

ZONING PRACTICE

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Holistic Accessibility



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Holistic Accessibility

By Jill Bahm, AICP, and Rose Kim

Physical accessibility is a fundamental part of building truly inclusive communities, but planners often think the minimum standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) suffice. Instead, it requires a broader, more thoughtful and holistic approach that anticipates and supports the diverse needs of all community members, at every stage of life, recognizing that our abilities and design needs can change dramatically over the course of our lives.

Many communities include the minimum ADA standards for parking spaces in their zoning ordinances and then rely on building codes and engineering standards for other ADA minimums, such as ramp placement and specifications, sidewalks, and signage. Meanwhile, relatively few use zoning to promote universal design or other more holistic concepts of accessibility.

This issue of *Zoning Practice* explores how zoning and other local development regulations can promote accessible places, spaces, and homes. It begins with an explanation of the importance of accessibility for all communities and a brief overview of common accessibility frameworks before highlighting specific regulatory strategies and inspirational international efforts.

The Importance of Accessibility

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates roughly 13 percent of people in the United States have a disability, with higher rates among older adults. But with many different types of disabilities and some people not seeing themselves as having difficulty in the areas defined by the Census Bureau, this percentage may be much higher. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in four adults in the U.S. has one or more legally defined disabilities (CDC 2024). Others still may face significant physical accessibility challenges due to chronic health conditions that don't meet the legal definition of a disability.

There is no “average” human, and our abilities can shift throughout our lives. So it doesn't make sense to design

An ADA-compliant home entryway (Credit: RyanJLane/E+)



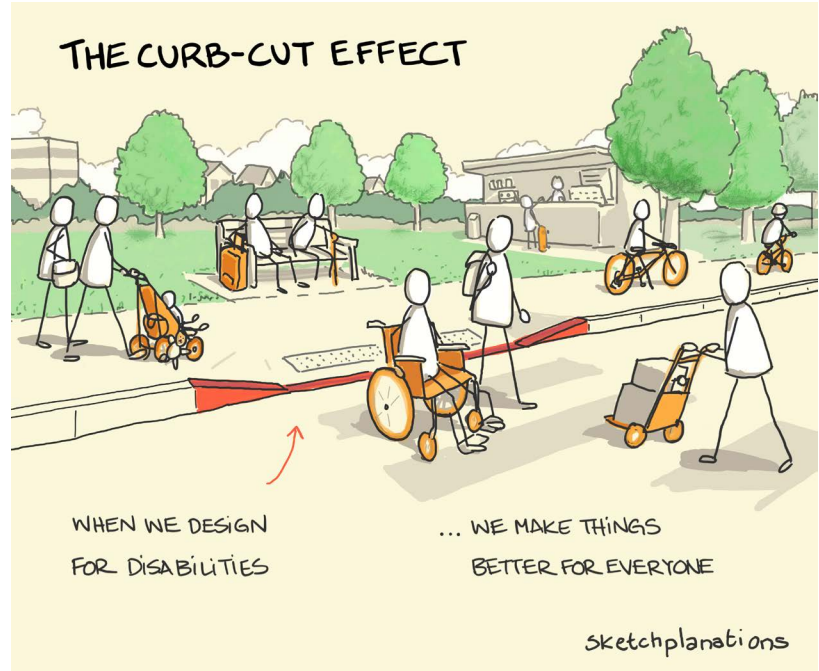
communities for one default type of person. Whether or not we currently have a disability as defined by the ADA, we have all been temporarily disabled or experienced limitations at one or more points in our lives. From the complete dependency of infancy to the physical changes of pregnancy, a sudden injury, disease, or a lingering illness, these moments remind us that our needs for accessibility can change at any time.

Rather than simply thinking about disability as a personal characteristic, it is important to consider how community design affects access to places, spaces, and homes. Many default patterns of design in the built environment disable significant portions of the population, establishing everyday barriers and challenges for people as they navigate through their communities. Some challenges people find in the built environment include the following:

- **Site access barriers:** A lack of ramps and elevators, missing or poorly maintained paths, narrow doorways and walkways, and more can specifically impact wheelchair users and people using mobility aids, like walkers, scooters, and strollers.
- **Mobility barriers:** A discontinuous sidewalk network and development patterns that are not conducive to transit or active transportation can prevent people from traveling within and between neighborhoods.
- **Overstimulation:** Autistic people or others with intellectual disabilities are often overwhelmed by visual stimulation, the acoustic environment, lighting, and odor present within the built environment.
- **Wayfinding and safety issues:** Intersections, poorly lit spaces, and sudden level changes can be confusing or dangerous for people with low vision, and hearing loss may make it difficult to deal with excessive background noise, particularly if visual communication cues are lacking.

