

CASE SUMMARY

APPLICATION TYPE: PLAN AMENDMENT STUDY ON VISITABILITY

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY

M P C
METROPOLITAN
P L A N N I N G
C O M M I S S I O N

T E N N E S S E E

Suite 403 • City County Building
400 Main Street
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902
865 • 215 • 2500
FAX • 215 • 2068
www.knoxmpc.org

File Number: 2-A-08-MP **Related File Number:**
Application Filed: 1/29/2008 **Date of Revision:**
Applicant: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

PROPERTY INFORMATION

General Location:

Other Parcel Info.:

Tax ID Number: 999 999

Jurisdiction: City

Size of Tract:

Accessibility:

GENERAL LAND USE INFORMATION

Existing Land Use:

Surrounding Land Use:

Proposed Use:

Density:

Sector Plan:

Sector Plan Designation:

Growth Policy Plan:

Neighborhood Context:

ADDRESS/RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION (where applicable)

Street:

Location:

Proposed Street Name:

Department-Utility Report:

Reason:

ZONING INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Zoning:

Former Zoning:

Requested Zoning:

Previous Requests:

Extension of Zone:

History of Zoning:

PLAN INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Plan Category:

Requested Plan Category:

SUBDIVISION INFORMATION (where applicable)

Subdivision Name:

No. of Lots Proposed:

No. of Lots Approved: 0

Variances Requested:

S/D Name Change:

OTHER INFORMATION (where applicable)

Other Bus./Ord. Amend.:

MPC ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Planner In Charge:

Mark Donaldson

Staff Recomm. (Abbr.):

Approve study

Staff Recomm. (Full):

Staff recommends approval of the study. No amendments to the zoning code or subdivision regulations are recommended in the study. The goal of achieving more housing that is more accessible for more people is best moved forward through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to raise awareness about this emerging trend in housing development.

Comments:

City Council Request

In a December 19, 2006, resolution, City Council requested MPC consider modifications to the zoning code to better assure availability of housing designed to meet the needs of physically challenged persons by conducting a study to determine the potential and feasibility of making such modifications. The commonly used term for this is accessible housing.

Background

City Council asked MPC to consider amendments to the zoning code to assure more housing that is more accessible to more people in Knoxville. The Knoxville zoning code, without a major change in emphasis such as creating districts exclusively for senior housing, is not an appropriate place to assure greater accessibility in the housing inventory.

The theme of Visitability is a version of the greater list of accessibility features required by the Fair Housing Act in all residences within structures having 4 or more dwelling units. The focus of Visitability is on a limited number of necessary features to achieve the desired design outcome:

- An accessible route into and through the dwelling to the bath made up of
 - o Hallway and doors wide enough to provide access to the bath for the mobility impaired; and
 - o A no-step route and entrance to the dwelling;
- A bath or half-bath on the primary living floor of the dwelling.

Designing for Visitability is also convenient for anyone using strollers or carriages, carrying groceries, or moving furniture and appliances in and out of a home. The cost of completing these features during original construction is considerably less costly than retrofitting.

Demographic changes in the local population should create a demand for housing with Visitability features. Those aged 65 and over are the fastest growing segment of the population and the percentage of people with a disability is growing rapidly. But growth in these segments of the population has not resulted in an increase in demand for housing with Visitability features.

A purely regulatory approach to Visitability is of great concern to the building industry. A regulation that requires the provision of Visitability in all new housing is done by only a handful of communities across the country. A universally applied approach does not reflect the unique characteristics that may apply to each developed lot in the city. Until there is a demonstrated demand for Visitability features, builders are reluctant to invest in speculative housing with these features.

A proper role for the City may be to demonstrate the desirability of these Visitability features in order to grow the demand for them. Once there is a demand, the housing suppliers will meet that demand. The following approach is recommended for Knoxville:

1. Require Visitability features in housing not subject to the Fair Housing Act developed through the City's Community Development programs when direct assistance is provided through a contractual agreement.
2. Include Visitability features when completing development agreements that provide indirect public assistance resulting in new housing not subject to the federal Fair Housing Act.
3. Create a volunteer certification and marketing program using as a model Georgia's EasyLiving Home program with cooperation between the Knoxville Home Builders Association and the Knoxville

Council on Disability Issues.

4. Create informative literature for distribution to consumers and builders.

MPC Action: Approved

MPC Meeting Date: 2/14/2008

Details of MPC action:

Summary of MPC action: Approve study

Date of MPC Approval: 2/14/2008

Date of Denial:

Postponements:

Date of Withdrawal:

Withdrawn prior to publication?: **Action Appealed?:**

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Legislative Body: Knoxville City Council

Date of Legislative Action: 3/11/2008

Date of Legislative Action, Second Reading:

Ordinance Number:

Other Ordinance Number References:

Disposition of Case: Accepted by Resolution

Disposition of Case, Second Reading:

If "Other":

If "Other":

Amendments:

Amendments:

Date of Legislative Appeal:

Effective Date of Ordinance: