



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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March 24, 2008

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

#### House Concurrent Resolution 121/House Resolution 103 - Encouraging Real Estate Developers, Designers, and Architects in Hawaii to Incorporate Universal Design Principles into the Design of their Real Estate Projects

The Disability and Communication Access Board supports House Concurrent Resolution 121/House Resolution 103 which seeks to increase the accessibility features of real estate projects to promote access for persons with disabilities.

Universal design is different from accessible design, which is limited to code compliance specifications unique to persons with disabilities. Universal design, on the other hand, is a design principle, rather than a code, which is intended to create an environment that is usable to all persons, not just persons with disabilities. Universal design does not feel like special design for a select population; rather, it has features of universal applicability for a population over the full spectrum of a lifetime.

It should be noted that single-family residential homes have no accessibility requirements in code. However, they can incorporate universal design principles in order to accommodate all potential inhabitants and visitors. This concept is called 'visitability,' where your home may not need to be accessible for a resident without a disability, but should have features that will allow visitors to come to the site. We encourage the resolution to mention this concept of visitability with respect to real estate projects which are of the single family residential nature.

We support the passage of this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA M. NIELSEN  
Chairperson  
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Peter Durkson [duroy@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 6:28 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** Universal Design HCR 121 & HR 103  
**Attachments:** NEW HOME UNIVERSAL DESIGN OPTION CHECKLIST.rtf

ATTENTION: Robert Herkes & Marilyn Lee HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

Please accept this testimony regarding HCR 121 & HR 103 being considered on 24 March 2008 at 230 pm in Room 325.

This bill which proposes the incorporation of universal design into real estate can be greatly strengthened by adding the Lifespan Homebuilding zoning ordinance proposition currently on the desk of the Mayor of Maui.

While your initiatives are recommending the incorporation of universal design into real estate projects, our Lifespan Building initiative actually spells out how universal design which fosters accessible design can be implemented in residential building practices.

Our rapidly aging population is going to have a difficult time aging in barrier filled homes which make up a majority of all Hawaiian residences.

Requiring real estate developers and builders to offer optional accessibility features to new home buyers will send a statement to all builders and eventually create competition amongst many builders who'll want to be recognized for offering truly accessible and senior friendly homes.

I strongly urge you to strengthen your resolution with this same requirement.

Mahalo nui loa,

Peter Durkson, Chairman  
Maui County Council on Aging  
(808) 250-2216

lack of foresight article.txt  
Maui NewsMomentum building for aging-in-place procedures

Wednesday, December 26, 2007 11:18 AM

The concepts of aging-in-place and aging-in-community are finally getting into the consciousness of developers, county officials and the general public on Maui

The Office of the Mayor is reviewing a Lifespan Building Initiative which will provide new homebuyers with a list of optional, aging-in-place features which they can select and include in their home purchase price. Installing basic accessibility features in new homes will save homeowners many more home remodeling dollars in the future when they will need more accessible homes.

The Maui County Council on Aging has urged the mayor to consider creating a Lifespan Remodeling Hotline/Web site where existing homeowners can obtain information and assistance with home modifications they, too, will need to age-in-place.

We've also recommended that a Maui County senior housing issues task force be created to address the unmet need for more adult day-care centers, assisted living dwellings and active adult retirement communities wherever needed on Maui. Responding to these pressing needs will require an innovative new alliance of developers, county housing and planning officials and senior advocacy groups.

Zoning and permitting barriers and delays, smart growth boundaries, and insufficient local and state tax incentives will have to be dealt with if we are going to meet the urgent 21st century needs of our aging population.

Fortunately, there is still time for our county government to be proactive, even if the lack of foresight and underplanning of past administrations has left our baby boomers and kupuna at risk.

Peter Durkson, Chairman  
Maui County Council on Aging  
Makawao

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## Agenda for July 25, 2007 1000am meeting with Mayor Tavares & staff.

1. Introductions ( 5 minutes )
2. Background of Maui Lifespan Housing initiative (10 minutes)

### Maui County Council on Aging Lifespan Housing sub-committee.

*The Maui Lifespan Housing initiative calls for builders on Maui to offer new home buyers a list of optional accessibility features that **informed** buyers can select from and pay for themselves...and buyer will be informed with a brochure outlining the purpose of the various optional accessibility features being offered.*

*A successful initiative will bring the idea of more accessible "lifespan" homes into the consciousness of our community including architects, developers, builders, contractors, and homeowners.*

**Maui News coverage & Supporters grow.**

3. Summary of Initiative (10 minutes)
4. Discussion (15 minutes)
5. Action Plan (5 minutes)
  - A. Complete draft of initiative. Refine with Public Works. Validate with stakeholders.
  - B. Submit to County Council after Labor Day
  - C. GOALS : Work with Office of the Mayor (1) to Legislate a Maui Lifespan Housing code before end-2007 (2) to provide a model of how diverse stakeholders can work together in solidarity for the greater good of the community (3) to demonstrate proactive leadership in dealing with the looming aging in place crisis confronting Maui and all of Hawaii today.