To build truly inclusive communities, planners and local officials must promote changes in the built environment that

enable people of all abilities and at all life stages, creating spaces where people can feel comfortable, navigate with ease, and participate fully.



Core Accessibility Frameworks

Understanding the similarities and differences of different accessibility frameworks can help planners support the creation of a more equitable, intuitive, and user-friendly world for all individuals, whether they experience permanent disabilities, temporary impairments, or situational limitations.

Barrier-Free Design

Barrier-free design principles were the first on the scene in the 1950s as veterans found the need to access public spaces and semi-public spaces like workplaces. The focus for advocates was, and still is, to proactively remove obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from navigating spaces safely and independently. These principles typically address physical accessibility features, such as ramps, elevators, wide doorways, and lowered counters. Civil rights legislation in the 1970s emerged from these early efforts, leading to improvements in federal facilities and public universities.

The curb-cut effect (Credit: [sketchplanations](#))

Universal Design

Architect Robert Mace coined the term *universal design* in 1985 to describe an aspirational approach to designing products and physical environments that work for all people. He went on to establish the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University and led efforts to develop the [Seven Principles of Universal Design](#) in 1997:

1. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Places often incorporate accessible design components that address a specific demographic group or specialized need, but universal design is intended to make places inviting to everyone.

ADA Standards

In 1990, ADA established a legal framework to provide barrier-free accessibility in public spaces to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It followed the Fair Housing Act of 1988 that expanded the civil rights legislation of the 1970s. ADA standards include a variety of legal requirements that apply to sites and buildings open to the public, such as providing wider doorways, ramps, and accessible parking spaces, to address the needs of people with disabilities.

Amendments to ADA, via the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, became

effective January 1, 2009 (EEOC 2011). These amendments introduced several significant changes, most notably in the definition of "disability." This revision reflects a growing understanding of the diverse ways impairments can affect individuals in their daily lives. Many of the changes relate to the workplace and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), but this broader perspective on disability suggests physical access standards could better support a larger population. In 2010, the Department of Justice revised the ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Generally, these updated standards have wider application and better address people with disabilities. Newer guidance for children's environments, particularly play areas, were introduced in the 2010 Standards.

It's important to note that while communities may address ADA minimum standards in their zoning ordinances, the ordinances themselves may not adhere to digital accessibility standards. In 2024, the Department of Justice updated Title II of the ADA to ensure that web content and mobile applications (apps) are accessible to people with disabilities. Updated [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) provide the technical standards for state and local governments' web content and mobile apps. As communities explore options for new websites, applications, and content, digital access should be considered.

Visitability

The concept of visitability emerged in the late 1980s. Visitability principles address features that make it easier for people with mobility impairments to visit the homes of others—whether for a family gathering, neighborhood party, or other social event. These features include a no-step entrance, wide doorways, a ground-floor

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bathroom, and enough space to get around in the kitchen and bath. The main idea here is that while individuals may have incorporated such strategies in their own homes, they still may be limited in visiting others because many single-family homes do not incorporate these fundamental features.

Inclusive Design

Inclusive design doesn't seem to have a universally recognized starting point but rather has evolved with the recognition over decades that accessibility improvements actually benefit everyone. That is, instead of adapting for accessibility, accessibility can and should be designed into spaces at creation. This design concept expands beyond accessibility to other aspects of daily living as well. Inclusive design is user-centered and ensures diverse needs are considered throughout the design process. Unlike universal design, which aims for broad usability, inclusive design acknowledges that different individuals may need customized solutions. For instance, offering multiple modes of interaction—voice commands, tactile buttons, and visual interfaces—ensures greater accessibility.



An all-abilities playground in Walnut Creek, California (Credit: [Utilizer/Wikimedia Commons](#))

ASLA's Universal Design Principles for Public Spaces

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) promotes and encourages landscape planning and design that “ensures people with disabilities can better participate in public life.” Fine-tuning the Center for Universal Design's principles, ASLA established their own set of principles for public spaces (Dillon and Green 2025).

