



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 14, 2009

TO: Members of the Community Planners Committee

FROM: Kelly G. Broughton, Director, Development Services

SUBJECT: Voluntary Accessibility Program Amendments

The proposed Voluntary Accessibility Program is intended to encourage accessible design in new residential development projects. The proposal was developed in concept by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Accessibility Subcommittee. The goal is to increase the number of accessible housing units in the local housing supply by offering a variety of development incentives to facilitate this type of accessible design. Accessible housing will be important for the City to meet the needs of its aging population in accordance with General Plan policies to promote balanced communities.

Residential projects that are exempt or partially exempt from accessibility requirements in the California Building Code (CBC), such as single dwelling units or duplexes, would be eligible for this incentive based program. Any dwelling unit that is voluntarily designed to be accessible would be eligible for a development incentive or floor area ratio bonus. The number of development incentives available to a project would increase in accordance with the number of dwelling units voluntarily designed for accessibility, and the type of accessible design features included in the units (Attachment 1).

The program would result in two main accessible design types (Tier I and Tier II). Tier I dwelling units would be required to comply with the CBC (Chapter 11A) requirements for accessibility, with an additional requirement for multi story dwelling units to provide a kitchen on the primary accessible level. These dwelling units would be adaptable to meet the accessibility needs of individual occupants thereby enabling those occupants to remain living in their homes during periods of temporary, developing, or permanent disabilities or frailties; as opposed to the current situation where many homeowners and renters are displaced because their homes were not developed to be adaptable. Tier II dwelling units would be required to comply with a modified set of accessible design standards to create "visitable" units by facilitating access to, and access within, the primary level of a dwelling unit, which would include at a minimum a kitchen, a bathroom or half bathroom, and at least one common use room.

Much of the discussion that occurred during past TAC Accessibility Subcommittee meetings was related to the minimum design requirements, and whether Tier II “visitable” units should be required to provide a maximum three quarter inch transition at the entrance to the dwelling unit (similar to Tier I development). As proposed, Tier II projects may provide an adaptable entrance with a maximum 4 inch step; however, a greater number of incentives would be available to accessible projects designed with a maximum three quarter inch transition at the entrance.

The types of incentives available to eligible projects include a floor area ratio bonus, density bonus, expedited processing, or a choice of development incentive from a set menu that currently includes parking related incentives such as reducing parking space size, reducing parking aisle width, reducing required motorcycle or bicycle facilities, reducing driveway width, allowing parking in the portion of the driveway within a required setback, or allowing tandem parking to count towards the parking requirement. Other types of development incentives proposed include a reduction of setback requirements up to 10 percent, an increase in lot coverage up to 10 percent, an increase in height up to 10 percent (specifically to accommodate an elevator or special access lift system that may not exceed coastal height limit or airport related height limit), or a modification of the required landscape area. As proposed, development incentives would be limited to eligible units and may not be redistributed across the project as a whole. The Community Planners Committee is encouraged to provide input as to whether the proposed development incentives are appropriate, or whether there are additional incentives that should be incorporated to facilitate this type of accessible design.

Staff requests that the Community Planners Committee review the proposed Voluntary Accessibility Program Amendments (Attachment 2) and provide a recommendation accordingly. The Code Monitoring Team reviewed the draft amendments on May 13, 2009, and unanimously recommended approval with suggested edits that are reflected in the proposed draft. Additional stakeholder input will be obtained via an informal public review and comment period, prior to the item being scheduled for public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. Please contact Amanda Lee, Senior Planner, at (619) 446-5367 or ajohnsonlee@sandiego.gov for additional information.



Kelly G. Broughton
Director, Development Services

AJL

Attachments:

1. Voluntary Accessibility Program Table
2. Draft Code Language