WAVERLY WEST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING

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- I am currently working as a Community Resource Specialist for The Canadian Paraplegic Association, Manitoba Division. Housing issues affect 99% of my clientele
- Being a Paralympic Athlete for the past 12 years, I have traveled around the world and have been exposed to many environments based on various economic situations
- I am pleased to be presenting today on behalf of the City of Winnipeg's, Access Advisory Committee, Housing Subcommittee

INTRODUCTION

In 1997 the city of Beirut was rebuilt after devastation from a civil war. Developers rebuilt the city based on a master plan which required an element of Visit-ability to be included in all new buildings. This is full citizenship through design

In Malaysia, the attitude is “we can’t afford segregation so in turn, we have inclusion

Recently, a Manitoba Government in-fill housing project in the core area of Winnipeg required that the developers include Visit-able housing philosophies in their proposal. It was successfully completed

In June 2003, Bolingbrook, IL passed a Visit-ability ordinance requiring basic access in all new homes. By June 2004, more than 3,000 Visit-Able Homes had been constructed.

According to an article in the Winnipeg Free Press on December 19, the province of Manitoba promises that:

- WAVERLY WEST WILL NOT BE JUST ANOTHER 'COOKIE-CUTTER' SUBURB
- WAVERLY WEST WILL BE ECONOMICALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE
- WAVERLY WEST PARKS AND TRANSIT SERVICES WILL BE MORE ACCESSIBLE

- Being a “ground-up” project, Waverley West would provide opportunities for developers to incorporate visit-able attributes at the onset with minimal additional costs
- Visit-able housing will facilitate the building of homes for the widest spectrum of people possible.
- Visit-able housing will discourage developers from making ‘cookie cutter’ suburbs, thus making a more unique development

WHAT IS VISIT-ABLE HOUSING?

- An affordable, sustainable and inclusive design approach for integrating basic accessibility features into all newly built homes and houses

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING DESIGN FEATURE # 1

- **One** zero step entrance into the home, from an accessible path of travel that is 36 inches wide
- Includes a maximum 5% slope for walkways or 8% slope for driveways or ramps

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING DESIGN FEATURE # 2

- Doorways should have a minimum of 32 inches clear width throughout the entire main floor plan and hallways should have a minimum of 36 inches of clear width

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING
DESIGN FEATURE # 3

- Basic access to at least a half-bath on the main floor for which everyone can use

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING
ADVANTAGE # 1

Basic access features confirms full citizenship, civil and human rights and in turn improves livability for all

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 2

Visit-able housing would promote and permit full social participation in community and contribute to interaction with neighbors

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 3

The ease of applying visit-able housing is reasonable. It is a crucial step towards full citizenship and the ongoing application of the City of Winnipeg's Universal Design policy. "Building spaces for as many individuals as possible."

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 4

Visit-ability focuses on the three structural features most essential for a person with mobility impairments to visit a home once and possibly even on an ongoing or permanent basis

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 5

Visit-able housing makes houses relatively easy to adapt in the future, allowing current residents to remain in their homes as they age, rather than being forced to move as more supports to maintain functional independence

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 6

Visit-able housing provides benefits to a wide range of users including those with disabilities, their nuclear family, friends and relatives who may from time to time, need to use wheelchairs or other adaptive equipment.

VISIT-ABLE HOUSING ADVANTAGE # 7

“ Wouldn’t It Be Nice To Move Appliances And Furniture Into A New Home Without Having To Remove The Doors or windows?”

DISPUTING MYTHS ABOUT VISIT-ABLE HOUSING

MYTH # 1

The Equal Importance Fallacy: The percentage of homes with access should be roughly equal to the percentage of people who currently have disabilities

Discussion for Myth # 1

- Visiting other people's homes is as important to people with functional limitations as it is to other people
- Those homes already built on a Visit-Able Housing floor plan are easier to adapt to full accessibility when the need arises
- Such homes allow people to remain in them and the community as they age.
- Any member of a community can acquire a permanent or short term disability at anytime.

MYTH # 2

The Equal Importance: All the required features in typical access codes are of equal importance, from the height of the mirrors to the width of the doors.

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 2

- Visit-Able Housing is meant to augment, not substitute for fully accessible housing elsewhere in neighbourhoods
- For the short term visitor, the most important needs are getting in and out of the home independently and fitting through the interior doors comfortably.
- For longer visits access to a ground floor bathroom is important

MYTH # 3

Aesthetic Concerns: Visit-Able Housing features are unattractive

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 3

- In many cases, Visit-Able Housing homes are indistinguishable from conventional homes.
- If done properly Visit-Able features are integrated into the design and are not noticeable.
- Many consumers view these design features as attractive assets because of their increased usability.

MYTH # 4

Expenses: The expense of including Visit-Able Housing features is high.

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 4

- Visit-Able Housing is most easily achieved if it is incorporated in the housing design at the planning stages. At this stage, the costs would be $100 for homes on a concrete slab and $300-$600 for homes with a crawl space or basement.
- Extra space to include the features is insignificant.
- The cost for retrofitting would be higher. However, the cost to then make the home fully accessible at a later date would be much less

MYTH # 5

Siting Costs: A zero-step entrance is only feasible when building on a concrete slab.

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 5

- When using the lay of the land as an advantage, a sloping lot is often easier to work with than a flat lot.
- Access to the rear of the building, at the high side, provides Visit-Able Housing units without changing the front or side of the building at all.

MYTH # 6

Design Restraints: A zero-step entrance is only feasible when building on a concrete slab

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 6

- Building with a basement or crawl space does not make a zero-step entrance infeasible. The grade of the surrounding land can be adjusted to eliminate steps without requiring a ramp. Depending on the site conditions, this may require a deeper basement to bring the first floor to level grade.

DISCUSSION FOR MYTH # 6 CONTINUED

In the daily lives of people without disabilities, a zero-step entrance is private and makes it easier to carry groceries, bicycles and other heavy objects in and out.

EXAMPLE 1 OF VISIT-ABLE HOUSING



EXAMPLE 2 OF VISIT-ABLE HOUSING



EXAMPLE 3 OF VISIT-ABLE HOUSING



CONCLUSION

- With the ‘Baby-Boomers’ taking over, the demand for more accessible and/or Visit-Able Housing is on the rise. In newer housing developments there exists an opportunity to build the kind of housing that will allow people to age in place. Developers & builders have a responsibility to supply the demand for this need.