

City Council Conference

Visitability Ordinance

7/08/2025



Visitability and Accessibility

- Visitable Dwelling: Offers a few specific features making a home easier for mobility-impaired people to live in and visit. (visitability.org)
- Accessible Building: The intent of these sections is to allow a person with a physical disability to independently get to, enter, and use a site, facility, building, or element. (Section 101, ICC A117.1-2009)



Visitability v. Accessibility

Visitable Dwelling Unit	Accessible Dwelling Unit
No step entry and compliant entry path required.	No step entry and compliant entry path required.
Routes to required areas to be 36" wide typically Doors to be 31.75" in the clear wide.	All Routes to be 36" wide typically Doors to be 31.75" in the clear wide.
Bathroom: Toilet/Sink with backing and clearances at the toilet required.	Bathroom: Toilet/sink/bathing with grab bars installed and proper clearances for all of them. Counters at accessible heights and laid out for proper reach distances.
Kitchen: Which includes a sink, cooking appliance, and refrigerator to have a path to these areas typically 40" wide.	Kitchen: Has proper widths, reach ranges, counter heights, with clear spaces for the sink and all appliances.
A living room or similar is to be on a compliant route that is at least 70 sqft in area.	All the living space on the accessible floor level has to be compliant including sleeping rooms, laundry rooms, game rooms and similar.
Receptacle outlets and lighting controls to be installed between 15" and 48" typically.	Outlets, lighting controls, switches, environmental controls, electrical panel boards, security controls and similar to be installed at a compliant height and reach distance.

As defined by the ICC ANSI 117.1-2009
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Visitability v. Accessibility

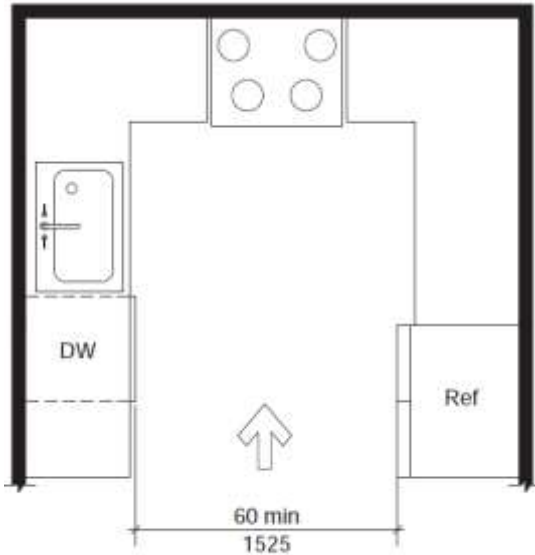
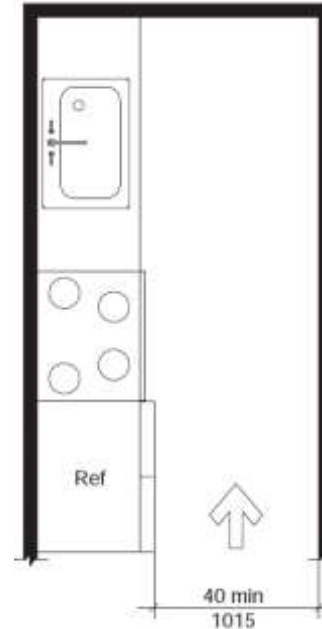


FIG. 1004.12.1.2
U-SHAPED KITCHEN CLEARANCE IN TYPE B UNITS



36" width would be ok for Visitable needs if the range wasn't here and certain features like counter heights and reach ranges are not obligated.



Current Visitability Codes

- The currently adopted codes for the State of Oklahoma and City of Norman for Residential Construction are the 2018 IRC and for accessibility is the ICC A117.1-2009.
- ICC A117.1-2017 is the most current version of the Accessible Standard. The Oklahoma Uniform Building Code Commission (OUBCC) updates the Building Codes statewide at their discretion but generally every 3 years. It is likely during the Summer of 2026 the state codes will update and the new standard for accessibility will be the A117.1-2017 and the new standard for Residential Construction will be the 2024 IRC.
- In the 2009 version of the ICC A117.1-2009 Standard it included a new section Type C Visitable Units this is included in the 2017 version of the standard.



History of the Norman Visitability Code

January through April 2019: The Citizen Ad Hoc Committee for Accessible Housing met, discussed and drafted the Norman Visitability Code.

May 2019: At the CPT meeting the Ad Hoc Committee presented the Norman Visitability Code, draft document for consideration to staff and members with request that the document be compared to the current building codes and practices, as well as other visitability codes.

The document was to be discussed during the annual City Council retreat.

The original proposed Norman Visitability Code was an organic interpretation of the Fair Housing Act Design Manual, which was published in 1998. The manual is a 300 page design guide but not a prescriptive code. While many of the concepts in the Fair Housing Act have been put forth in other building codes it is not one staff has adopted or utilizes as a current standard.



History of the Norman Visitability Code

(cont.)

- Staff provided recommendations to the Community Planning and Transportation Committee on 5/27/2021 to consider a 2 year program adopting the Nationally Recognized ICC ANSI 117.1 2009 Standards for Visitability as an incentive program where participants could receive a credit of \$.14/sf if their home was built to the Standard.
- Council adopted the resolution on June 22nd of 2021 to adopt the program as a 2 year program.
- Staff came back to CPTC in March of 2023 and in discussion it was agreed to extend the program for an additional 2 years. Resolution R-2021-118 Amendment 1 was approved by Council for a 2 year period and the program 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 Program Statistics

- 67 enrolled currently
- 10 have Completed the program and received a credit
- 47 withdrew/did not pass the program
- 10 are still in the program as of today
- 9 applied in year 2021
- 40 applied in year 2022
- 7 applied in year 2023
- 9 applied in year 2024
- 2 applied in year 2025

Data accurate as of 5/14/2025



Program Outcomes

In discussions with applicants that withdrew these were some common reasons:

- Lot features made the no step entry a challenge. Drainage or large elevation changes. There are developments especially those with hills and elevation changes that creating no step entries are not easy and to do so could invite moisture intrusion.



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Program Outcomes

- Cannibalization: Most of our spec builders participate in Energy Credit Programs. In roughly the same window as the Visitability Program we have had over 650 Homes enrolled in the Energy Credit Program.



Program Outcomes

- Customer wanted features outside the scope of program custom front doors and ornate entry's.



Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends keeping the program and making it a permanent program by Ordinance. The reference to the Type “C” Visitable Dwelling from the A117.1 can be referenced in such an adoption which ensures that if future updates occur in this standard, the programs benchmark home updates with it.
- By making the program permanent future builders and developers can certainly consider this as a cost savings option for the future developments.
- Over time we could see builders gravitate to the Visitable Home Program if Energy Code Compliance becomes more difficult.
- There is little downside to the program other than the cost to the City from the Credit.
- If adopted by Ordinance Staff will plan to promote the program by various means including website features, updated hand outs, word of mouth and more to make certain builders and applicants are aware of the program.



Direction and Questions

