



Presentation to: Disabilities Commission

Date: August 6, 2012

Following the presentation on the housing element process, challenges and emerging issues, commissioners provided the following feedback:

Affordable Housing

It is great to hear the amount of affordable housing being built, but the commission's concern is to understand better how much of the affordable housing being constricted can be considered accessible and for the Disabilities Commission to advocate to increase this number/percentage.

Additionally, in the new proposed units in the pipeline, are there accessible units and if so how many?

Many questions were asked about ensuring that accessible units were occupied by tenants who need that level of accommodation. In particular, if projects received government funding, how does the City enforce Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act? Also, what efforts are being made to direct persons with disabilities to accessible units as units become available? They would like to see a policy that promotes more outreach related to housing accessibility and affordability, including prioritizing units for persons with disabilities to the greatest extent allowable.

Visitability

Visitability is a term that describes the ability for a residential building and/or unit to be accessed by visitors with disabilities, whether those are neighbors living in the building or others. The design of residential buildings to facilitate visitability is a major concern for the Disabilities Commission and is not currently required by State law or City code. The City's building official (Ron Takiguchi) recently gave a presentation (to the Disabilities Commission) and they discussed the potential ways to promote visitability with him.

The Disabilities Commission strongly supports the principle of providing visitability, which is also a factor in enabling people to "age in place" and would like a policy that promotes visitability because it "makes good sense."

Housing Assistance and Supportive Services

Of the eight primary goals under the 2008-2014 Housing Element, the goal of providing housing assistance and supportive services to those in need is especially pertinent. Commissioners encouraged working closely with Westside Center for Independent Living.

Public: 1 speaker - Alan Toy, Executive Director of Westside Center for Independent Living

Mr. Toy would very much like to see [1] set-asides of accessible housing and [2] accessible housing as a community benefit.



City of Santa Monica 2013-2021 Housing Element
PCD Strategic and Transportation Planning Division
Elizabeth Bar-El, AICP, Senior Planner, Project Manager

There is a problem for projects that accommodate the disabled getting tax credits because the State code does not list persons with *physical* disabilities as disabled. He would like to see SM take the lead by supporting legislation to change that.

After the discussion, the Commission agreed to write a letter for City staff and officials expressing their concerns and requests in regard to housing policy and disability accommodations.