

“Livable for a Lifetime” Applying Universal Design in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District

Design and Construction Work Group

Introduction

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. The Livable for a Lifetime initiative grew from the “2020 Plan: Aging in Community.” Its purpose is to promote change in the practice, policy, design, and construction of homes, businesses and communities, as well as the community involvement necessary to fulfill this initiative.

Purpose

The Design and Construction Work Group will create innovative, affordable, and practical methods to incorporate universal design features without sacrificing the integrity of the design. The Work Group will then create a greater awareness of the need for universal design practices among architects, landscape architects, planners, builders, developers, realtors, homeowners, building inspectors, and other practitioners. The key purpose of this Work Group is to make universal design a regular practice among the design and construction community.

Goal

To have design principles and construction techniques in place to be used as models for incorporating universal design features in both interior and exterior environments. To achieve an increase in the number of new and rehabilitated structures that use universal design construction techniques.

Suggested Activities

- Create landscape/site plan drawings to show how accessibility is carried through to the external environment
- Create architectural drawings that show how universal design can be successfully integrated into the overall design

- Create a neighborhood site plan that details how universal design features can be incorporated into public spaces
- Identify the challenges/limitations that effect building with universal design features
- Identify the opportunities/potential that effect building with universal design features
- Help establish a Universal Design Committee of the Blue Ridge Home Builders Association
- Work with the Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors (CAAR) to create a greater awareness of the benefits of universal design, including the increased marketability and resale value of homes with universal design features
- Work with large development practitioners to increase the number of residential and commercial building with universal design features
- Build a demonstration home that incorporates both universal design features and quality design

NOTE: Universal Design is used to describe both full universal design, and visitability (a standard that includes a no step entrance, adequate doorways (a minimum of 32 inches of clear passage space), a usable bathroom on the first floor, and sufficient interior space.)