



Universal Design Ordinance Review

Disabilities Advisory Commission | March 5, 2025

Presentation Outline



1. Universal Design Ordinance (UDO) Overview
2. Project Scope
3. Outreach Results
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Summary of Proposed Amendments
6. Next Steps

Universal Design Ordinance Overview

- Adopted in 2010
- Based on State Universal Design Model Ordinance
- What does it do?
 - Applies to new residential developments of **20 units or more** in the R-1 and R-1A Zones.
 - Ordinance applies to **at least one model** in the development.
 - Buyer could select any of the UD options listed the ordinance – developer is be required to provide those options **at the buyer's expense**.





Key Features Required to be Offered

- Accessible primary and secondary **entries**
- Accessible **exterior and interior routes**
- Accessible **bathroom** on route from primary entry
- Accessible **kitchen** on primary entry level
- Accessible **common use room** on primary entry level
- Accessible **bedroom** on the primary entry level
- Accessible **routes** to miscellaneous areas or facilities (i.e. patio, laundry room, or storage area)



Key Features Required to be Offered Cont.

- **Conduit** for the future wiring of assistive technologies in all exterior walls.
- **Outlets** at the bottom and top of any stairs to facilitate the use of a chair lift
- **General components**
 - Rocker light switches and controls
 - Flooring
 - Raised outlets
 - Doors and openings for rooms

Ordinance Challenges

1. Very few buyers have requested installation of UDO features (1-2 known cases)
2. Need to provide clarification on scope and application of ordinance due to evolving building trends which involve more “phases” and/or “series”, etc.

Project Scope – Housing Element Direction

Program H20. Universal Design Ordinance

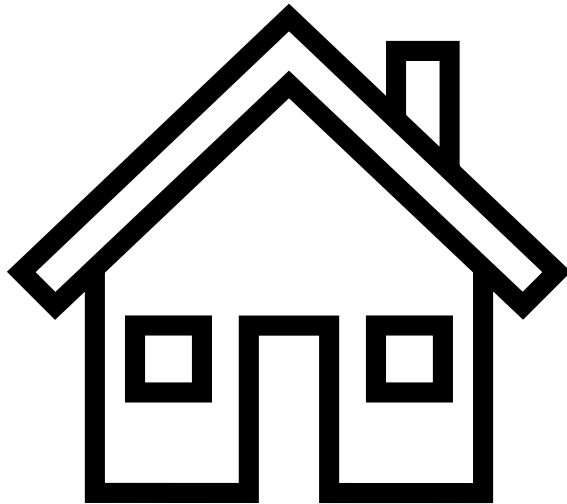


The City shall **review and update** the Universal Design Ordinance **to provide clarification on how and when the ordinance is applied**. The City shall partner with AARP and Resources for Independent Living to **increase awareness of the City’s Universal Design Ordinance**.

Preliminary Outreach

- ❑ Home builders
 - North State BIA + Individual Builders
- ❑ Older adult, age friendly, and independent living advocates
 - Resources for Independent Living + AARP
- ❑ City Housing Policy Working Group

Home Builder Survey Responses



1. Are you aware of any homes in subdivisions you have worked on that have been constructed with Universal Design features as outlined in the Ordinance? If so, how many?

Only one buyer has requested the offered Universal Design Features as required by the ordinance. All other respondents said no.

2. Has your organization ever run into questions or complications regarding the scope and application of the Ordinance? If so, please elaborate.

Generally, no major questions or complications were identified. Only suggestions related to applicability were made.

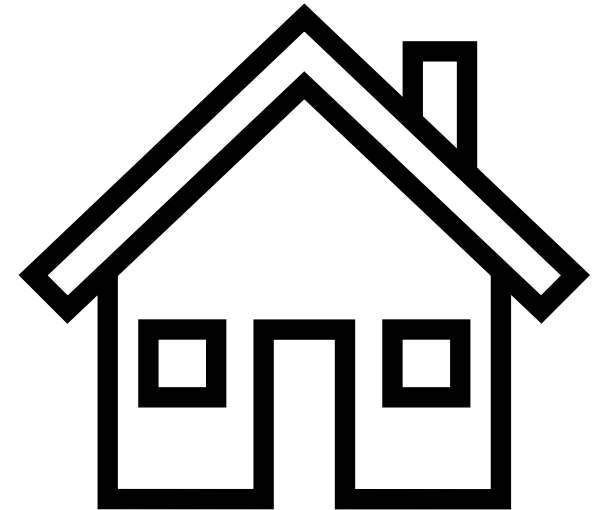
Home Builder Survey Responses

3. Do you believe the City's Universal Design Ordinance provides a benefit to your home sales?

Mixed responses, with more responses saying no.

