

September 25, 2018

MEMO TO: IEM-81 File

F R O M: Elle Cochran, Chair 
Infrastructure and Environmental Management Committee

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL RELATING TO VISITABILITY STANDARDS IN THE COUNTY'S BUILDING CODE**
(IEM-81)

The attached legislative proposal pertains to Item 81 on the Committee's agenda.

iem:ltr:081atrans01

Attachment

Resolution

No. _____

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO INCORPORATE VISITABILITY STANDARDS IN THE COUNTY'S BUILDING CODE FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

WHEREAS, a November 2016 study titled, "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Hawaii with a Focus on People with Disabilities" ("Analysis"), prepared by the Center on Disability Studies at University of Hawaii at Manoa's College of Education ("CDS"), estimated that the County of Maui is home to a population of approximately 16,681 people with disabilities with 1,045 individuals under the age of eighteen, 8,159 between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four years, and 7,494 over sixty-four years; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism states that the number of individuals sixty-five years of age and older is projected to increase from 14.5 percent in 2010 to 23.6 percent in 2040 with about one in three individuals having mobility and self-care-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the number of multigenerational households in Hawaii will continue to increase as the state's aging population grows, causing barriers for individuals with disabilities who wish to live at home with their families; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization ("WHO"), through their Age-Friendly Cities Initiative, encourages municipalities to adapt their structures and services to be accessible and inclusive; and

WHEREAS, in October 2015 the American Association of Retired Persons ("AARP") Network of Age-Friendly Communities, in affiliation with WHO, approved the City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Age-Friendly City Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, visitability standards were incorporated in the City's building code to support the implementation of the Age-Friendly City Action Plan; and

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WHEREAS, visitability standards were included in Volume 1 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 1996 "Fair Housing Planning Guide," and continue to be used; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, specifications for visitability standards were incorporated in the International Code Council's ("ICC") American National Standard A117.1, Standard for Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities, which is increasingly being adopted by municipalities and states; and

WHEREAS, the ICC's specifications are available for the purpose of adoption by municipalities and the ICC offers a range of expertise and guidance relating to the application and administration of technical requirements; and

WHEREAS, the six visitability features recommended by the Analysis and incorporated in the ICC standards, include:

- 1) At least one zero-step entrance into a home, on an accessible route leading from a driveway or public sidewalk;
- 2) Interior doors with 32 inches of clear passage space, enough for a wheelchair user to navigate through;
- 3) One wheelchair-accessible full bath on the main floor of the home, large enough to access in a wheelchair and close the door;
- 4) One accessible bedroom on the main floor of the home;
- 5) Hallways with a minimum 36 inches of clear passage to allow maneuvering space for a wheelchair user; and
- 6) Receptacles placed 18 and 24 inches above finish floor; and

WHEREAS, the Analysis further states that "a growing number of architects and builders are coming to realize that including visitability features increases construction costs only minimally, or not at all, and is a selling point appreciated by many home buyers of all ages"; and

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WHEREAS, requiring visitability features for new residential construction would not require costly retrofitting to existing homes but would support accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the Analysis highly recommends that local governments make visitability a requirement of building codes; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of six visitability standards in the County's building code for new residential construction will greatly increase inclusiveness and accessibility of residential communities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it hereby urges the Department of Public Works to incorporate visitability standards into the County's building code for new residential construction; and
2. That it hereby encourages the Department of Public Works to report back to the Council within 60 days of the adoption of this Resolution regarding its recommendations and proposed legislation; and
3. That certified copies be transmitted to the Honorable Alan M. Arakawa, Mayor of the County of Maui; and the Director of Public Works.