**County of Maui**

**(Seal)**

**RESIDENTIAL ACCESS-ABILITY**

**Maui County**

**Council on Aging**

**(808) 270-7755**

# **ACCESS-ABILITY**

## **Basic Home Access for Everyone**

The primary goal of this brochure is twofold: to develop your awareness of making your new home as “user-friendly” as possible, and to enable you to live safely, comfortably and independently at home during all the seasons of life.

As we grow older, changes in physical abilities can make daily routines more difficult. Climbing stairs, bathing, and moving about our homes can become challenging. Planning ahead and building basic accessibility features into your new home now will enable you to avoid the problems of living in a barrier-filled home.

Every day hundreds of people with disabilities are confined to nursing homes, rehabilitation units and personal care homes because they cannot return to their homes due to stairs, narrow doorways and hallways, and lack of an accessible bathroom on the first floor.

Basic home accessibility requires that people with mobility problems who must use wheel chairs or walkers be able to operate all the usual features of a home, including bathing and cooking facilities.

The three most important features of basic home accessibility are:

1. At least one zero-step entry to the home that does not require the use of stairs.
2. A clear path through wider doorways and hallways.
3. A main floor bathroom that accommodates wheelchairs and walkers.

The wide acceptance of accessibility has expanded to include designing homes for all seasons of life which benefits everyone immediately and in the future:

1. The parent pushing a stroller or carrying a child.
2. An elderly relative, resident or visiting guest.
3. Furniture movers.
4. People carrying groceries
5. Anyone with a permanent disability.

As we grow older, we all want to be able to remain independent and age-in-place and not be forced into a nursing home or long term care facility because of a lack of basic home accessibility.

A well planned accessible home can give you the satisfaction of staying in control and in your own home for a long time. Moreover, the costs of adding accessibility to your new home are relatively low compared to the much higher costs and inconveniences of remodeling later.

## The Basics

- No Step Entrance

At least one residential entrance to the home that does not require the use of stairs. This entry can be located at the main entrance, the basement, or through the garage. The threshold should be no longer than 1/2".

Homes build on post & piers can be built with ramps or reinforced where appropriate for a ramp in the future.

- An Accessible Bathroom

To be usable by individuals in wheelchairs, the bathroom must not only get through the door, but they have to be able to close the door behind them, be able to transfer onto the toilet and have a 60" diameter turning area .

- A Clear Path of Travel

...from the parking area to the doorway with the zero step, to the common areas of the home including the bathroom. This means 36" doorways and no less than 42" hallways.

# Important Dimensions

1. Maximum safe slope for graded walk or ramp.....1:12  
(Requires handrail 34-36" above ramp. Preferred slope is 1:20)
2. No Step Entry....36" door. Maximum ½" thresholds in all locations.
3. Preferred width of Hallways.....42" Minimum.
4. Rectangle needed to accommodate a wheelchair.....32" x 48".
5. Diameter needed to turn a wheelchair.....60".
6. Preferred height for blocking and/or grab bars.....34"-36".
7. Preferred height for light switches and thermostats.....42"-48".
8. Preferred height for electrical outlets.....18"-24".

## Resources

The National Association of Homebuilders has a list of Certified Aging-in-Place Specialists who can help you plan your new home design or remodeling. To find out go to:

[www.nahb.org/directory.aspx?directoryID=188](http://www.nahb.org/directory.aspx?directoryID=188)

The AARP has a information on designing more accessible homes at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) . Go to this site and put UNIVERSAL DESIGN or ACCESSIBILITY into the search feature of this site.

The Maui County Council on Aging can be contacted at (808) 270-7755 for more information.



**NEW HOME LIFESPAN HOME DESIGN OPTIONS CHECKLIST**

Name of Development, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Lot Address/ID \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Map Key Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Lot Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_

Developer (Contact) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.# \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Ordinance No. ....

requires the developer to provide purchasers of lots within the development with the following list of specific "Lifespan Home Design" optional accessibility features which are intended to make a home safer and easier to use for persons who are disabled, aging or frail, or who plan on aging-in-place.

