



# HCCA

**Howard County Citizens Association**

*Since 1961...*

*The Voice Of The People of Howard County*

Date: October 27, 2016

Subject: Legislative Update of "Universal Design Guidelines for Age-Restricted Adult Housing in Howard County" (UDG)

To: Chairman Dr Calvin Ball, Howard County Council  
Jen Terresa, Howard County Council

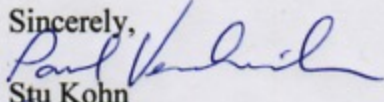
Paul Verchinski of the Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) Board met with you on September 6<sup>th</sup> regarding the above referenced subject. The UDG has not been updated since 2002 and new Age-Restricted Housing (ARH) is exempted from the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The HCCA Board unanimously endorsed his suggestions that were made to you at our Board meeting on October 18.

We recommend that developers/builders of ARH should be providing substantially updated UDG to allow the Howard County older adults to age in place. Attached is the identical mark up of changes. The existing UDG requirements were brought to our attention because of a proposed ARH development - Bethany Glen. This ARH proposal along Bethany Lane and astride I-70 is an isolated land parcel not walkable to US40 nor is there any transit service. We are therefore recommending that ALL ARH be "either on an existing transit route or the builder shall provide a three year subsidy for a new transit route after 75% building occupancy is reached". We are also recommending that a number of former UDG "Desirable" items now be "Required" as noted in the Attachment.

"Planning for the Growth of the Older Adult Population in Howard County" was issued by the Howard County Department of Citizen Services in 2015 where six priorities were identified. A housing related priority stated "Ensure that diverse housing options are available for Howard County residents to age in the community and to function as independently as possible." Updating the ARH UDG would be beneficial to fulfill this priority.

If you desire, HCCA would assist you in developing this needed legislation.

Sincerely,

*for*   
Stu Kohn  
HCCA, President

cc: County Council - Greg Fox, Jon Weinstein, Mary Kay Sigaty  
County Executive Allan Kittleman  
Attachment (1)



Source HOPLIP

## Requirements

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR AGE-RESTRICTED ADULT HOUSING IN HOWARD COUNTY

The Howard County Zoning Regulations allow for "active adult housing" as either a conditional use in residential zoning districts or as a permitted use in the Planned Senior Community, Planned Office Research, Community Center Transition, and Residential Institutional zoning districts. Active adult developments must be appropriately designed for adults at least 55 years of age. Site improvements must ensure accessible routes between parking, dwelling units and common areas. Individual dwellings must incorporate universal design features to be adaptable for residents with mobility and functional limitations that often result from aging.

Design standards for site accessibility and usable common areas have been established for multi-family housing by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act of 1988. While recognized standards for individual units for older adults have not been established, Universal Design® is a relatively new, evolving concept that provides some guidance.

Accordingly, the Department of Planning and Zoning met with several senior housing developers, representatives of the Homes for Life Coalition of Howard County, and the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits to discuss minimum requirements. Divergent views were expressed regarding what features should be required vs. optional. Features vary considerably in cost, relevance for different users, and adaptability to different sites and project types. Developers chief concerns were that the current market doesn't perceive a need for most universal design features since the oldest boomers are still relatively young and aren't focused on how their needs may change over time. Concern was also expressed about increasing the cost of senior housing if many universal design features are required rather than optional.

These guidelines reflect a middle position focusing on requiring those features that are relatively inexpensive if part of initial construction, but would require major renovation to retrofit in the future. Items that are either relatively less expensive to retrofit in the future are listed as desirable or optional.

#### Required

- for multi-family apartment or condo developments, an accessible path between parking, dwelling units, and common areas that meets ADA standards
- for single family detached and attached developments, a no-step access to the front entrance to the community building and all dwellings (~~a no-step entrance is desirable, but not required at other entrances~~)
- 36" wide front door with exterior lighting of the entrance
- all interior doorways at least 36" wide (36" is preferable)
- hallways at least 36" wide, (40-42" is preferable)
- complete living area including master bedroom & bath on first floor (or elevator access if multi-story rental/condo apartments)
- lever handles on interior and exterior doors
- ~~blocking for grab bars in walls in bathroom walls near toilet and shower~~

o Either on an existing transit route or builder provides a three year subsidy after 75% occupancy is reached for a new route



Required

~~Desirable~~

Desirable

- low maintenance exterior materials
- covered main entry
- entry door approach with 18"-24" of clearance at side adjacent to handle
- smooth transitions between rooms (vertical threshold of 2" or less)
- slip resistant flooring
- maximize accessible path between main living rooms (preferably 38-42")
- lever handles on kitchen and bathroom sinks, plus shower
- anti scald devices on all plumbing fixtures
- 5' turning radius or T turn in kitchen and first floor bathroom
- parallel and forward approach maneuvering space in front of appliances and plumbing fixtures
- main electrical breaker box located on the first floor
- Switches, doorbells, thermostats, and breaker boxes should be located no more than 48" above the floor; electrical receptacles should be at least 15" above the floor

#### Custom Options

- security system
- visual ID of visitors
- visual smoke detectors
- ✓ handrails on both sides of exterior and interior stairs
- ✓ task lighting in kitchen, bath and other work spaces
- rocker light switches
- lighting in closets and pantry
- closet rods adjustable from 3' to 5'6"
- ✓ slip resistant flooring in kitchen and bath
- multi-level or adjustable kitchen countertops and work spaces
- pull-out shelves for kitchen base cabinets
- ✓ front mounted controls on stove
- ✓ installation of grab bars in bathroom
- hand held showerhead in shower
- ✓ curbless shower
- ✓ low kitchen overhead cabinets

✓ Denotes required