARK JOHNSON, SHEPHERD CENTER,  
AND CONCRETE CHANGE PARTICIPANT  
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# Operating Principles



- The goal is for basic access to be part of **every new house**—houses for sale on the open market, not just designated for older people or buyers with disabilities.
- To be **applied in reality**, the feature list must
  - be SHORT
- To be **meaningful**, the features must
  - be the MOST CRUCIAL features for visiting friends and extended family, or for coming home from the hospital to one's own home.

# The essential access features

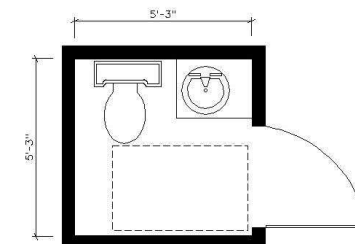
--One zero-step entrance on an accessible route—at the front, back, side, or through the garage.



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



--A main floor bathroom with basic maneuvering space.



# Visitability Milestones



- 1987 - Conceived of the concept and made early materials, contacted housing groups, builders, etc.

1989 – First victory: Atlanta affiliate of Habitat for Humanity agreed to make every new home visitable. More than 800 visitable Atlanta Habitat houses to date.



1992- Passed Atlanta ordinance: first in the world to mandate a zero step entrance on certain private, single-family homes



1998 and following: advocates in Austin TX and other locales begin replicating Atlanta ordinance



Austin – More than 2,700 Visitable houses.

Here, note steps at front, raised alleyway leads to zero-step entrances through the garages.

1998-- HUD agrees to add point for Visitability to certain applications for funding. Thousands of visitable single-family houses and duplexes in scores of locations result, which would not have otherwise had access features.



Memphis TN



Macon GA

2002, 2003, 2007 - First ordinances mandating visitability in EVERY new house (except the small per cent with unusual site difficulties)



2002 - Pima County AZ  
15,000+ visitable houses.



2003 - Bolingbrook IL  
3,600 + visitable houses,  
all with basements.

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2007 - Tucson AZ –  
Every new house beginning January 08.



In spite of some progress, the fact is that the great majority of new houses are built with steps at all entrances and narrow interior doors, especially bathroom doors.

We believe Visitability, or its absence, has major health and safety implications.

We hope you will partner with us in research and education initiatives.

[www.concretechange.org](http://www.concretechange.org)