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>> Turner: Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the

Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar series. My name is Randi Turner and I'm the accessibility and disability rights coordinator with the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. Today's focus is visitability, building today's housing for tomorrow.

Participants' microphones will be turned off during the session so please make note of the webinar tool bar where you will see the Q&A icon. This is where you will submit questions. Questions will be answered during the session and Susan is going to have to leave us when her piece is done so to make sure she's going to start us out so make sure you submit questions for Susan as they come up during the session and she will answer them when her piece is complete.

If there is information to share with the audience, we will use the chatbox, but please don't respond in the chatbox because that makes it difficult to monitor -- monitor a couple of different areas.

The webinar will be recorded and will be posted to our YouTube channel. Training materials and the realtime captioning transcript will be made available to all participants after the session.

In a moment we'll begin recording and then I'll repeat some of this information, but quickly before we start the Governor's Committee is composed of telephone individuals. Seven of whom must be people with disabilities.

We also have officials from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Texas Education Agency. The Workforce Commission. The Department of Licensing and Regulation. And the Texas State Independent Council that serve as non-voting, advisory, ex-officio members.

We have a staff of five that serve as a central resource here in the office. So I will begin recording in just a moment. And you will hear me repeat the very beginning of this so that it's on the recording.

>> Turner: Good afternoon and welcome to the Accessibility and Disability Policy webinar series. My name is Randi Turner and I am the Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator with the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.

Today's focus is visitability, building tomorrow's housing for -- I'm sorry, building today's housing for

tomorrow.

And we're going to start off with Susan Barr. Susan, can you take us away?

>> Barr: Yes, thank you, Randi. Thank you all for attending today. My name is Susan Barr and I am the manager of residential plan review with the City of Austin in the development services department.

Just a quick disclaimer here about this presentation, this presentation is for the City of Austin's visibility ordinance number 20140130-021, which only applies to certain private residential projects. An accessible house presumes that a person with a disability will live in unit, while a visitable house provides the ability to visit it and is more adaptable for future need.

Also, the Americans with disability act, which only applies to commercial, public and governmental buildings, is not covered in this presentation.

So give you a quick outline of the presentation, we'll be going over a brief history of the City of Austin's history and background of accessible code requirements and then we'll also be going over the components of the 2014 ordinance which has interior and exterior

requirements, an ability to waive out of the exterior requirements and then what needs to be submitted.

So the history and background. There have been provisions for providing some type of accessibility inside the new construction of a single-family dwelling or duplex residence since the early 1980s. The requirements were limited to a 30-inch clear opening with two by six minimal lateral wall reinforcement at 34 inches from and parallel to the interior floor finish.

And then Randi, could you click one more time? And then this gives you a visual of kind of what that looks like.

So the dashed lines show the two by six blocking that needs to be provided and then a 32-inch wide door will provide a 30-inch clear opening.

As we are living longer there is a growing need to expand upon the existing regulations, allowing for better access into and around a home. So that more people can age in place.

So the components to the ordinance, there are seven of them. And the first one is applicability and then the second, counseling and guidance required at plan review.

Third, visitable bathrooms, fourth, visitable light switches, receptacles and environmental controls.

Fifth visitability bathroom route. The sixth is visitability dwelling entrance. And the seventh is the exterior visitable route.

One thing I would like to mention is that the first six were effective on December -- I'm sorry, were effective on February 10th of 2014. And then the last one, the exterior visitable route, was not effective until July 1st of 2015. That gave people a pretty good time frame to get used to the requirements and especially for the exterior visitable route.

So applicability. So a permit for construction of a new single-family or duplex dwelling with habitable space on the first floor must be designed and constructed as a visitable dwelling in compliance with the requirements of section R 320. The requirements of the section are limited to new construction and do not apply to remodels or additions.

So what we're looking at here, on the left-hand side is we have a carport and then a storage utility room and a carport.

