



## Community Development Department

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## Residential Visitability and Universal Design Petaluma Municipal Code Chapter 17.14.

### Summary of Requirements

This ordinance is based on California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Model Universal Design Local Ordinance (AB 2787). The essential features contained in this model are adapted for Petaluma conditions.

See HCD Universal Design Model Ordinance: [Universal Design Model Ordinance | California Department of Housing and Community Development](#)

See Petaluma Municipal Code: [Title 17 Building and Construction | Petaluma Municipal Code](#)

The effective date of this ordinance is April 20, 2022. Applications received after this date shall comply.

The purposes of this chapter are to:

1. Establish consistent, practical, and proven building and design standards that will make specified dwelling units visitable, more usable, and safer for occupancy and visitability by persons with disabilities or frailties.
2. Enhance the full life-cycle use of housing without regard to the physical abilities or disabilities of a home's occupants or guests to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and functional abilities.
3. Implement the City of Petaluma's General Plan Housing Element by providing housing that meets a diverse range of needs, including those of disabled occupants and visitors.

This chapter shall **not** apply to applications for dwelling units that have already received site plan and architectural review approval, pursuant to Chapter 24 of Petaluma Zoning Code, prior to the effective date of this chapter.

The provisions of this Chapter shall **not** apply to:

1. Alteration or expansion of an existing dwelling unit;
2. Reconstruction of an existing dwelling unit destroyed due to fire or other natural disaster;
3. Accessory dwelling units, as that term is defined in Chapter 28 of the Petaluma Zoning Code; or
4. Addition of four (4) or fewer residential units to or within an existing structure.

### **Residential Visitability- PMC 17.14.60.**

The requirements “shall apply to new dwelling units within a building with four (4) or fewer dwelling units.” All **new dwellings in buildings with 4 or fewer dwellings** require Visitable features, including an accessible primary entrance, interior route connecting entrance to common room and Powder Room/Bathroom.

Residential units located above grade level may need an elevator to meet visitable entrance requirement. Also design and dwelling unit configuration may readily achieve Visitable features without elevators.

**17.14.060 Visitable Dwellings.**

Visitable Dwellings shall be constructed to include all the following:

- A. An accessible Primary Entrance in accordance with Section 17.14.080.
- B. An accessible Interior Route in accordance with Section 17.14.090.
- C. An accessible Common Room in accordance with Section 17.14.100.
- D. An accessible Primary Floor Powder Room/Bathroom in accordance with Section 17.14.110.

**Universal Design- PMC 17.14.070.**

Universal Design “shall apply to **thirty percent (30%) of the total dwelling units within developments with five (5) or more total dwelling units.**” Universal Access features include Visitable Dwelling features and accessible bedroom, kitchen, miscellaneous and laundry facilities. These features are to be designed into a minimum of 30% of the project dwellings.

When calculating the project number for which 30% Universal access is required, fractional units are to be rounded up to the next whole unit. (30% equals 2 of 5, 3 of 7, 4 of 11, 5 of 14, etc.). The units are to be distributed throughout the project site and have similar design, appearance, and quality with other units.

1. Universal Design Dwelling units shall be constructed and occupied concurrently with or prior to the construction and occupancy of the other residential units in the development project, unless an alternative schedule is permitted based on extenuating circumstances as part of the project approval. In phased projects, Universal Design Dwelling units shall be constructed and occupied in proportion to the number of units in each phase of the project.
2. Universal Design Dwelling units shall be distributed throughout the residential project site, to the fullest extent practicable.
3. The design, appearance and general quality of the Universal Design units shall be comparable to and compatible with the design of the other units in the development project as determined through the Site Plan and Architectural Review process, Chapter 24 of the Implementing Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance 2300 N.C.S.), provided that all other applicable [zoning](#) and [building](#) codes are met.

**17.14.070 Universal Design Dwellings.**

All Universal Design Dwellings shall be constructed to include all the following:

- A. Accessible Primary Entrance in accordance with Section 17.14.080.
- B. Accessible Interior Route in accordance with Section 17.14.090.
- C. Accessible Common Room in accordance with Section 17.14.100.
- D. Accessible Primary Floor Powder Room/Bathroom in accordance with Section 17.14.110.
- E. Accessible Bedroom in accordance with Section 17.14.120.
- F. Accessible Kitchen in accordance with Section 17.14.130.
- G. The Miscellaneous Accessible Requirements in accordance with Section 17.140.
- H. Accessible Laundry Facility consistent with the requirements of CBC Chapter 11A.
- I. If the Universal Design Dwelling unit is two or more stories, one or more of the following shall be included:
  1. Electrical Outlets at stairs to accommodate future stair chairlift installation; or
  2. Placement of stacked closets to accommodate future home elevator installation, including adequate dimensions and electrical access.

