

(BILL No.: \_\_\_\_\_)

**AN ORDINANCE**

Amending Title 4 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code,” by amending Subcode “B,” to add to Chapter 11, “Accessibility,” a new Section B-1111, entitled “Visitable Design Requirements,” and by amending Subcode “R,” to require that all newly constructed detached one- and two-family dwellings, and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses or rowhouses) be constructed according to established “visitable” design standards.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Findings.

- 1) Whether due to injury or age, there is a great likelihood for each of us, at some time in our life, to suffer a temporary or permanent condition that limits mobility or the ability to perform daily tasks of living
- 2) Philadelphia has a disproportionate number of residents with disabilities, and a large and increasing population of residents aged 65 years and older.
- 3) Visitable design is a design criterion that affords all persons basic access to residential dwelling units by incorporating certain minimal accessibility requirements.
- 4) Visitable design includes constructing residential dwelling units with at least one no-step entrance, wider doorways, wider interior circulation paths, and at least one minimally accessible powder room or bathroom on the entry level floor of the dwelling.
- 5) The increased cost of constructing a residence to be “visitable” is minimal, while the costs and disruption associated with retrofitting an existing home to make it minimally accessible, are substantial.
- 6) A residence that provides minimal accessibility offers the possibility of occupancy or visitation by a person with a disability, enabling them to remain inclusive and active members of the community.
- 7) An occupant of a home that is designed to be visitable who becomes disabled is more likely to be able to remain at home, maintain independence, and avoid unnecessary institutionalization.
- 8) Visitable design also provides benefits in residential dwellings to many non-disabled individuals such as couples with small children in the use of baby strollers, delivery persons, and police, fire, and emergency personnel.

Section 2. Additions to the Code made by this ordinance are set forth herein in **Bold**.

Section 3. Title 4 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled “The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

Title 4. THE PHILADELPHIA BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY  
CODE

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CHAPTER 4-200.0. TEXT OF SUBCODES

\* \* \*

SUBCODE “B” (THE PHILADELPHIA BUILDING CODE)

\* \* \*

CHAPTER 1  
ADMINISTRATION

\* \* \*

SECTION B-101  
GENERAL

\* \* \*

B-101.2 Scope. \* \* \*

**B-101.2.2 Visitable design requirement. All new construction of detached one- and two-family dwellings, and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses or rowhouses) shall comply with Section B-1111 of Chapter 11 of this code.**

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## CHAPTER 11

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### Section B-1111

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## VISITABLE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

\* \* \*

### SECTION B-1111

**B-1111.1 Scope.** This Section shall apply to all new construction of detached one- and two-family dwellings, and multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses or rowhouses).

**B-1111.2 Design and Construction Standards.** Covered dwellings shall be built according to the following design and construction standards:

**1. Building entrance.**

**No-Step Entrance.** Each dwelling unit shall provide at least one no-step entrance approachable by an accessible route that complies with ICC A117.1.

**Width.** All no-step entrances must have a minimum clear open width of at least 32 inches.

**Threshold.** The no-step entrance shall have a threshold of no greater than 1/2 of an inch.

**Location.** The no-step entrance to the dwelling unit may be located on any exterior side of the unit or an entrance through the integral garage to the visitable level of the unit as long as it is approachable by an accessible route.

**2. Interior Circulation Paths.**

**Width.** Interior circulation paths on the visitable level of the dwelling unit must be at least 36 inches wide.

**3. Interior Doorways.**

**Width.** All interior doorways on the visitable level of the dwelling unit, excluding closets and doors to basement stairs, shall have a minimum clear open width of 32 inches.

**4. Powder Rooms and Bathrooms.**

**Minimum Requirement.** Each visitable dwelling shall have a minimum of one powder room or bathroom on the visitable entry level floor.

**Clear Floor Space.** The powder room or bathroom shall have a 30 inch by 48 inch minimum clear floor space contiguous to the water closet and the lavatory. The clear space under the lavatory may be included in these measurements and clear spaces contiguous to the water closet and lavatory may overlap.

