

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	27191	Agenda Number	85.
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Meeting Date:	12/12/2013	Department:	Planning and Development Review
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Subject

Approve second and third readings of an ordinance amending the Residential Code, codified in City Code Chapter 25-12, to require additional visitability (accessibility) standards for residential single-family and duplex construction. THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THIS ITEM WAS HELD AND CLOSED ON MAY 23, 2013.

Amount and Source of Funding

Fiscal Note

Purchasing Language:

Prior Council Action:

October 18, 2007 – Council adopted 2006 International Residential Code with local amendments.
June 18, 2008 – Council adopted the residential accessibility requirements.

For More Information:

Dan McNabb, 512-974-2752.

Boards and Commission Action:

February 7, 2013 – Approved by the Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals on a 4-1 vote with Board Member Thorn-Leeson abstaining from the vote.
February 7, 2013 - Recommended by the Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities.
August 12, 2013 – Recommended by the Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities supporting staff’s visitability ordinance and to also include a fee in lieu program.

MBE / WBE:

Related Items:

Additional Backup Information

The City Council adopted the accessibility ordinance June 18, 2008, which codified accessibility in the *Residential Code* for new construction effective January 1, 2009. The International Residential Code (IRC) provides a statewide standard for the home construction industry. The proposed ordinance establishes additional visitability requirements to the current accessibility standards for residential single family and duplex construction.

City staff recommends adopting the additional requirements. The Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities supported the additional requirements at the February 7, 2013 Building and Fire Code Board meeting, and again at the Committee’s August 12, 2013 meeting

One recommendation is to require that new dwelling units with habitable space on the first floor must be constructed with a bathroom or a half bath on the first story. The code currently states that the opening be at least 30 inches wide. The current code also states that the walls will be reinforced with wood blocking to accommodate grab bars.

The second recommendation is to require that light switches, located in the bathroom or half bath must be no higher than 48 inches above the interior floor level, and that receptacles shall be a minimum of 15 inches above the interior floor level.

The third recommendation is to provide a visitability route to include all the common areas in a home such as the kitchen, living room, dining room, and bathroom, and to have a clear minimum width opening of 32 inches. Existing structures that are remodeled in accordance with the current adopted Remodel Ordinance 20100624-149, or otherwise, are not included to meet this requirement.

The fourth recommendation is to provide an exterior route to the no step entrance for newly developed lots and all new structures built on existing lots when practicable based on topography submitted for review after January 1, 2016. Existing structures that are remodeled in accordance with the current adopted Remodel Ordinance 20100624-149, or otherwise, are not included to meet this requirement.