**The following text from the ordinance is provided to clearly describe paths to compliance.**

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- B. An accessible Interior Route in accordance with Section 17.14.090.
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- C. An accessible Common Room in accordance with Section 17.14.100.
- D. An accessible Primary Floor Powder Room/Bathroom in accordance with Section 17.14.110.
- E. An accessible Bedroom in accordance with Section 17.14.120.
- F. An accessible Kitchen in accordance with Section 17.14.130.
- G. The Miscellaneous Accessible Requirements in accordance with Section 17.140.
- H. An accessible Laundry Facility consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A.
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  2. Placement of stacked closets to accommodate future home elevator installation, including adequate dimensions and electrical access.

**17.14.080 Accessible Primary Entrances.**

A. Visitable Dwelling units and Universal Design units shall all include an Accessible Primary Entrance in accordance with subsection B, below.

B. Accessible Primary Entrances shall include the following:

1. An exterior accessible route that is either:
  - a. Consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A; or
  - b. Not less than forty inches (40”) wide and with a slope no greater than one (1) unit vertical in twenty (20) units horizontal.
2. An accessible primary entrance that is consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A.
3. A floor or landing at and on the exterior and interior side of the Accessible Primary Entrance door that is either of the following:
  - a. Consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A; or
  - b. Having a level area on the side to which the accessible entrance door swings extending twenty-four inches (24”) past the strike edge of the door.
4. An exterior accessible entry door that is either:
  - a. Consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A; or
  - b. Having a thirty-four inch (34”) net clear opening.
5. A second exterior door that is installed so that it is accessible as provided in this Section 17.14.080 with a thirty-two inch (32”) net clear opening.
6. Where at least one eyeholes is provided in the accessible entry door, one shall be at a standard height and a second one between forty-two inches (42”) and forty-four inches (44”) from the finished floor.

7. Where at least one doorbell is provided for the accessible entry door, one shall be provided that is between forty-two inches (42") and forty-eight inches (48") from the finished floor must be offered.

**17.14.090 Accessible Interior Routes.**

- A. Visitable Dwelling units and Universal Design units shall all include Accessible Interior Routes in accordance with subsection B, below.
- B. Accessible Interior Routes shall comply with the following:
  1. There shall be at least one accessible interior route through the hallway(s), consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A, from the accessible primary entrance of the dwelling unit to a powder room or bathroom, common use room, and the kitchen.
  2. Accessible interior routes shall have a minimum width of forty-two inches (42"); except that, a thirty-nine inch (39") hallway width is permitted when all doors leading to any bathroom or powder room, if on the primary entry level, have an accessible minimum clear door opening of thirty-four inches (34"), and a thirty-six inch (36") hallway is permitted when all doors leading to any bathroom or powder room on the primary entry level have a minimum clear door opening of thirty-six inches (36").
  3. On accessible interior routes, no sunken or raised areas are permitted between the primary entry and bathroom or powder room, the accessible common use room, the accessible bedroom and the accessible kitchen; and
  4. Handrail reinforcement must be installed on one or both sides of accessible interior routes.

**17.14.100 Accessible Common Use Rooms.**

- A. Visitable Dwelling units and Universal Design units shall all include an Accessible Common Use Room in accordance with subsection B, below.
- B. Accessible Common Use Room shall:
  1. Be located on accessible interior routes.
  2. Not have sunken areas.
  3. Construction shall be consistent with standards related to accessible path to any other common area room on the primary entry level.

**17.14.110 Accessible Primary Floor Powder Rooms/Bathrooms.**

- A. Visitable Dwelling units and Universal Design units shall all include an Accessible Primary Floor Powder Room/Bathroom in accordance with subsection B, below.
- B. Accessible Primary Floor Powder Rooms/Bathrooms shall:
  1. Be on the same level of the residential unit as a Primary Accessible Entry of the residential dwelling unit that complies with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A.
  2. Contain clear space that is either:
    - a. Consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A; or
    - b. Outside of the swing of the door and either a forty-eight-inch circle, a forty-eight inch by sixty-inch rectangle (48" x 60") or a sixty-inch (60") diameter circle, at the option of the purchaser/owner.
  3. Contain a bathtub or shower that meets the requirements of ANSI A117.1.
  4. Include grab bars installed in a manner consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A for the toilet, shower/bath, or lavatory.
  5. Include faucets and handles not requiring tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A.
  6. Include a lavatory or sink installed consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.