**1. EXTERIOR FEATURES**

Accessible route of travel from public sidewalk or arrival point to primary entrance

Graded path

Ramp

Driveway to graded path

No-step entry (1/2" or less threshold)

Accessible route from garage/parking to home's primary entry

Accessible route from garage/parking to secondary entry

**2. EXTERIOR DOORS AND ENTRIES FEATURES**

Minimum 36" of clearance primary entry doorway

Minimum 36" of clearance secondary entry doorway

Primary entry: accessible internal/external maneuvering clearances, hardware, thresholds and strike edge clearances

Secondary entry: accessible internal/external maneuvering clearances, hardware, thresholds and strike edge clearances

(1/2" or less)

Primary entry accessible/dual peephole/doorbell

### **3. GENERAL INTERIOR FEATURES**

Accessible route of travel to at least one bathroom, kitchen, common room and bedroom

Accessible route of travel: other areas

42" wide hallways/maneuvering clearances with 36" clearance doorways on accessible route

Accessible hallway and doorway widths: other areas

Accessible hardware, strike edge clearance and thresholds for accessible doorways

Light switches, environmental controls and outlets at accessible heights

Light switches, environmental controls and outlets at accessible locations when over barriers

Visual smoke/fire/carbon monoxide alarm

Visual doorbell

Non-slip carpet/floor for accessible route

Handrail reinforcement (1 side) provided in all accessible routes of travel/rooms over 4 feet long

Handrails (1 side) provided in all accessible routes of travel/rooms over 4 feet long

Handrail reinforcements (2 sides) provided in all accessible routes of travel/rooms over 4 feet long

Handrails (2 sides) provided in all accessible routes of travel/rooms over 4 feet long

Handrail reinforcements or handrails installed in other areas

Interior lifts/elevators:

Interior stairway lift

Interior elevator

Electrical and location for future elevator

Laundry area, if provided:

Accessible doorway and accessible route/clearance

Accessible workspace

Accessible cabinets

Accessible appliances

#### 4. KITCHEN FEATURES

At least one kitchen on accessible route

Adequate work/floor space (34"x48" or greater) in front of:

- Stove
- Refrigerator
- Dishwasher
- Sink
- Oven

60" of clearance to turn around

Accessible appliances (doors, controls, etc.):

- Stove
- Refrigerator
- Dishwasher
- Sink
- Oven
- Microwave

Accessible countertops:

- All or a specified portion repositionable
- One or more counter areas at 30" wide and 28"-32" high
- One or more workspaces at 32" wide with knee/toe space

Cabinets:

- Base cabinets: pull-out and/or Lazy Susan shelves
- Wall cabinets: pull-out and/or Lazy Susan shelves
- Accessible handles/latches for doors/drawers

Under cabinet roll out carts

Sink:

- Repositionable height
- Removable base cabinets under sink
- Single-handle lever faucet
- Hose/sprayer feature
- Anti-scald device

Contrasting Colors:

- Edge border of cabinets/counters
- Flooring: in front of appliances
- Flooring: on route of travel

## **5. Bathroom Features**

At least one full bathroom on an accessible route

Maneuvering space:

60" diameter turning area

Clear space for toilet and sink:

36" x 36" clear use area

30" x 48" clear use area

Bathtub and/or shower:

Standard bathtub with grab bar reinforcement

Standard bathtub with grab bars

Accessible bathtub (size and handles)

Standard shower with grab bar reinforcement

Standard shower with grab bars

Accessible shower (roll-in)

Single-handle lever faucets

Toilet:

Standard toilet with grab bar reinforcement

Standard toilet with grab bars

Accessible toilet with grab bars

Sink:

Standard with undersink cabinets

Standard with removable base cabinets

Pedestal or open front

Accessories:

Lower/accessible medicine chest

Accessible counter space near sink

Single-handle lever faucets

Anti-scald devices for sink

Accessible handles/latches for doors/drawers

Lower towel rack(s)

Lower/tilted mirror(s)

Contrasting floor color

Fold-down/fixed shower seat

## **6. COMMON ROOMS FEATURES**

Dining room on accessible route of travel

Living room on accessible route of travel

Den on accessible route of travel

No split level common room(s)

## **7. ACCESSIBLE BEDROOM**

One bedroom on accessible route of travel

Two or more bedrooms on accessible route of travel

Closets have minimum 36" clear opening

Closets have adjustable (36"-60") shelves and bars

Name of Development, if Applicable \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address ( for lot) \_\_\_\_\_  
Tax Map Key Numbers (s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_

FORM PROVIDED BY DEVELOPER TO BUYER \_\_\_\_\_  
Buyer Signature and Date