

Residential Building Accessibility



The RDBN is motivated to ensure the region is an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our society, including persons with disabilities. An important part of this work is removing physical and social barriers and making buildings and public spaces more accessible. Providing accessible spaces that can be used safely, independently and with confidence empowers people of all abilities to live, work and play in their communities.

Universal design is a term that describes those features that enable people of all ages and abilities to enjoy a product. For housing, universal design features typically include elements such as main-floor bathrooms, roll-under sinks in kitchens and bathrooms, lever faucets and door handles, wider doorways, grab bars, and improved lighting. For older adults and people with disabilities, accessible building design can make the difference between aging in place and having to move to another setting.

A home designed with visitability

offers a more modest set of features for the main level of a detached home. These include at least one zero-step entrance and a bathroom and bedroom on the main level.

These features are not difficult to build into new homes, and homes built with universal design features look much like other homes.

Many residents (and their friends and family) do not recognize the importance of such features until they find themselves physically impaired in some way.



RDBN Planning Department

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Making Residential Buildings More Accessible

There are a number of benefits to incorporating universal features into your home. Many features such as grab bars can be easily retrofitted, however some features such as wider hallways must be completed during construction. Universal design features make a home more useable for everyone and can add value to your home. It also makes your home more visitable and may allow you to age in place.

Home Entrance

1. One entrance without steps and a flat threshold or a ramp with minimal slope
2. Minimum 60" by 60" level maneuvering space at stepless entrance
3. Outdoor walks with a firm and even surface and a continuous path of travel
4. 36" minimum exterior door with lever hardware

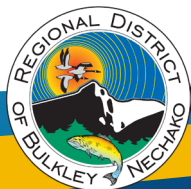


Bedrooms

1. A room that can be used as a master bedroom on the main level
2. Height adjustable closet shelves and clothes rod
3. Maneuvering room between bed and closet
4. 60" turning radius in bedroom

General Interior

1. Hall widths of 42" (where possible)
2. 36" minimum interior doors with lever hardware
3. Maneuvering space at doors (60" by 60")
4. Increased number of electrical outlets (18" min height) for additional lighting and alarm indicators, especially in bedrooms
5. Flashing and audible fire/smoke detectors
6. Rocker or paddle-type light switches 44" max above floor
7. Low pile carpet or smooth anti-slip flooring
8. View windows at 36" max height
9. Front-mounted controls on washer and dryer
10. Stairs with a closed riser
11. Stairs with handrails on both sides and handrail extensions



Need more information?

Our Planning Department staff are here to help.



Kitchens

1. Clear floor space with a 60" min turning circle
2. Adaptable cabinets to reveal knee-space at sink and under work surface near cooking appliance
3. Cooktop or range with front or side-mounted controls and staggered burners to eliminate dangerous reaching
4. Exposed piping and any sharp or hot elements in any knee-space should be insulated or concealed
5. Single-lever faucet controls
6. Adjustable height shelves in wall cabinets
7. Refrigerator/freezer with freezer in the bottom or side-by-side refrigerator/freezer
8. Variable height counter surfaces
9. Continuous counter between stove and sink
10. Loop or other easy-to-use handles on drawers and cabinets
11. Task lighting



Bathrooms

1. At least one three-piece bathroom on the main level that is accessible
2. Clear floor space in room with 60" diameter turning circle
3. Adaptable cabinets with under sink knee-space
4. Broadly applied blocking (reinforcement) inside walls around toilets and bathing fixtures for future installation of grab bars
5. Offset controls in tub or shower to minimize stooping, bending and reaching
6. Lever-type sink faucets
7. Toilet in a 48" by 56" space with centerline of toilet 18" from wall
8. Curbless showers, if installed, at least 36" by 60", plus a standard tub
9. 32" min lavatory counter height with lever faucet control
10. Adaptable cabinets to reveal knee-space under lavatory - exposed piping in knee-space should be padded or concealed
11. When tub or shower are installed, select models designed to accept a portable bench or bathing seat
12. Adjustable height hand-held shower head in addition to standard fixed shower head
13. Anti-scald devices on all plumbing fixtures
14. Mirror positioned to backsplash



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