

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION WORK GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

Attendees:

Council Chair and Work Group Chair, Jolene Ivey  
Council Member Ingrid S. Watson, Vice Chair  
Griffin Benton, Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA)  
Jim Chandler, Office of the County Executive  
Charlesetta Griffin, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Chapter 939  
Brooke Larman, Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)  
Tierra Medley, Maryland Inclusive Housing  
Lori Parris, Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE)  
Sarah Reddinger, Habitat for Humanity

Members Absent:

Dwight Joseph, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)  
Marcus Monroe, American Institute of Architects – Potomac Valley

Others Present:

Adam Jiroun - Meeting Substitute for Dwight Joseph, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)  
Margaret Klotz and Karron Roundtree, Karrie Quigley and Associates  
American Sign Language Interpreting Services

Staff:

John W. Sheridan, Policy Director, Council District 5  
Kathleen H. Canning, Legislative Attorney  
Rana Hightower, PHED Committee Director  
Shirley M. Anglin, Administrative Aide  
Aminah Bushrod, Council Technical Services  
Sharon Savoy Williams, Administrative Assistant  
Rhonda Riddick, Administrative Aide

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Welcome and Opening Remarks

The third regular meeting of the Universal Design Implementation Work Group (Work Group) was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, by the Chair of the Work Group. Chair Ivey indicated that the items for discussion at the meeting were the no-step entry and the waiver checklist.

Discussion Items: Presentation by Small Group

Ms. Parris indicated that the Small Group had met on February 1, 2024, and February 12, 2024, to discuss in depth issues regarding the no-step entry and the waiver. She provided information on seven items that were discussed by the Small Group that need further discussion.

1. What would the waiver process look like?
2. Is there a need for clarification on definitions or terms as related to accessibility and usability?
3. What is the purpose and need for the 50% threshold for the waiver requirement? How will it be applied? 50% for the entire development or 50% per builder?
4. Should the language regarding the implementation date be changed?
5. WSSC's input is needed as to their inspection of the plumbing and fixtures of the house and their sign-off process to be coordinated with DPIE.
6. With the exemption process, how do we identify properties as being exempt at the beginning of the process.
7. DPIE - staffing needs required to be determined for the implementation of urban design in the County; specifically relating to applications and waivers. She will be following up with IT to determine costs and programmatic functions. She indicated that there was consensus on the need for an electronic system to implement the universal design program.

Mr. Chandler stressed the importance of creating a procedure up front, earlier than at the permit stage but indicated that it might not be possible to tie waivers to the Detailed Site Plan or to the Subdivision.

Ms. Parris also raised the issue of the timing of the waiver. She said that the issue has been raised in the Small Group but has not been resolved.

Mr. Benton stressed the importance of a decision on an exemption earlier in the process to address financing and other budgetary and construction concerns. He indicated with the threshold being unspecified a hard cut-off is problematic.

Chair Ivey asked about the possibility of the waiver determination at the time of grading. Ms. Parris indicated at the time of site plan review, it is uncertain where an entrance will be located and on which lots, especially with multiple contractors. Further, Ms. Parris indicated that in addition to being hard to process the waiver at grading, not all Detailed Site Plans go to the Planning Board.

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Ms. Parris spoke about the utilization of the waiver not to exceed 50%. She posed questions regarding how the waiver will be applied. Is it 50% for the entire development or 50% per builder? Also, she asked how the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement would track the application of the waiver across the properties.

Mr. Benton noted that the hardest universal design requirement for the builders to meet is the zero-step entry and asked whether the Work Group would consider imposing a fee for buy-out for those not able to meet the standards that would go into retrofitting existing homes. He indicated that he would report back on what a fair fee would be.

Ms. Charlesetta Griffin asked Chair Ivey if the meetings were being recorded to aid in understanding the work of the Work Group and the Small Group. Chair Ivey indicated that both were being recorded and Ms. Griffin indicated that she would contact John Sheridan to obtain access to the recordings. Ms. Griffin indicated that the recordings would be most helpful.

Ms. Sarah Reddinger shared thoughts about universal design and the Work Group and Small Group work this far. She indicated that it is important to add certainty to compliance with the universal design process. She supports the idea of a fee to retrofit homes. Chair Ivey asked about Habitat for Humanity's building practices as related to the no-step entry. She indicated that Habitat for Humanity tends to chose lots with zero-step entry or lots that are able to be graded without too much cost. Flat would mean there are no significant changes in grading from the street to the house with sidewalks having a slight incline. Typically, there would not be a basement as slabs are easier to do. Further, she indicated that 100% zero-step would be great because a lot of our housing stock is not accessible, useable, or visitable. In summary, she provided that in houses that they retrofit the width of the doorways with electric and HVAC on opposite walls make it hard to get a wheelchair in and blocking is needed in the bathroom for grab bars.

Chair Ivey asked about the use of chairlifts. Ms. Reddinger indicated that there is usually a chairlift to the second level of the house. Ms. Ivey indicated that the bill, (CB-65-2023), required a wall electrical outlet to accommodate a chairlift.

Chair Ivey asked Mr. Benton for the cost of certain retrofitting improvements. Mr. Benton provided the following cost estimates: installing a chairlift for one flight of stairs with no turns would cost \$2,500; installing a tub cut would cost a few hundred dollars; replacing a tub with a shower would cost \$8,000-\$15,000.

Vice-Chair Watson asked about what was trending in the building industry; namely, whether buyers are interested in a first-floor full bath.

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Mr. Benton indicated that for new construction a first-floor bath would cost \$15,000-\$20,000 and a first-floor half bath would be \$7,500 and the addition of a shower would be an additional \$7,500 for a total cost of \$15,000. Mr. Benton indicated that he would provide information on market trends.

Ms. Griffin asked what the cost would be of adding a shower in a first-floor powder room. Mr. Benton said that it would cost approximately \$4,000 to \$10,000 depending on the length of the plumbing.

Mr. Benton talked about the use of ramps as an alternative for a zero-step entry. Chair Ivey said that the use of ramps and the first-floor bathrooms are being discussed.

Vice-Chair Watson asked what the cost of would be of implementing the bill's, (CB-65-2023), universal design elements. Mr. Benton estimated the cost to be \$13,000-\$15,000 with land costs differing. Chair Ivey indicated that the construction costs would be equal in the housing but that the land costs may differ in different locations in the County.

Ms. Griffin discussed having a shower, sink, and toilet in the first-floor bath versus having a bathtub.

Ms. Tierra Medley described a State funding program available to persons receiving Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) Services. Ms. Medley indicated that there is a DDA allowance of up to \$15,700 used for retrofitting showers, tubs, and grab bars. DDA funds are available and there is no DDA waiting list for this funding.

Chair Ivey asked if these State DDA funds would be available to seniors and Mr. Griffin indicated that while the needs of persons in the DDA community and seniors may overlap, the seniors generally cannot qualify for DDA funding.

Mr. Benton indicated that there are Federal program funds available for retrofitting homes to be universal design compatible.

#### Next Steps

- The Small Group will meet a couple more times to make sure that the provisions of the bill, CB-65-2023, are implemented correctly.
- Meetings will be recorded.
- Develop potential changes to the bill, (CB-65-2023).

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2023, and January 10, 2024

Vice-Chair Watson made a motion to approve the minutes and Chair Ivey seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0.

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Next Meeting

March 13, 2024, In-Person

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.