

How do I improve my doorways?

- ♦ All interior passage doors need to be a minimum of 2 feet 10 inches which leaves 32 inches of clear space when the door is open at 90 degrees. Although 2'10" are not yet commonly stocked in home improvement stores, they are readily available from the door companies where professional builders buy their supplies. Thirty six inch doors are excellent where space permits. Pocket or sliding doors are another way to obtain 32 inches of clear passage space. Special attention needs to be paid to the bathroom door because this is the one typically smaller than other doors in the home.
- ♦ Usually a builder need not employ an architect to modify an existing house plan to accept wider doors; usually the existing plan already offers enough wall space for wider doors and the wider doors can be indicated by simply marking the plan.
- ♦ It is not essential to have a large turning diameter inside a residential bathroom; in a small bathroom, the wheelchair user can roll in forward and roll out backward. It is essential to have a 32" path to the commode.
- ♦ The bathroom door can be hinged to swing out rather than in to give a person using a wheelchair enough room to shut the door when inside the room.

Visit-ability features make economic sense.

A note from the Mayor's Desk

As you consider new construction or renovation, I urge you to plan for the needs of both the handicapped and aging populations. The visit-able home concept will allow for those in our community with mobility impairments the access they require to either visit a residence or make it their home. Inclusion of a few basic architectural features in your design will easily improve the livability of your new or renovated home. Let's make everyone feel at home in our community!

Joseph E. Sinnott, Mayor
626 State Street
Erie, PA 16501

VISIT-ABLE
HOMES



PROMOTING VISIT-ABLE
COMMUNITIES

VISIT-ABLE
HOMES



To find out more call:
City of Erie
Community Development
Specialist: 870-1469

What is Visit-Ability?

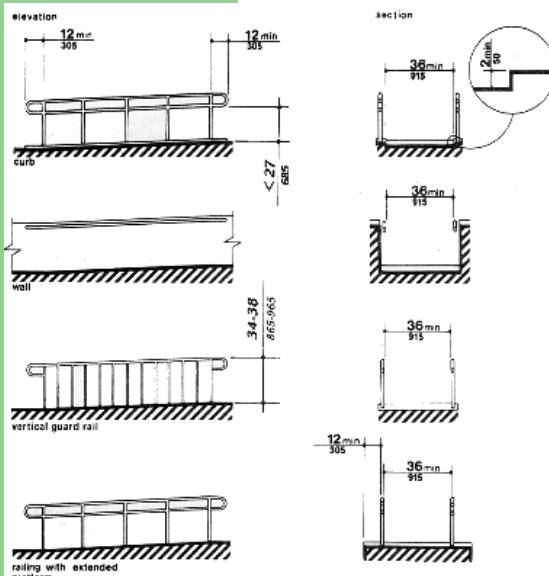
Most homes have steps at every entrance, and have bathroom doors that are narrower than other interior passage door.

Visitable homes have:

- One entrance with zero steps
- 32" clear passage through all interior doors, **including bathrooms**.
- At least a half bathroom (preferably a full bathroom) on the main floor.

Visitable homes are deliberately designed with basic access by residents who are not disabled. Visit-ability is a campaign for these features to become standard in virtually all new homes, through legislation, voluntary implementation, market forces and strong advocacy from interested individuals.

Planning on building a ramp? Here are some basic measurements that you need to know.



What are the Benefits?

- ◆ Residents in the community can welcome guests who use wheelchairs or walkers, or have some other mobility impairment such as stiffness, weakness or poor balance. When **Visit-ability** is in place, mobility-limited people are **not isolated by architecture**.
- ◆ If a family member develops a disability through illness, accident or aging, the person and their family are more likely to **be able to remain in their existing home**, rather than having to do major, expensive renovation or move to another house, or a nursing home.
- ◆ **All residents find it easier** to bring in baby strollers, grocery carts and heavy furniture.
- ◆ It is also fun to keep the **family together**.
- ◆ Visitable homes **enhance sale and re-sale** in an era where senior demography is growing rapidly. Buyers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy-use convenience for themselves.
- ◆ Visit-ability features **cost little up front**—unlike the much higher after-the-fact cost of widening doors and adding ramps.



Zero-step entrances on new homes are nearly always **easy to construct**, on flat or hilly terrain. The entrance can be at the front, side or back, wherever is most feasible for the topography. A **zero-step entrance** can usually be incorporated without a “ramp” by grading so that the sidewalk meets a porch. For the 40% of homes built on a concrete slab, the **zero-step entrance** is typically extremely easy. For homes with basements or crawl spaces, solutions such as sitting the home properly on the lot, using a porch as a bridge to the sidewalk, lowering the first-floor rim-joist, creative use of small retaining walls, constructing the zero-step entrance from the garage and other methods provide low-cost zero step entries.



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