Since that storage utility room is not habitable, visitability does not need to be provided on that first floor. However, looking at the floor plan on the right, the space between the carports is a media room and because that is -- so because it is habitable, then a half bathroom does need to be provided and that space does need to be visitable.

So the compliance required at plan review needs to be done by a survey -- prepared by a registered design professional or other professional designing with all requirements of the section. So first we need a survey from a certified land surveyor and then the plan documentation needs to be done by an architect or a certified building designer.

So when we're -- the next item is the visitable bathroom. So a visitable dwelling must be designed and constructed with at least one bathroom group or half bath on the first floor that meets the following requirements: There must be a minimum clear opening of 30 inches, like we mentioned before, a lateral two by six or larger nominal wood blocking installed flush with the stud edges of the bathroom walls. And then that center line of the blocking

must be 34 inches from and parallel to the interior floor level, except for the portion of the wall located directly behind the lavatory.

And we have a couple of images to show you here.

So this is that similar -- that same floor plan that we were looking at earlier and you can see that the dashed line stops at the lavatory because you do not need to provide blocking behind the lavatory and then our next image that we have is actual -- from actual construction site. So that is showing the two by six blocking at 34 inches to the center line that's flush with the studs.

The next item is the visitable light switches, receptacles and environmental controls. So the first floor of a visitable dwelling must meet the following requirements. The light switches and environmental controls must be no higher than 48 inches above the interior floor level and outlets and receptacles must be a minimum of 15 inches above the interior floor level except for outlets and receptacles.

We have a couple of images to show.

On the left we have the construction drawing, elevation, interior elevations, indicating those

locations, and then on the right we have actual images from construction sites.

So as you can see the outlet on the left is above the 15 inches and then on the right the outlets or the light switches actually are at 45 inches. So those both meet the code requirements.

So the fifth item is the visitable bathroom route. So bathroom group or half baths designated for visitability have a route of a minimum of 32 inches at the visitable entrance and continuing through the living room, dining room and kitchen and be level with ramped or beveled changes at door thresholds.

So what we have here on the left is showing the visitable route going through all those spaces and it also indicates where the visitable bathroom is. And then the next image -- and there is an exception. It's -- the exception is the visitable route is not on an area with a split-level or sunken floor provided an alternative route is available. So what we're showing on the right side is that the kitchen in the back, there's actually stairs that go up to it, however -- so you don't need to provide access to that or visitability through that

because we have the half bathroom that is on the same level as the other spaces, which is the living room, family room and rooms such like that.

The sixth component is the visitability dwelling entrance. So a dwelling must be accessible by at least one no step entrance with a beveled threshold of one half inch or less and a door with a clear width of at least 32 inches. The entrance may be located at the front, rear or side or in the garage or carport of the dwelling.

So what we have here is we have a floor plan of a house showing all the exterior doors and the front door is the one to the right, and so if you click, Randi, the front door location is the most common. And if we have one more click, the entrance from the garage to the home is the second most common location.

As an FYI we have an approved threshold detail so we issued a code interpretation in 2013 that approved the following threshold.

And so this has a one and three-eighth -- if there's a step in the concrete slab from the inside to the outside and it's one and three-eighths, using this type of threshold will then receipt the requirements of a no-step

entry.

And then we have a link there where you can get some more information on that.

So the last component, the exterior visitable route. A visitable entrance must have at least one visitable route with a cross slope no greater than two percent that originates from the garage, driveway, public street or public sidewalk.

A ramp included in an exterior visitable route must comply with the residential code which is section R 311.8 of the 12 IRC.

So what we have here is an image of a floor plan showing the options for the visitable route. So one is looking at -- from the sidewalk to the front door and then the next one is from the garage to the -- to inside the house. And the image on the right we have -- you can see that the visitable entrance is through the front door and it's a very flush -- apologies. Very flush transition inside the home, into the home.

So waiver requirements. There are a couple of different options. So the requirements of section R 320.7 do not apply to lots with 10% or greater slope prior

to development or properties for which compliance cannot be achieved without the use of a switchback ramp.

