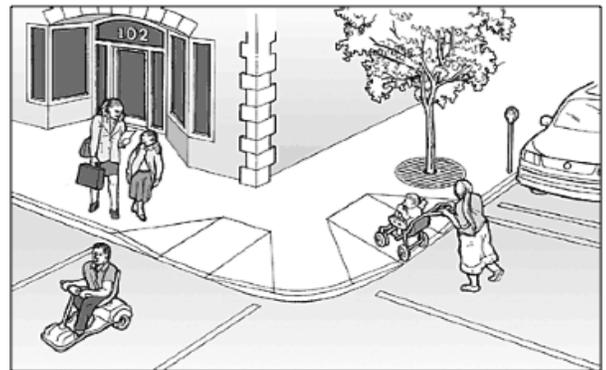


APPENDIX 4: STRATEGIES FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH PHYSICAL NEEDS

Affordable housing needs to be inclusive of all types of users. Housing choice should be available for all segments of the community, should be able to be adapted as users and needs change, and should be easily visited by all members of the population. Developing for households with special needs is a major part of the design parameters of an affordable housing program. The following are various types of accessibility in regards to housing options:

- Visitability is based on the principle that all new homes should include basic features that make them accessible to people regardless of their physical abilities.
- Adaptable housing refers to dwellings with design features that are easily adapted at a later date to flex with the changing needs of the occupants. This means the adaptations require less work at less cost.

Figure A4 – 1: Visitability Feature



Source: LAWalks.org

- The term Accessible describes a site, building, facility, or portion thereof that complies with these standards and that can be approached, entered, and used by physically disabled people.
- The intent of Universal Design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal Design benefits people of all ages & abilities

One approach for delivering affordability while also providing for households with special needs, has always been to provide the minimum number of fully accessible units, as required by the Fair Housing Act wherever applicable. However, it is recommended that the Housing Master Plan promote the development of the tools necessary to make as many units visitable and adaptable as possible, especially on all ground floor units. A “visitable home” has a main level that is easy for both residents and guests to enter and exit with ease.

A house is visitable when it meets three basic requirements :

- One zero-step entrance.
- Doors with 32 inches of clear passage space
- One bathroom on the main floor you can get into in a wheelchair

In general there is a 25 to 50 square foot increase for an accessible unit as compared to a non accessible unit with the same number of bedrooms and bathrooms. If planned properly the cost for providing accessible units in a new building can be negligible. For example, the requirements for providing a 4 fixture bathroom (sink, toilet, tub, and shower) in a non-accessible unit is virtually the same in cost and size as 3 fixture bathroom (accessible sink, toilet, and shower) in an accessible unit. There are usually multiple accessibility codes and requirements, which can oftentimes be conflicting, that will need to be reviewed before a final decision about a direction on types and numbers of accessible units is made to avoid the need for retrofitting, which is when accessibility generally is the most costly.

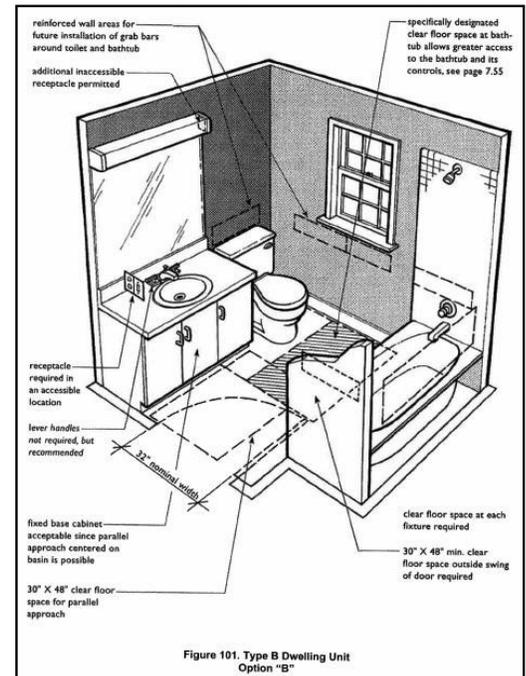
In terms of adaptability, certain design features are built-in for future accessibility:

- Blocking for grab bars
- Adjustable countertop height
- Tiling before fitting cabinetry, so knee-space clearance & accessible cabinetry can be installed later
- Adjustable height bench/counters that can be moved up & down to suit each user in the home

This approach reduces the requirement of the developer to build units that may not be attractive to the market, but can be converted more easily if the need arises. This approach is a good “compromise” between mandating/inducing full accessibility and creating developments that would require costly retrofits to be adapted for a person with needs.

Uniformity in unit size is important in keeping the costs of providing affordable accessible units in check. With careful advance planning adaptable units can be designed to flex between accessible and non-accessible market-rate units. Fully-accessible bathrooms (rental units or hotel rooms) are undesirable in the marketplace, so those units are the last to rent and often require a 10% rental rate discount because of the bathrooms.

Figure A4 – 2: Adaptability Guidelines - ANSI Type B



Source: LAWalks.org

The principal of Universal Design stresses the importance of use by all individuals. This includes elements to assist with visual and hearing-impaired residents. It also ensures that spaces works for non-classified special needs. Visitability and accessibility is needed from the very young to the elderly. The Principles of Universal Design include:

- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple & intuitive
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach & use