From the Beginning

When planned from the beginning of the design and construction process, a zero-step entrance works on steep lots as well as flat lots.

No matter the term…
Constructing a zero-step entrance, wide interior doors and a usable bathroom in "regular" homes for the open market is an innovation whose time has come.

Building on Experience

- In 1989, an Atlanta affiliate of Habitat for Humanity began making every one of its new homes visitable. More than 800 visitable Atlanta Habitat houses have been built.

- In 1992, the Atlanta ordinance was passed. It was the first in the world to mandate a zero step entrance on certain private, single-family homes.

- In 1998, advocates in Austin, TX and other locals began replicating the Atlanta ordinance. There are now more than 3,000 visitable houses in Austin.

First ordinances mandating visitability in EVERY new house:

- 2002 – Pima County, AZ: More than 15,000 visitable houses.

- 2003 – Bolingbrook, IL: More than 3,600 visitable houses, all with basements.


For more information on Visitability, please visit:
Concrete Change
www.concretechange.org

Visit-ability
Basic Access in Every New Home
Built for the Open Market

RTC: Rural
The University of Montana Rural Institute
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A Visitable home is built for the open market, not specifically for people with disabilities, with three specific access features.

The essential access features of a Visitable home include:

1. One zero step entrance on an accessible route—at the front, back, side, or through the garage.

2. All main floor interior passage doors with 32 inches clear passage space.

3. A half or full main floor bathroom with basic maneuvering space.

Square Footage
Adding square footage to the home is not necessary as a solution—even in very small houses. In a minority of cases, a few inches of space need to be shaved from an adjacent room or a more open plan chosen.

Most stock house plans showing narrow doors already have ample wall space for the builder simply to write in a wider door specification, without re-drawing plans.

Moisture Protection
Moisture protection for zero-step entrances in homes can be accomplished by applying normal waterproofing procedures. Just as for commercial buildings, the combination of a good-quality door seal, a sloping porch floor and an overhang above the door has proven to provide long-term, reliable moisture protection at residential zero-step entrances. Thousands of Visitable homes throughout all climates have confirmed this in practice.

Bathrooms
If bathroom size does not permit a 5-foot turning circle, a 48”x30” rectangle of open floor space adjacent to each fixture can provide maneuvering room. In a small half-bath, the door can be hinged to swing out to facilitate a wheelchair- or walker-user closing the door when inside the room, or a pocket door can be installed.

Why should basic access be built in virtually every new home?

1. Low Cost
When planned-in-advance, basic access typically costs from $100 for new homes on a concrete slab to $500 for homes with basements. Retrofitting an existing house is usually expensive, may be hard to coordinate during a health crisis, and often is awkward looking.

2. Aging in Place
Visitable homes allow a person to age in their home instead of an institution.

3. Convenience
Basic access benefits people with disabilities as well as non-disabled people. A step-free entrance and ample interior door widths are convenient for all.

Visit-ability
Visitability means people with mobility limitations are not isolated by architecture.