Having this was important for Austin because Austin is very hilly and so we needed to have some kind of provision for all of the sloped lots.

So topographic information shall be performed by a Texas professional registered land surveyor. This surveyor shall be provided -- the survey shall be provided at the time of application submit a the registered or certified design professional shall substantiate the request for the waiver. So this is showing one of the options of the sloped waiver request. So we have the survey from the certified land surveyor at contours of one foot or two feet, and then we have the height differential from the lowest point to the highest point. And that is 17 feet. And then there's also the distance between the lowest and the highest point of 150 feet, eight inches.

And then this is just pointing out that the survey is stamped by the professional land surveyor and then we have like the high point, the low point.

And then another couple more clicks, the slope calculation, the 17-foot rise divided about the 150, eight

inches run gives us 11.3 percent slope and then we have the substantiation from the define professional.

So because this site is more than 10%, they do not have to comply with the exterior visitable route, however, they still need to comply with the interior requirements.

So the next option is a switch back waiver requirements. So a switch back waiver shall be determined by the slope between the elevation of the finished floor at the visitable dwelling entrance and all potential origin points as defined in section R 320.7. The horizontal distance shall be reduced by six feet to account for code required landings at the top and bottom of the ramp.

So the 320.7 talks about the potential origin points, the garage, driveway, public sidewalk, public street. And then this section, R 311.8.1 talks about the maximum slope for the ramp, it being one to 12, and that there is an exception in the IRC that if it is technically infeasible to comply because of site constraints, that a ramp may have a maximum slope of one to eight, which is a 12.5% slope.

So here's an example of the switchback waiver request.

And so we -- calculations have been done that the overall site slope is less than 10% so they're looking at how can we go about getting a switchback waiver.

So if we -- so we have the ABC and D showing the different origin points and then we have the slope calculations in the upper left-hand corner that have been substantiated by the design professional. And then this goes into a little bit more detail because it is really hard to see what those calculations were for each of the origination points.

So with this we have -- the first one is the garage. If you click, we'll -- so there's A. So we have a four foot rise, 14-foot run, 29%.

And then the driveway there's two possible from the public or from the driveway itself. And that was equated to 56% and 47%. And for this street we have a 28%. And then the sidewalk is 30%.

So with that, they would be able to get the waiver.

So submittal requirements. So we need to have an interior visitability plan with graphic notations or a plan with descriptive notes.

The exterior visitability plan shows exterior route

and the components. And then the waivers, the survey with contours and registered design professional substantiation letters or notes.

Plan sheets and/or submittal exhibits that are necessary to demonstrate visitability compliance must be sealed by a Texas Registered architect or a certified building designer.

So this kind of shows you both options. So we had the visitability plan where they are showing in graphic form either -- they don't have to show both. Either you will be coming from the front door or you will be coming from the garage, but then it also has the parts and pieces called out in regards to the visitable bathroom and the blocking, the door size. And then there's also the option on the right which has all the visitability notes written out.

And here's a bigger image of the visitability notes written out.

All right. And that is all. Thank you so much. Please let me know if you have any questions.

>> Did she have one question so far. So this is applicable only to the City of Austin.

>> Correct.

>> Turner: But Darrel is going to share with us how to take this information and possibly get it established in your community that does not have such ordinances.

So this is a great -- this is the groundwork that you might need once you are able to establish some kind of visitability ordinance in your community. And I don't have any other questions right now, Susan. Thank you so much for joining us. I'm sorry you have to leave early.

We may have questions that come up later. If so, I'll email you and we can get those answered.

>> Barr: That sounds great. I can actually stay around until 3:00.

>> Turner: Okay. Very good.

>> Barr: Thank you all.

>> Turner: All right. So now I am going to turn it over to Darrel. Thank you, Darrel, for joining us.

>> Christenson: Well, thank you so much for the invitation. My name is Darrel Christenson and I'm with ability 360 here in Phoenix, Arizona. If we go to the next slide, please, Randi.

And so my day job is as vice-president of community

integration here in Phoenix, but I'm also a board member at the national council on independent living and I'm their co-chair for housing subcommittee and this is an organization that oversees a number of advocacy issues nationally, and certainly housing is a huge part of that for folks with disabilities.

So today's objectives for my portion here are six. One is why should I care about visitability in the first place. No matter where you're sitting in the audience, wherever your position is in the community, why should you care about it? We'll answer that.

What are the benefits of visitability, and there are many.

We're going to sort of do a Dave Letterman and the Top 10 myths and we'll dispel them.

Fourth I'll talk about how to make visitability a reality in your community. And Susan has done a wonderful job in the City of Austin as a model as are others in the nation.

Fifth we'll talk about building partnerships, and that really is the key towards moving forward.

And then lastly, we'll talk about the playbook to pass

a visitability ordinance.

So why should I care? Right now Americans move every seven years on average. And current homes that have been built last between 50 and 100 years. So just simple math of a home that was built in 1971, there have been seven families in and out of that property. The 100 year home from 1921, 14 families would have been gone in and out buying and selling that single property and you really don't know -- it's not necessarily building for the initial home builder or the homeowner, but for the future as well.

So we're talking, as Susan mentioned, about single-family homes, and when we take this, only 38% of single-family homes built before 1970 are visitable.

And only half of the single-family homes built before 1980 are visitable.

So you know, 1980 to me sounds like a couple of years ago but that's already 40 years old.

So with these numbers there's a 60% chance that at least one person with a disability will be living in today's newly built homes. And you don't know which ones so you can't really pick and choose a five percent or

10 percent, but 60 percent will have at some point someone with a disability living there.

Also the visitability trends. So 70 years ago back in the 1950s, home accessibility increased to meet the needs of the veterans who were coming home from war.

And by 2030, which is only, what, nine years from now, it's projected that there will be 70 million Americans ages 65 and older.

And five years out from that in 2035, one in three households will be led by a resident 65 and older.

Some more statistics to throw out is that the trends say that currently 80% of Americans over 50 want to remain in their current homes. And 95% of Americans over 75 want to remain at home. Both these figures come from AARP.

And don't forget about the baby boomers. We're getting older too.

And a quote from Eleanor Smith who is from "Concrete Change" back in 1986, and she said that these features hurt nobody, but they help a lot of others.

So what are the benefits of visitability? It can be benefiting a resident with a permanent disability, so currently I checked that the population of Texas is about

29 and a half million people total. And then a couple of years ago figures were that 3.2 million Texans have a permanent disability or just under 12% of the population.

And this figure of 3.2 million is actually the second largest in the United States behind California as far as hard numbers of folks with disabilities.

So you know, what we say is that acquiring a disability is an equal opportunity club. You can join at any time. Either you're born with a disability like I was or maybe you go out in the highway, I-35, get into a car accident, and you have a spinal cord injury or a brain injury, you go to the doctor's office, you're diagnosed with MS, whatever it might be. And if that doesn't happen, Mother Nature kicks in with the aging process. And so it's just part of the human experience and you never know.

The benefits also are for folks with temporary mobility impairments. And someone goes out and goes skiing and breaks a leg or fall in their home and have crutches or canes or other needs for a temporary basis.

The benefits also include parents who have infants and using a stroller. Susan talked about the zero step entrance. And it's much easier to get a stroller in and

out of a home when there's no steps than having to deal with that.

Grandparents coming to visit the family and the grandkids, very common, right?

And then moving furniture in and out, whether it's the new sofa or a big screen TV for next season's football games, it's much easier that way or even just getting groceries in and out of the house without having to deal with steps.

Additional benefits of visitability include eliminating costlier modifications later. For example, we'll talk about wider doorways and doing it upfront in new construction is about two dollars per door, but to widen a doorway later and make the modification, you're talking just under a thousand dollars. It could be seven to eight hundred dollars for one door to be widened so it reduces that.

