



Livable for a Lifetime  
*Applying Universal Design  
 in homes & communities*

## Applying Universal Design In Communities

### Livable for a Lifetime

A community is livable for a lifetime when it has a diversity of affordable housing types, supportive community features and services, and reasonable mobility options, which together foster personal independence and residents engaged in civic and social life.

### Universal Design

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people regardless of their ability or age, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

In our neighborhoods and communities, universal design can simplify life for everyone by making the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

**UNIVERSAL DESIGN:**  
 The design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.

### The Need for Universal Design and Livable for a Lifetime Communities

Over the next 25 years, our region will experience a dramatic increase in its senior population. During the period 2000 to 2010, the total population is expected to increase by 16%, compared to 24% for those 65 and older and 40% for those 85 and over. By 2020 those ages 65 and older will grow by 77% compared to 32% for the total population. By 2025, those 65 to 84 will grow by 109% and those 85 and older by 99%. **From 2000 to 2025 the population of residents 65+ will double.**



*All people benefit from an easily accessible sidewalk*

As our population ages, the number of seniors with disabilities also increases. For example, for the population over 65 with a disability, 69% have a physical disability. However, for the population ages 16 to 64 with a disability, only 34% have a physical disability. **Regardless of age, those with a disability constitute more than 15% of the population.**

Universal Design principles help make Livable for a Lifetime

communities meet the needs of seniors, people with disabilities and people of all ages and ability.

## The Principles of Livable for a Lifetime Communities

In order to achieve Livable for a Lifetime communities, we must

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Foster communities with a strong sense of place
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Encourage compact building design in neighborhoods, villages and cities

## Achieving Livable for a Lifetime Communities

The physical characteristics of a community play a major role in achieving the principles of Livable for a Lifetime. A Livable for a Lifetime community has:

- Single family homes, apartments, townhouses and other housing types constructed or retrofitted with universal design features
- Neighborhoods that are traversable by all persons regardless of age or ability
- A mix of land uses – residential, commercial, civic, and employment – available to community members regardless of age or ability
- Community members, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities, participating in the community planning process
- Identifiable neighborhoods that benefit all people, particularly if the neighborhood includes a mix of uses
- Transportation choices, particularly public transit, are both provided and accessible to people regardless of age or ability
- The elderly and people with disabilities people benefiting from the ability to live within their current neighborhoods. The concept “aging in place” is made easier in Livable for a Lifetime communities
- Compact building design helps preserve open space and makes moving from building to building easier and more realistic for people of all ages and abilities



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