



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

Recommendation Number: (20130311-107): The purpose of the recommendation is to include the remaining Visitability Requirements into City Code.

Whereas, Council is scheduled to adopt the international residential code and local amendments in May 2013;
Whereas, in 2008 council adopted two elements from the Visitability ordinance requirements;
Whereas, the City of Austin has been a leader in accessibility for all citizens;
Whereas, cities such as San Antonio, Atlanta, St. Petersburg, Tucson and Long Beach have adopted similar housing ordinances;
Whereas, the issue of housing, aging in place, and visitability are critical to a growing number of our citizens;
Whereas, approximately 20% of the population has a disability, an increasing number of citizens are reaching retirement age, and an increasing number of our returning veterans will need mobility assistance;
Whereas, the City's Architectural Barrier Removal Program (ABR) has expended over 12 million dollars over the last ten years to assist citizens in modifying their homes for needed accessibility such as accessible entrances and modifications to bathrooms for increased independence;
Whereas, the ABR program has limited funding and recently reported that at mid-year all fiscal year funding has been expended leaving citizens on waiting lists.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities recommends that Council adopt the remaining visitability elements per the attached technical language to the International Residential Code to further enhance the availability of housing for our veterans, senior citizens, and citizens with disabilities.

Date of Approval: March 11, 2012

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 6-0 vote (one vacancy)

Attest: _____

Dalares González

See attached Back up next page

INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE AMENDMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR NEW SINGLE FAMILY AND TWO FAMILY

IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

1. Recommend inclusion of the staff recommendation language for Sections R320.1, R320.2, R320.2.1, R320.2.2, and R320.3 in the ordinance adopting the 2012 International Residential Code with local amendments. RATIONALE: There is no known controversy associated with any of these amendments that have been developed through an extensive stakeholder process. These proposed code amendments will require a first floor bathroom with at least a toilet and a sink, and that bathroom will have an entrance that meets long-standing Visitability ordinance standards for entrance and blocking. These proposed amendments will also require a visitable route throughout the first floor in new homes so there is access for people with disabilities through the first floor living room, kitchen, and visitable bathroom. Finally, these proposed amendments will require accessible heights for switches, thermostats, and receptacles/plugs on the first floor. Elements of accessibility/visitability will be enhanced by requiring these standards in the International Residential Code amendments for the first time. The cost of building S.M.A.R.T. Housing as compared to market-rate new single-family and two-family homes will decrease as more visitability elements become part of requirements for all new one and two family homes in Austin, resulting in a positive impact on housing affordability.
2. Replace the staff recommendation language for R320.4 and R320.4.1 with the following: R320.4 Except as otherwise provided in this section, this article applies to the new construction of single-family and two-family dwelling for which a building permit application was filed after December 31, 2015.
3. R320.4.1 This article does not apply to any application that meets the waiver requirements of 5-1-133 of the Austin City Code.
4. R320.4.2 DEFINITIONS ACCESSIBLE ROUTE has the meaning prescribed by Article 1 (International Building Code) of Chapter 25-12 of the Code. FIRST STORY has the meaning prescribed by Article 1 (International Building Code) of Chapter 25-12 of the Code. HABITABLE SPACE has the meaning prescribed by Article 1 (International Building Code) of Chapter 25-12 of the Code. RAMP is a walking surface that has a running slope steeper than one unit vertical in 20 units horizontal (5-percent slope) and complies with Chapter 10 and Chapter 11, Article 1 (International Building Code) of Chapter 25-12 of the Code.
5. R320.4.3 Building Entrance At least one building entrance that is served by an accessible route shall be provided at the front, side, or back of a dwelling with habitable space on the first floor.
6. R320.4.4 A walking surface from a garage, ramp, sidewalk, or public right-of-way within 200 feet of the building entrance is considered an accessible route provided that any ramp installed complies with Article 1 of the adopted Building Code (International Building Code).
7. R320.4.5 A building entrance shall be considered a no-step entrance if the maximum distance between the interior level of the building entrance and the adjacent walking surface level is one-half (1/2) inch.
8. RATIONALE: This substitute recommendation incorporates all of the building entrance elements and exemptions of the Visitability Ordinance that was first adopted by the City Council in 1998 while creating a transition of more than two years for affected builders to transition to these standards on lots where topographical constraints are not present. The draft staff recommendation would grandfather lots in every existing subdivision in Austin and every subdivision where an application was filed prior to January 1, 2016. The draft staff

recommendation would allow builders to exempt additional lots that they deemed impractical because the specific long-standing standards for waivers based on topography, historic districts, and small lots are not incorporated in the staff draft. If the language for exemptions need to be adjusted because of recently published ICC/ANSI 117.1 standards for visitability or Land Development Code amendments promoting accessibility that could emerge from the Imagine Austin implementation process over the next several years, the draft language will allow the current or a future Council to consider additional amendments long before these building entrance requirements become effective.

9. Elements of accessibility/visitability will be enhanced by requiring these building entrance standards and exemptions in the International Residential Code amendments for the first time. The cost of building S.M.A.R.T. Housing as compared to market-rate new single-family and two-family homes will decrease as more visitability elements become part of requirements for all new one and two family homes in Austin, resulting in a positive impact on housing affordability.