Also reducing falls, injuries, hospitalizations or nursing home placement. Last year alone in the country falls and injuries cost \$43.8 billion. And that -- many of them as we know happen in the home.

There's increased convenience and comfort with

accessibility and visitability.

They're esthetically pleasing. No longer do features look like your room is part of a hospital ward. These are very esthetically pleasing.

I like to tell people that like, for example, grab bars now come in mauve and taupe and peach colors to be very pleasing with the esthetics.

Folks, I'm a guy, I don't know what mauve and taupe are, and peach to me is a fruit.

So it's esthetically pleasing.

And we've even seen where Chip and Joanna in Waco have done accessibility and visitability as well. I've been there and visited their market.

And it's fully marketable to the general public so this way if you're a buyer or a seller, a developer, a homeowner, now you can actually buy and sell and put out to the market to the whole population, otherwise without these features in a way you're kind of cutting yourself off from the total marketplace.

So the Top 10 myths that we'll dispel.

First of all, the myth is that only a small percentage of houses need to have access because only a small portion

of people need a disability-friendly features.

well, as we're saying, 60%, 60% of all new homes are projected to have a resident with a long-term, severe mobility impairment over the lifetime of the house.

The second myth is that in practice a variety of construction and enforcement complexities make it impractical to mandate access in virtually all new homes. It can't be done.

well, folks, this is another myth. It's already been done. Existing ordinances for the past nearly 20 years and earlier demonstrate indisputable success.

For example, down here in Arizona, Tucson in Pima county, there have been over 62,000 homes built to date, and over 3,000 homes built in the community of Bolingbrook, Illinois and they've shown that administratively and constructionwise they can be accomplished without negative unintended consequences. So throw myth number 2 out the window.

Number three, a long list of universal design features, like lowering the cabinets, knee space under the kitchen sinks, rolling showers. That they should be included in every home.

The fact is it's not practical to include this long list of features in all new homes. It would undermine the overall housing affordability essential for millions of us with disabilities and without.

It's also practical to construct the most crucial features in all new houses. At least a one-step entrance, wide enough interior doors and the bathroom doors as well. That is reasonable.

And Susan and City of Austin have gone further as well.

Myth number 4, myth number 4 says a zero step entrance requires a conventional ramp with a 90-degree dropoff at the edges and handrails. The fact is in new construction the lot can be graded so that sidewalk ties directly into the porch.

I have an example that this took place actually in the City of Austin and this was a large TND community in Austin, an abandoned airfield and they were able to grade it out so that it worked for all units.

So that can be done usually quite easily.

Myth number five is that the zero-step entrance, as Susan mentioned, only works in a flat lot. And the fact is that steep lots are often easier than a flat lot because

the driveway may be steep, but the gently sloped sidewalk that leads to the driveway -- from the driveway to the porch or an alley or attached garage may provide access. And here's a visual of the -- of a driveway with the sidewalk going to a front entrance of a home.

Myth number 6 also speaks to the zero step entrance saying that it must be located at the front of the house, and again we're saying the best location depends on the specific site, depending on the lot, the house type, can be the front door, back door, side door or through the garage and here's a picture of a garage -- on the back entrance going off whereas the front entrance looks like it would be graded down toward so we're going off the back end.

Myth number six that we're going to dispel is also a zero-step entrance is not practical. Oops, seven.

Thank you. That it's not practical when building over a basement or crawl space.

Again, this has been ask dispelled that being over a basement or crawl space does not deter the cost effective zero-step entrance. So another picture of a sidewalk going directly into a front door without steps.

The last three here are very important. Myth number eight, basic access on new houses undermines affordability.

Okay, if you're going to do all this and you're going to make changes, it's going to be cost prohibitive for anybody to do this.

That's the myth. The fact is that basic access is compatible with affordability. You do a zero step entrance. The 32-inch clear doorways. That's going to be \$110 or less than a new -- or less on the new house built on a concrete slab, 110 bucks.

And it's about 610 to a new house built over a basement. And that's less than it costs of one single bay window added.

So for folks with disabilities -- well, for all of us, the price point is very important and adding these features certainly does not price anybody out of the market. But if we do the current norm and stay with where we're at, of constructing barriers, that's where the unaffordability comes in, people, in human distress and financial consequences. Steps at all entrances and narrow bathroom doors. They undermine the affordability

through the renovations that we've talked about that strain family and public funds through health and safety problems caused by inability to exit one's home independently or enter one's bathroom.

And actually it's through institutionalization when barriers contribute to moving to a nursing home. Seniors who have -- who don't have visitability features, many times are prematurely sent to a nursing home and this caused the community and taxpayers about 40,000 extra dollars per person per year. So the affordability piece throw that myth number eight out as well.

Myth nine says that home builders and architects may need to scrap their existing approved plans and start over, causing huge expense to the home buyer.

Again, this is simply not true and it's been proven for nearly 30 years.

Visitability features do not require this dramatic overhaul. And making these features a standard actually saves everyone.

And the tenth myth is that a man's home is his castle and the government should -- would be overreaching their rights and freedoms. The fact is in public -- in the

public interest there are already electric codes, plumbing codes, setback codes. They're already there. And houses that are being built are -- they're not being built the same way that they were in 1920 or 1970.

Materials that we're using have changed and improved over the years. And energy efficiency, energy star standards, green codes, those are desired and they actually enhance the end product.

So we are doing things differently. We're doing them better. Visitability just adds to that equation.

So then how do we make visitability a reality in your community? First of all, I would say educate yourself. What do your local codes include now?

What are other communities and states, what have they done to increase accessibility and private single-family and duplex homes? I know that with not only Austin, but San Antonio and other communities in Texas, they're already doing it. So get ahold of Susan and find out more if you have questions of her for Austin and their example.

visitability.org is a great resource and so you can check that out. Like I said, Austin, San Antonio. The Texas state affordable housing corporation, they are good

examples here in Texas as well.

Also, nationally, Habitat for Humanity, they have been a great champion in doing visitability in their homes. And AARP, they're also advocates of visitability. They have some great materials out.

If you check AARP's website they have a great manual to check out and inform yourself.

Do your homework. Identify the advantages of visitability and understand what I'll say are the hot buttons of various individuals or groups. What resonates with folks in the building industry, in the city governments? Just what are the hot buttons? Some are they want to make money, home builders want to make money, developers want to make money. Governments and such want to be cost effective.

So what -- or some people do it because they're good, caring folks and want to meet the needs of communities. What is their hot button that really resonates. That is what you want to find out.

So start to identify your allies and key players in your community.

So building partnerships. People with disabilities

in your community, you know, who better to ask than people who are going to use the features, right? Disability organizations. And this includes Centers for Independent Living. And for a list near you, it's ilru.org. Click on Texas and you will have a full list of Centers for Independent Living, they're advocate organizations by and run -- for and by people with disabilities.

Housing advocates. Not only on disability issues, but senior. Who are the housing advocates in your community. You can build partnerships with folks.

Mayor's commission on disability issues in your town. And then of course the Governor's Committee here on people with disabilities.

And we've also found over the years that elects officials who have a personal story of maybe a family member or a friend or themselves who has a disability, they usually understand the issues and the needs much more clearly.

So seek them out, find out if are there any elected officials that have a personal story to share and get them in that partnership.

Also, of course, homeowner's across the board. You know, what we find too is that many people do not even know that these features are available to them. So they don't even ask. And so we've heard, you know, builders say we'll do whatever the customer wants, but if the customer doesn't know that these features were even available, they're not going to generally ask.

So get the homeowner's involved. There's homeowner's associations and such. Code enforcement officials, work with your local folks.

Disaster planners, that may come as a surprise, but given what Texas is dealing with this past week now and today, you know, with disaster planning, with the weather change, climate change, busted pipes, hurricanes, you know, how are we going to build new homes?