These principles can inspire planners to expand thinking from physical accessibility to more holistic concepts like comfort, participatory, multi-sensory, and predictable design. Feeling comfortable in a space includes a feeling of safety that comes from sensing that spaces are accessible. Participatory design means including people with disabilities as stakeholders and experts throughout the planning process, ensuring policies truly address their needs. Multi-sensory environments go beyond visual cues, encouraging zoning standards that support tactile, auditory, and other sensory navigation aids for people with diverse abilities. Predictable design calls for consistent, clear cues across public spaces, helping everyone—especially those with cognitive or sensory challenges—feel safe and oriented.

Potential Development Code Reforms

Setting goals for accessibility and inclusion in long-range plans can raise awareness of these issues and lay the foundation for improvements. Incorporating visitability and barrier-free, universal, and inclusive design into zoning standards can ensure that new development and redevelopment projects accommodate all individuals.

Establish Policy Support in the Local Comprehensive Plan

Local comprehensive plans serve as long-range policy documents and provide legal backing and framework for the enforceability of regulations. When

universal design principles are embedded in comprehensive plans, it signifies broad community support, allowing for subsequent code reforms to be considered steps toward implementing the shared vision established by the plan.

Action items can lead to zoning changes as well as tie into community capital improvement plans. For example, when developing its [Comprehensive Plan 2021](#), Plano, Texas, embedded universal design into the document, specifically in Special Housing Needs and Community Design policies, and has subsequently moved to implement the actions for those policies in a [Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Rewrite project](#).

Require or Incentivize Accessibility Features in Housing

The Fair Housing Act addresses accessibility for housing projects built after 1991, with more than four units, by requiring at least one accessible entrance, wide doors and hallways, accessible common areas, usable kitchens and bathrooms, and reinforced bathroom walls for future grab bar installation. However, none of these are required for housing with four units or fewer (think “missing middle housing”) or housing built before 1991.

As noted earlier, the number of people with disabilities is significant. If housing better addresses universal design elements (inside and out) when built, adaptive strategies will be minimized in the future, and this approves affordability in the long run.

As communities across the US (and beyond) explore ways to address housing and affordability, features that enhance livability are sometimes thought of as “extras.” While there is a pressing need for housing across the country, it can be difficult to have the “quality versus quantity” battle. The [Universal Design Institute](#) describes the impact of early efforts to improve accessibility as being interpreted as being “special,” more expensive, usually aesthetically unappealing, and often stigmatizing. It’s taken considerable time for people to realize that many of the basic accessibility features recommended could actually improve spaces for all people.

Building Code Updates

There are communities who use development regulations to require visitability features. Back in 1992, Atlanta passed the first visitability ordinance, which applies only to homes that receive local, state, or federal benefits such as city loans, land grants, and tax incentives ([§8-2182](#)). Similarly, San Antonio, Texas, requires universal design standards be met with housing built with city funding ([§6-316](#)).

Other communities have established visitability or universal design requirements for all residences, regardless of funding. For example, Austin, Texas, requires any structure that “constitutes a dwelling unit per the International Residential Code” to include an exterior visitable route; provisions for light switches, receptacles, and environmental controls; and a “no step” threshold entrance ([§4.4.7](#)). Bolingbrook, Illinois, does the same ([Article XI](#)). In 2024, Prince George’s County, Maryland, amended its building code to include a Universal Design for Housing division, requiring features for all new residential dwelling units starting in January 2026 ([§4-356 et al.](#)).

Zoning Requirements

While some communities broadly address universal design in general codes, others include standards in zoning ordinances or land development codes, allowing for the targeting of accessibility requirements by

An accessible parking spot behind a duplex built according to visitability principles (Credit: [Brett VA/Flickr](#))



development location or type and offering early consideration in the development process. Expanding beyond threshold and interior adaptations, identifying additional design components, such as adaptable bathroom and kitchen facilities, will create new housing opportunities and promote greater inclusivity. Clearly defining critical terms related to universal design and visitability will also provide better direction during the development process.

In Chester, New Hampshire, all dwelling units in fair market rental housing subdivisions are required to incorporate universal design components (§7B.14.7). While Alameda, California, requires basic visitability features for all new residential dwellings for each unit, the city also requires 30 percent of all new residential units in a residential development of five or more units include more comprehensive features and access as well as provisions for optional features for residential developments including an on-site sales office to offer buyers the opportunity to select and purchase additional universal design features (§30-18). Similarly, all multiple-family residential developments of four or more units in East Lansing, Michigan, must install universal design features. All units need to meet a minimum level of accessibility, and at least five percent of all dwelling units in developments with 10 or more units must be fully accessible (§50-364).

The accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a housing strategy that can benefit people of all ages and can be easily designed and built according to universal design principles. Where these types of dwellings are regulated by local building codes, the visitability standards noted previously can also apply to ADUs. On the other hand, communities without such standards can specifically apply accessibility provisions to ADUs in ways that don't require additional redesign by a homeowner. For example, Portland, Oregon, requires ADUs to meet visitability standards, with limited exceptions (§33.205.040.C.4).

Zoning Incentives

Zoning regulations can provide developers with incentives, such as density bonuses or expedited permitting, when universal design and visitability features

are incorporated into new projects. For example, Sonoma County, California, includes a density bonus incentive for multi-unit residential projects that include a minimum of three universal design features (§26-89-050.D.h). Sarasota County, Florida, created a [voluntary recognition program](#) for residential units that apply principles of universal design and visitability, with builders committing to the standard receiving fast-track permitting and a certificate and recognition sticker that can be placed in the home. They note, "The design of a house directly impacts the ability of residents to live at home comfortably and safely. A good design can make it possible for residents to stay at home as they age or cope with a short- or long-term disability." In Auburn Hills, Michigan, proposed developments may be considered for streamlined permitting and eligibility for zoning flexibility via the city's planned unit development option if 75 percent or more of homes include a minimum set of universal design elements or features (§1836).

The land development code in Maitland, Florida, provides sustainable development incentives for all development and redevelopment projects in non-single-family residential districts (§5.13). Projects that integrate a minimum number of sustainable development practices are eligible for height or density bonuses, increased maximum impervious coverage, or reduced off-street parking requirements. Applicants can choose from a menu of sustainable practices in areas such as energy conservation, water conservation and quality, and universal design. For universal design, additional credits toward the minimum required for an incentive are granted if features are provided in 75 percent of residential units in a development, compared to 50 percent of units.

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Require or Incentivize Accessibility Features in Site Design

While design principles related to housing should be incentivized at the least and incorporated as zoning standards at best, there are other site design considerations that would benefit from considering accessibility and usability by people of all ages. As noted in APA's [Aging in Community Policy Guide](#), "[p]olicies, investments, and new tools such as form-based codes should help create a built environment that intentionally provides opportunities for older people to easily participate in community life and activities." Additional policy and implementation guidance is available through the AARP's [Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities](#).

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development can present opportunities to offer goods, services, and a range of affordable, supportive living options for healthy, independent living. In June 2025, Redmond, Washington, adopted zoning code updates to reflect the vision of its new comprehensive plan

([Ordinance No. 3220](#)). In addition to a new [appendix on universal design standards and incentives](#) with a checklist providing minimum requirements to qualify for incentives provided in the code's development incentive program, the updated code establishes a new [Marymoor Arts and Cultural District](#) intended to build a fully inclusive neighborhood as part of a pilot project, where site design and building features are required to incorporate universal design elements.

Flexible Development Options

Many zoning ordinances include planned unit development (PUD) provisions to offer applicants zoning flexibility in exchange for desired public benefits. When this type of flexible zoning is offered, communities may consider universal design or visitability as a desired benefit. For example, New Buffalo, Michigan, features a provision for applicants to justify a request for a site development allowance by meeting a minimum of one modification standard, one of which is universal design (buildings and site features designed with accessible features such as level access from the street

The Marymoor Village light rail station in Redmond, Washington, which provides access to the newly designated Marymoor Arts and Cultural District inclusive neighborhood pilot project (Credit: [SounderBruce/Wikimedia Commons](#))



or zero-step entry thresholds) in the city's planned unit development standards ([ZO §27-01 et seq.](#)).

Form-Based Codes

While the language may not always be as explicit as “universal design,” form-based codes are designed to foster environments where walkability and accessibility are prioritized. This approach is consistent with universal design goals where accessibility is seamlessly incorporated and is increasingly common in form-based codes for mixed-use and urban districts. Allowing multiple building frontages that can accommodate no-step entries, such as gallery or storefronts, can make spaces accessible for everyone. However, many form based codes require stoops, porches, and front yard frontages to have a minimum height above grade; this is something to consider as communities develop or amend their codes.

