

MAKE CORTLAND COUNTY VISITABLE!

Urge Legislators to Support Visitable Housing!

WHAT DOES VISITABILITY MEAN?

- A friend or family member with a physical disability is easily “able” to “visit” you in your home.
- All new, single-family housing integrates basic affordable and sustainable accessibility features.
- Emphasis is on the most essential access features, such as exterior entries and interior doors.
- Widespread construction change can happen more quickly.

Visitability does **not** include a long list of desirable access features or adhere to a comprehensive full-accessibility construction standard.

WHAT MAKES A HOME VISITABLE?

- **One zero step entrance on an accessible path of travel from the street, sidewalk or driveway.** A zero step entrance has no step or threshold to block a wheelchair or trip a person with limited mobility.
- **Doorways** that provide **32 inches** clear space throughout the home’s main floor and **hallways / routes** that provide **36 inches** of clear width. Lever-style door handles are required.
- **Full / Half bath on main floor** with basic access is long and wide enough for a person using a wheelchair to enter and close the door. Wall reinforcement for grab bars near toilet and in showers is required.
- **Usable first-floor kitchen** with wheelchair maneuvering clearance and access to basic appliances.
- **Wall mounted electronic controls**, such as light switches, thermostats and other environmental controls must be in accessible locations, no higher than 48 inches no lower than 16 inches from the floor.

THE BENEFITS OF VISITABILITY

While no statutory requirements presently exist mandating new structure be constructed to provide access for people with disabilities, the unfortunate fact remains that people with disabilities are often isolated in their own homes or in nursing facilities away from their families and friends. More than simply supporting visitability features, requiring or incentivizing these features would contribute to a more livable Cortland County.

- Significantly reduce the costs associated with retrofitting as people age or acquire disabilities
- Increase the ease of adaptability to homes built with these design features
- Improve the quality of health and safety within the home
- Provide for a more inclusive, integrated and livable community

WHO BENEFITS FROM VISITABILITY?

- The mother with a baby in a stroller, who doesn’t have to lug it up and down your steps
- The homeowner trying to bring heavy packages and tools into the house
- The son on crutches with a sports injury that has to get in the house and use the bathroom
- The visiting uncle using a wheelchair that wants to cook a meal for his family
- Grandma who wants to visit the grandkids but knows she won’t be able to use the bathroom while there
- The college kid moving out with all his boxes and belongings

Everyone, not just people with disabilities, benefits in a home that is visitable!

HOW CAN YOU HELP MAKE CORTLAND COUNTY VISITABLE?

Tell City and County officials to support, incentivize or require that all newly constructed homes be built using visitability design features. Share with them how this will allow you and loved ones to “visit” one-another without fear of injury or isolation. Share why you believe visitability gives you confidence in knowing that your community is truly livable. Urge them to consider their own quality of life and the quality of life of their families and friends.

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