Housing tech experts, also build them into the partnership. Design and planning professionals. Architects, developers, home builders, Realtors. Everybody in the housing industry has a stake here and it's a matter of how do we meet the needs of the community not only today, but for tomorrow, as we're saying.

So why should people care? I've started to talk about

this a little bit. But helping housing developers build better housing for all families. Again, this increases their sales that if I was to tell you that your air conditioner was working on 85% capacity and you have another air conditioner that's working on 100% capacity, I think you would want to work on the 100%, and that's the same thing here with developers. They want to be able to reach the largest market possible so that they can have more sales and make more money. And nobody's going to argue about people making money on this.

That's -- that's what people are in business for, but it's meeting community needs as well.

Helping homeowners or home buyers -- excuse me, home buyers to achieve that American dream of home ownership.

Building equity, having a place to call home for their families and their kids. Being able to stay there and like where seniors -- older adults may have been in a home for many, many years, it's where their raised their kids. They want to stay there, they don't want to be schlepped off to some nursing home.

Helping homeowners improve their relationship and their financial situation. Again, building equity.

So meet the community needs. Again, it's the hard numbers. It's just the numbers actually help to speak to being on the right side of visitability. It's meeting community needs.

Also, why should people care? Because they want to make money. They want to be successful. And maybe it's a developer or a builder who wants to learn more about visitability, how that incorporate in all their new subdivisions, they then would feel they have a leg up on their competitors.

So build them into your partnership, educate them and get them on your side.

As far as municipalities go, this is good public policy for your community that I've talked briefly about that.

And economic growth. People -- communities want to grow. They want to bring people to the community. They want to bring that economic growth. And that includes people not only without disabilities, or who are temporarily able-bodied, but also folks with disabilities as well.

And the last point of this slide, thank you, is that

you need to identify why people should care and how visitability meets their needs, and that's a way of building your coalition.

So the last portion here is the playbook to passing visitability. It's really important, people, to learn the political process. What department oversees the housing ordinance policy and procedures? I believe Susan, you're with the development -- community development, right?

Okay.

And so find out locally, you know, what is the equivalent as to the departments there.

What committees does the process have to go through? You may have a few different committees that it works itself through before getting to approval from council.

And attend those meetings and be visible. People who show up decide.

And then also bring people in, both the supporters of yours and those who are not initially supportive. And really understand their points of views and concerns.

This is a way to draw a larger consensus so that everybody has a buy-in to it.

Some are slow to change, but be persistent.

The playbook also continues by saying that knowledge and relationship building really are the keys. So always speak from a foundation of facts and information. And this PowerPoint will be available to the attendees, I believe, so please use the foundations and facts.

Ask questions and learn from others' experiences. You'll find on a couple of websites that we've talked about like visitability.org, there's other communities throughout the nation who have done this. Reach out to them and learn, ask questions.

And speak from your heart and share your passion saying this is important to me. I have a family member I want to see everybody have full access to being able to visit my neighbor. I mean, visitability came down to being able to the ability to visit your neighbor.

So this fall when the cowboys and the Texans and everyone is playing football, can you visit your neighbor to watch the game? Or are you going to be three doors down and you can't visit your neighbor at the household party for Sunday's game or Saturday's college game.

Speak from your heart and your passion.

And as I've said earlier learn what's most important to others and speak their language. And make a difference in your community, people. Hopefully this is why you're on today's call, you want to make a difference.

It's not easy, but it is possible. So we're certainly here to help out.

So next slide then is questions. And then, Randi, if you can go one more I'll put my contact information up there and take any questions that anybody has.

Thank you so much.

>> Turner: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Our first question is -- first I want to make clear that the whole idea about visitability is it's not going -- it would be great if we could go back and make everybody's house accessible in these five -- at least five minor ways.

But new construction in your community. How do we make sure from here on out these homes that are built are accessible and visitable?