4. How is your organization, as a home builder, meeting the needs of an aging population?

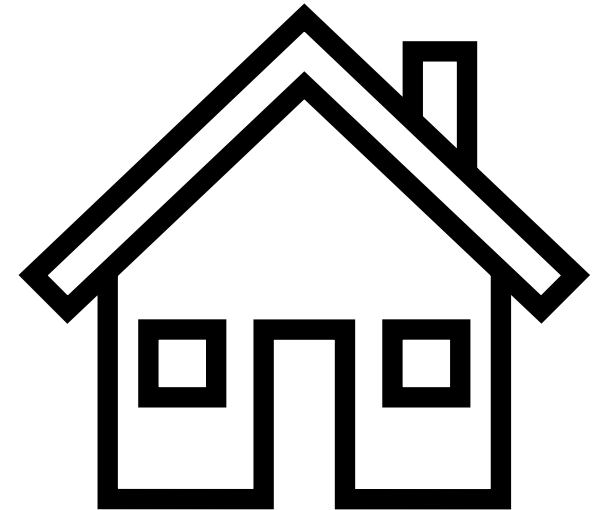
Most builders cite complying with the California Residential Code Aging in Place requirements, but some are finding success in building active adult communities and ADUs/JADUs.



Home Builder Survey Responses

5. Is there anything the City could do to improve the current ordinance purpose and intent based on your organization's experiences?

Most builders suggested that the ordinance did not add much value beyond the requirements of the building code. Builders suggest that they are meeting the intent of the ordinance in other ways such as creating communities entirely marketed towards older adults which are easier to implement than trying to fit these requirements into existing standard market rate developments.



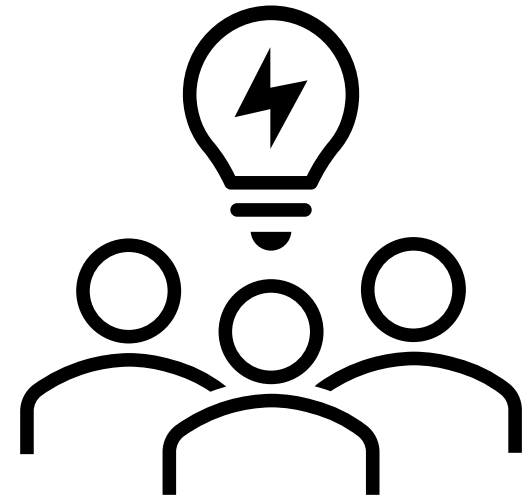
Older Adult and Independent Living Advocates

- Supportive of current ordinance
- Lack of awareness of the ordinance among organizations and buyers
- Support for increasing education on Universal Design



Housing Policy Working Group

- Suggestion for City personnel to be more focused on enforcement of ordinance requirements
- Interest in finding non-profits or funding partners to aid in cost of purchasing features
- Suggestion to consider adopting something similar to City of Davis Universal Access code



FAQ



Can the City require developments to build universal design features (not just offer)?

- State law (HSC § 17959) requires that our local ordinance must be “**substantially the same**” as the model ordinance.
- All Universal Design Ordinances must be filed with California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review

FAQ



How does this Ordinance differ from the New Home Universal Design Checklist (AB 1400)?

- AB 1400 (Chapter 648, Statutes of 2003) required HCD to develop guidelines and adopt a New Home Universal Design Option Checklist.
- This law **does not require that builders offer** universal accessibility features. It does require that they provide a list of features and **only whether or not they are offered.**

FAQ



How does this Ordinance differ from the Aging in Place and Fall Prevention Building Code requirements?

- Aging in Place requirements are required to be built into ALL newly constructed 1 or 2 family dwelling.
- These requirements represent the most commonly desired, easily achievable features, such as larger doors, grab bar backing and switch/outlet locations.
- The City's Universal Design Ordinance provides the potential for a greater level of accessibility.

Summary of Proposed Amendments

1. Modifications to scope and application section 15.154.040:
 - a) **Remove reference to R-1 and R-1A zones** due to current work underway to modify the City's Planning and Development Code for consistency with the 2040 General Plan.
 - b) Ensure that residential development projects that include **multiple development phases adequately meet the intent of the ordinance** by offering at least one model in each marketed phase of the project.
2. Streamline exemption language in section 15.154.060.

Summary of Proposed Amendments

3. **Exempt** housing development **projects that are subject to CBC Chapter 11A or 11B**, which have more universal design and accessibility requirements.
4. Only require universal design standards for powder room/bathroom facilities **if** a powder room/bathroom is offered on the primary entry level.
5. Only require universal design standards for common use rooms on the primary entry level **if** a common use room exists.

Universal Design Ordinance Proposed Outreach

- ❑ Partner with AARP and Resources for Independent Living (RIL) to **increase awareness** of the Universal Design Ordinance **to potential new homebuyers**
 - Speaking at existing events organized by AARP and RIL
 - In-person and virtual information sessions on UDO

Next Steps

Hearing Body	Timeline
Law and Legislation Committee	April/May
City Council Adoption Hearing	June



Q&A

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