Shared Open Spaces or Facilities

Development standards can ensure that public spaces are usable and welcoming for everyone. Seattle, Washington, provides developers with a bonus floor area for open space amenities with considerations for accessibility ([§23.58A.040.C.5](#)). In 2018, the city proposed an update to its incentive zoning program which would have allowed for additional bonuses by including amenities improving overall site accessibility such as accessible bathrooms or hill climb assist escalators, but it was put on hold.

A street that accommodates multiple modes of transportation in St. Petersburg, Florida (Caption: [City of St. Petersburg/Flickr](#))



Require Accessibility Features in Transportation Infrastructure

Parallel to a growing emphasis on universal design, the landscape of urban planning and transportation policy has been marked by a shift towards prioritizing the safety of street design and transportation networks for all users.

Complete Streets

The complete streets approach, which considers the needs of people using all modes of transportation (including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users) has gained popularity over the past 20 years. This approach aims to ensure that users of any age or ability can move around safely and easily regardless of the mode chosen.

Since the early 2000s, many states and hundreds of local jurisdictions have adopted complete streets policies and implemented projects that prioritize the safety and accessibility of all users. For example, Portland, Oregon, is widely recognized for its implementation of complete streets principles, including developing a [Citywide Pedestrian Plan](#) and [Pedestrian Design Guide](#), establishing a new transit-oriented district ([Ordinance 192000](#)), and eliminating minimum parking requirements ([Ordinance 191310](#)). In North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, complete street standards are included in the city's subdivision regulations, ensuring ever new subdivision contributes to the larger transportation network with considerations for walkway and pedestrian access, bike and transit facilities, and requiring the upgrading of existing adjacent streetscapes ([§20-40](#)).

Street Connectivity

A highly connected street network that is safe and convenient is essential because it provides routes for walking, biking, transit, and those using mobility aids. This makes traveling safer and more efficient and destinations, from housing to goods, services, schools, employers, and civic spaces, more accessible for everyone.

Street connectivity requirements in Durham, North Carolina, establish a minimum connectivity ratio for street networks ([§13.6](#)). These ratios of links to nodes are tailored to different development contexts and supported by mandatory pedestrian

links and cross access between compatible uses to further enhance non-vehicular connectivity.

Onsite Circulation and Parking

Onsite circulation and parking standards that prioritize accessibility further reinforce an inclusive mobility system, not only benefiting people with disabilities and non-drivers, but reducing congestion and improving overall community health and livability. For example, Fort Collins, Colorado's land use code devotes a section of development standards for access, circulation, and parking, requiring developments to create logical and convenient connections for all modes of travel within sites and to the surrounding street network (§5.9.1). The code mandates an onsite circulation system that works for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and those using mobility assistance devices.

Complementary Approaches

Access to transportation alternatives regulated through zoning provisions, such as bus stop amenities, bicycle facilities/parking, sidewalks/shared use pathways, and signage, can also be refined to better accommodate a wider number of users. Other related strategies, like transit-oriented development (TOD) and green infrastructure, can increase pedestrian and cyclist access and encourage enhanced walkable environments. For example, Chicago stands out for an equitable transit-oriented development ordinance that incentivizes accessibility, encouraging developers to build accessible units (2022). It excludes these units from lot-area-per-unit and floor-area-ratio calculations and offers bonus height to developments that include at least 25 percent accessible units.

Inspiration from Abroad

Several international cities are demonstrating leadership in integrating universal design principles into their urban planning frameworks.

Tokyo, Japan

Japan's national commitment to universal design stems from a zoning system which is largely centralized at the federal level,

offering a flexible and inclusive framework that inherently allows for mixed-use developments and diverse housing types rather than the rigidities of Euclidean zoning. This

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approach means that local municipalities operate within a broader, less-restrictive zoning context, so that cities like Tokyo are ripe for promoting universal design through various policies and ordinances. The city passed the Barrier-Free Act in 2006, which standardized features like wheelchair ramps, elevators, multipurpose toilets, and tactile paving in public spaces, and the federal government further reinforced this commitment with plans to accelerate inclusive development across Japan (JNTO 2025).

