



TO: City Council

FROM: Greg Clark, Development Services Manager

DATE: 6/13/25

RE: Visitability Ordinance

HISTORY OF THE VISITABILITY RESOLUTION:

At the May 2, 2019 CPT meeting a Citizen Ad Hoc Committee presented to City staff and Council Members a proposed draft of the Norman Visitability Code. The purpose of the Norman Visitability Code was to establish minimum regulations for the design, installation and construction of single-family homes or other dwellings with less than four units by providing reasonable criteria for Visitability for persons with disabilities or seniors aging in place. A draft copy of the proposed code was provided to staff and Council Members in attendance that was tailored around the Fair Housing Act. It was recommended that staff should review and compare the proposed Norman Visitability Code to applicable and existing code and for Council to discuss its priority during their annual retreat.

Staff presented at the May 27, 2021 CPTC meeting information about what makes a Visitable dwelling. Further discussion was about the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations and how it compared to current codes. In addition to this staff provided information from the currently adopted codes specifically the ICC A117.1-2009 Standard, in particular Section 1005, Type C (Visitable) Dwelling Units. It was staff's recommendation that for the purpose of the incentive program we utilize the already written and vetted standard of a Type C Visitable Dwelling Unit. The committee shared staff's opinion and the Resolution was written to reflect this standard.

Staff presented the Resolution at the City Council Study Session on June 8th, 2021 and it was approved on June 22nd 2021 with effective start date of August 1st 2021 for a length of 2 years.

With the program set to expire Staff presented to CPTC on March 25, 2023. At that time several applicants remained in the program therefore, it was suggested the program be extended for an additional 2-year period. The program was extended by Council under Resolution R-2021-118 Amendment 1 for a 2 year period and is set to expire August 1, 2025.

At the May 22, 2025 Community Planning and Transportation Committee staff presented to the Committee the status of the program and advised it was set to expire on August 1, 2025. After discussion staff was provided direction by the Committee to propose the program as an Ordinance.

CURRENT CODES AND PROGRAM STATISTICS:

Currently, the adopted code for Dwellings for the State of Oklahoma and the City of Norman is the 2018 International Residential Code (IRC). The IRC references the Standard ICC A117.1-2009 for accessible considerations. In the 2009 standard a new section was added titled 1005 Type C (Visitable) Units. The section deals specifically with creating a minimum standard for Dwelling Units to comply with to be considered Visitable.

As of May 16, 2025, 67 homes have enrolled in the program. 10 have completed the program and received a credit. 47 have withdrawn or did not pass the program, and 10 remain enrolled in the program.

It must be acknowledged that the plan does not have a lot of success stories to date with a pass rate of 17.5% and only 67 participants. There are a number of reasons for this.

- Cannibalization. The City currently offers an energy credit program and this program is a more popular with builders. In the same time window there have been over 650 homes registered in the Energy Credit Program.



(Example: A home with no step entry and a basic door that complies with Visitability requirements; however, the builder pursued energy credit program.)

- The most common reason builders have withdrawn/failed the program has to do with the thresholds for the front doors. Most builders are using very ornate custom doors and these doors come with manufactured attached/included thresholds and the builders did not want to remove or replace these components.



(House with custom door that had an easy method to comply with the program but unlikely the builder client would desire to amend the door)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommendation is to keep the plan and make it permanent by ordinance.

- Stability in the program will likely encourage more builders/developers to consider the benefits for the home and credit.
- Other than the cost to the City for the credit, there is essentially no negative aspect to the program.
- The ordinance is written in such a manner that it will hold up over time regardless of how other codes are updated.
- As energy codes evolve over time and get more stringent, it is possible more builders will see benefit to the Visitable Program as these requirements are unlikely to shift dramatically.

INCENTIVE:

The proposed source of the credit is the Building Permit fee from Article 6-105 (a) (4). This fee is .14 cents per sq. ft. of the project area (all areas under the roof) of a home. This incentive is a pass or fail with either 100% of the fee being credited or 0% credited if the home failed to comply. While this may not seem like a significant incentive a lot of the principles of a Visitable Home can be achieved without significant changes to a properties floor plan.

CC: Jane Hudson, Planning & Community Development Director
Beth Muckala, City Attorney III

Attachments: Staff Visitable FAQ Document