So we do have a question that asked: Does the City of Austin offer any financial assistance to owners seeking to make their homes more visitable?

You're muted, Susan. Okay. Nope?

We cannot hear you, Susan. I don't know what happened.

It says you're unmuted, but you're not.

Hang on. Let me make you a co-host and see if that does anything.

Do you want to try again? Nope. We can't hear you, I'm so sorry.

Maybe you can type an answer into the chatbox.

>> Christenson: While we're getting Susan's answer in, I think that's a good point you made, Randi, about new construction. Because we talk about the life-span of a home. Now that we're building in 2021, that's going to be 2071 or whatever, it's for the future and the future is now. Thank you.

>> Turner: But there are some cities that have programs to make -- to assist people that are lower income to possibly add an accessible entrance or add some of these -- maybe not go and replace all of the wall sockets, but can help with some other accommodations getting into the home. And I'm going to ask Ron in a second to maybe talk about some of that because I think he's with it, our

executive director.

>> Lucey: Randi, this is Ron. I think what you are talking about is the architectural barrier removal programs that are often provided with Community Development Block Grant money from HUD. And those provide some mitigation of accessibility problems in older homes that were not built to a visitability standard. There are economic guidelines that apply to those, but that's more of a retrofit program. They can put in an accessible commode or grab bars in a shower or help put in a ramp, but they would not do all of the things that the visitability program does or the visitability ordinance.

>> Turner: Ron, you were the chair for the Austin mayor's committee on people with disabilities for awhile when the city ordinance was passed.

Can you maybe talk a little bit about how you made that happen? How the committee was involved?

>> Lucey: Yeah, I wasn't the chair when it a passed. I was the chair the first time we attempted it. It took two attempts in Austin. I believe the first was in 2009 or 2010 and then it finally passed in 2014. And I didn't

or the mayor's committee didn't make it happen, it was a broad coalition of groups like ADAPT, ARCIL, the Gray Panthers, the AARP. And just to echo all the things that were already said, it required going through different boards and commissions and educating folks and educating the city council.

[Inaudible].

>> Turner: We lost you, Ron. You broke up there.

>> Christenson: I think we have Susan's chat --

>> Turner: You're kind of fading in and out, Ron. Can you say that last part again?

>> Lucey: Yeah. What the City of Austin did right is they listened to the builders and developers and they built in some variances or exceptions. So if the 10% slope or topography on the lot is one way that you can get a variance. Nobody is asking a developer or builder to build a visitable home on the side of a cliff, it's just not feasible.

So the other thing that I thought they did is a lot of times when an ordinance passes, it becomes effective at the beginning of the next fiscal year. And often that gives builders little or no time to change their building

plans or adapt to the new regulatory environment.

So providing a longer glide path or slope to help prepare for that change and implement your ordinance a year after it passes, I think those concessions to the builders are going to help reduce objections to it. But ultimately it's the right thing to do.

I recall when we -- the difference between the cost of a visitable home and a non-visitable home, the city staff at the time estimated that it would be approximately \$500 more, but that \$500 is not insignificant for somebody buying a home, but what you have to understand is they finance that \$500 as part of the overall cost of the home over 30 years for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage. And within [Inaudible].

>> Turner: You faded out again, Ron.

I'm sorry about that, Ron, we still can't hear you.

I've put Ron's email address into the chatbox, so if you would like to reach out to Ron directly here at the Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities, please do so.

Do we have any more questions for our panelists?
well, seeing none, I want to thank you both for joining

us today. Susan and Darrel, I know you've got to head out in a minute, Susan, anyway.

It's great information. We will post this to our website, the session is being recorded. And we post the materials with the recording at the website.

So I sent that information out through the chatbox earlier. But you will get a follow-up email with a survey as well as the information on where to get the materials at our website in case you didn't get it out of the chatbox.

So I'm going to go ahead and say thank you for our interpreters from communication by hand. And thank you for our captioning from Texas Closed Captioning.

And have a nice day, everyone.

Thanks for joining us.