In addition, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has established comprehensive guidelines for every stage of infrastructure projects to ensure projects are reviewed for inclusivity (Takahashi, Fakhoury, and McClain-Nhlapo 2023). To prepare for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, a Tokyo Metropolitan Government ordinance was enacted to require newly built hotels or renovated hotel floors exceeding 1,000 square meters to feature no uneven flooring, wider doors, and wider passageways, toilets, and bathrooms. The Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, which was recently revised in 2024, mandates "reasonable accommodation" and is expected to lead to more universal design features in construction and housing, such as wider doorways, ramps, accessible restrooms, and elevators with braille



Apartments originally developed as athlete housing for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (Credit: y-studio/iStock Editorial/Getty Images Plus)

buttons, with similar modifications anticipated in homes like lowered countertops and walk-in showers (Japan Build 2024).

London, United Kingdom

London has also demonstrated a commitment to integrate universal design principles into its planning and zoning framework through policies and guidelines. The city operates under the Equality Act 2010, by which the city publishes one or more specific measurable Equality Objectives at least every four years (2025). Universal design principles are embedded in strategic planning documents which require all new developments to achieve high standards of accessible and inclusive design. With challenges due to retrofitting older infrastructure, London has made a commitment to ensure that new buildings and infrastructure projects adhere to higher accessibility standards (GLA 2021). Transport for London (TfL) has established a travel policy that underscores the importance of accessibility across its network and provides guidance on streetscape, cycle infrastructure, and accessible bus stops (London 2024).

Copenhagen, Denmark

Renowned Danish urban designer Jan Gehl has been key in transforming the city of Copenhagen into a walkable, bikeable city centered around people. Planning in Copenhagen, beginning with the Copenhagen Finger Plan in 1947, has historically focused on bolstering urban clusters along arteries to foster mixed-use developments and support transit options and dense populations. Danish building regulations include accessibility requirements like zero-step entranceways (DIHR 2013). The Danish Ministry of Culture recently enlisted industry experts to propose a new National Architecture Policy in 2025, setting forth a direction for sustainable urban planning, biodiversity, and community-driven design, emphasizing the creation of accessible and equitable environments, and expecting local municipalities will update their strategies in alignment with national guidelines (Gehl 2025).

Conclusions

Despite the relative scarcity of existing ordinances to copy or use as inspiration,

By consistently monitoring and addressing barriers, local governments can send a clear message that accessibility is a fundamental right, not an afterthought.

the integration of universal design principles into zoning ordinances presents a compelling opportunity for communities to foster inclusivity, equity, and accessibility for all residents and visitors. Form-based codes, design standards, and initiatives such as complete streets and mobility ordinances offer robust frameworks for embedding accessibility into the built environment from the outset. These tools

ensure that new developments are not only compliant with minimum legal requirements but also actively promote usability for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Along with rules come enforcement. By consistently monitoring and addressing barriers, local governments can send a clear message that accessibility is a fundamental right, not an afterthought. This includes addressing issues such as blocked entryways or travel paths, unmaintained properties, and any conditions that restrict or inhibit access.

Moving into the future, the rapid advancement of new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), further expands the possibilities for creating environments that are usable by a broader

range of people, often without the need for specialized or costly design interventions. AI and data analytics can empower planners and zoning administrators with real-time insights, enabling more data-driven and responsive decision-making. For instance, smart infrastructure—such as adaptive lighting, wayfinding systems, and responsive transit networks—can be integrated into new developments through updated zoning codes. Communities might consider creating new zoning overlays for “smart districts” or embedding digital accessibility standards directly into building and zoning regulations.

Looking ahead, planners and policymakers must remain proactive in evaluating how emerging technologies can be harnessed to support universal

design objectives. This requires ongoing assessment, stakeholder engagement, and a willingness to adapt regulatory frameworks to accommodate innovation. Planners should collaborate with technologists, disability advocates, and community members to identify best practices and anticipate future needs. By fostering these partnerships, communities can ensure that technological advancements are leveraged to enhance, rather than compromise, accessibility.

Moreover, the process of updating zoning codes to reflect universal design and technological advancements is not a one-time effort. It demands continuous learning, experimentation, and refinement. Pilot projects, public feedback mechanisms, and performance metrics can help communities assess the effectiveness of new approaches and make informed adjustments. This iterative process is essential for building resilient, adaptive, and inclusive environments that serve everyone.

Ultimately, the convergence of universal design principles, robust zoning frameworks, and emerging technologies holds the promise of creating communities that are truly accessible and welcoming to all. While challenges remain—including the need for greater awareness, resources, and political will—the opportunities for transformative change are immense. By embracing innovation, enforcing standards, and prioritizing inclusivity, planners and policymakers can help shape a future where every individual, regardless of ability, can participate fully in community life.

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