**Fixtures.** Powder room or bathroom plumbing fixtures and entry doors must be equipped with lever-style hardware.

**Wall Reinforcement.** Powder rooms and bathrooms shall have a minimum 6 inch wide by 24 inch long reinforcement in the walls adjacent to water closets, bathtubs, and showers, mounted at a height of 32 to 38 inches above the finished floor, for the future installation of grab bars if needed.

**5. Light switches**

**Maximum Height.** Light switches may not be higher than 48 inches above the finished floor.

**B-1111.3 Administration and Enforcement.** The design and construction standards contained in this Section shall be administered and enforced in accordance with the Administrative Code.

**B-1111.4 Appeals and Variances.** Appeals and variances from the requirements of Section B-1111.2(1) (No-Step Building Entrance) shall be processed in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Administrative Code.

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Title 4. THE PHILADELPHIA BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY  
CODE

\* \* \*

CHAPTER 4-200.0. TEXT OF SUBCODES

\* \* \*

SUBCODE "R" (THE PHILADELPHIA RESIDENTIAL CODE)

\* \* \*

R-101.2 Scope. \* \* \*

**Visitable Design Requirement.** All dwellings covered by the provisions of this code shall comply with Sections R-322.2.

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**R-322.2 Visitable Design and Construction Standards.** All covered dwellings shall be built according to the following design and construction standards:

**1. Building entrance.**

**No-Step Entrance.** Each dwelling unit shall provide at least one no-step entrance approachable by an accessible route that complies with ICC A117.1.

**Width.** All no-step entrances must have a minimum clear open width of at least 32 inches.

**Threshold.** The no-step entrance shall have a threshold of no greater than 1/2 of an inch.

**Location.** The no-step entrance to the dwelling unit may be located on any exterior side of the unit or an entrance through the integral garage to the visitable level of the unit as long as it is approachable by an accessible route.

**2. Interior Circulation Paths.**

**Width.** Interior circulation paths on the visitable level of the dwelling unit must be at least 36 inches wide.

**3. Interior Doorways.**

**Width.** All interior doorways on the visitable level of the dwelling unit, excluding closets and doors to basement stairs, shall have a minimum clear open width of 32 inches.

**4. Powder Rooms and Bathrooms.**

**Minimum Requirement.** Each visitable dwelling shall have a minimum of one powder room or bathroom on the visitable entry level floor.

**Clear Floor Space.** The powder room or bathroom shall have a 30 inch by 48 inch minimum clear floor space contiguous to the water closet and the lavatory. The clear space under the lavatory may be included in these measurements and clear spaces contiguous to the water closet and lavatory may overlap.

**Fixtures.** Powder room or bathroom plumbing fixtures and entry doors must be equipped with lever-style hardware.

**Wall Reinforcement.** Powder rooms and bathrooms shall have a minimum 6 inch wide by 24 inch long reinforcement in the walls adjacent to water closets, bathtubs, and showers, mounted at a height of 32 to 38 inches above the finished floor, for the future installation of grab bars if needed.

**5. Light switches**

**Maximum Height.** Light switches may not be higher than 48 inches above the finished floor.

**R-322.3 Administration and Enforcement.** The design and construction standards contained in this Section shall be administered and enforced in accordance with the Administrative Code.

**R-322.4 Appeals and Variances.** Appeals and variances from the requirements of Section B-1111.2(1) (No-Step Building Entrance) shall be processed in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Administrative Code.

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Section 4. This Ordinance shall supersede all statutes or parts of statutes, local, special or general, or regulations, including but not limited to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code, codified at 35 P.S. §7210.301, and Title 4 of the Philadelphia Code entitled “The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code.” This Ordinance satisfies the requirements of the UCC, 35 P.S. §7201.503(b)-(k), and its regulations, 34 Pa. Code §403.102(i)-(k).

Section 5. If any provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not effect any other provision or application of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable. If any clause, sentence, paragraph or phrase of this Ordinance shall, for any reason, be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction, or administrative agency, to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph or phrase thereof so found to be unconstitutional or invalid.

Section 6. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect 35 days after enactment.