7. Include a toilet installed consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.
8. Include removable cabinets under the lavatory/sink.
9. Include only mirrors and towel fixtures in the accessible bathroom or powder room that are installed consistent with the requirements of CBC Chapter 11A.

**17.14.120 Accessible Bedrooms.**

- A. Universal Design units shall all include an Accessible Bedroom in accordance with subsection B, below.
- B. Accessible Bedrooms shall:
  1. Be on an accessible interior route of travel.
  2. Contain at least one closet that has at least a thirty-two inch (32") net opening and adjustable closet rods and shelving.

**17.14.130 Accessible Kitchens**

- A. Universal Design units shall all include an Accessible Kitchen in accordance with subsection B, below.
- B. Accessible Kitchens shall:
  1. Be located on the primary entry level of a residential dwelling unit.
  2. Be on an accessible interior route to the kitchen, with a pathway through the kitchen to the stove, oven, or combination stove-oven consistent with the requirements of CBSC Chapter 11A.
  3. Include at least a forty-eight inch by sixty-inch (48" x 60") clear space in front of a stove at the base of a U-shaped kitchen.
  4. Include at least a thirty-inch by forty-eight inch (30" x 48") clear space in front of the sink (counting open access underneath, if available).
  5. Include at least one eighteen-inch (18") wide breadboard and/or at least eighteen inches (18") of counter space at a thirty-four inch (34") height, or any combination thereof, at the option of the purchaser/owner.
  6. Have sink controls consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.
  7. Have an adjustable sink and/or removable under-sink cabinets consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.
  8. Include hood fan controls at light switch level or lower.

**17.14.140 General Miscellaneous Accessible Requirements for Universal Design Dwellings.**

- A. Universal Design units shall be built in accordance with subsections B through G, below.
- B. The installation of all receptacle outlets, lighting controls and environmental controls throughout the residential dwelling unit must comply with CBSC Chapter 11A or applicable provisions of the California Electrical Code.
- C. Rocker light switches and controls installed in rooms must be accessible and on an interior accessible route.
- D. On accessible interior routes all adjacent, interior doors or openings for rooms and routes of travel must be accessible consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A. However, a thirty-four-inch (34") clear doorway width is permitted provided from a hallway with a thirty-nine inch (39") width, and a thirty-six inch (36") clear doorway width is permitted from a hallway with a thirty-six inch (36") width.
- E. The width of the level area on the side toward which an accessible door swings must be consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.
- F. Flooring along accessible interior routes must be consistent with CBSC Chapter 11A.
- G. Standards pertaining to residential structures from ANSI A117.1 shall apply throughout this chapter when CBSC Chapter 11A does not contain specific standards.

- H. If on the primary entry level, miscellaneous areas or facilities (such as a patio or yard, laundry room, or storage area) for the dwelling must have an accessible route to and from the accessible entrance, either through the dwelling unit or around the dwelling unit.

**17.14.150 Exemptions.**

- A. When the applicant adequately demonstrates to the Building Official's reasonable satisfaction that compliance with any portion of any regulation under this chapter would create an undue hardship, or that equivalent compliance is not possible or practicable, the Building Official shall grant an exception to that portion of the regulation.
- B. When the applicant adequately demonstrates to the Building Official's reasonable satisfaction that a residential dwelling unit is being reconstructed as a result of a natural disaster, the Building Official shall grant an exemption to all or any portion of this chapter.
- C. In considering whether an undue hardship may exist so as to justify an exemption pursuant to this Section, the Building Official shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the following:
  - 1. The cost of satisfying the visitability or universal design standards in this chapter;
  - 2. The cost of the proposed construction project;
  - 3. The impact of compliance with the visitability or universal design standards in this chapter on the financial feasibility of the project;
  - 4. The nature of the accessibility to be gained by complying with the visitability or universal design standards in this chapter;
  - 5. Any negative impact on the natural environment resulting from complying with the visitability or universal design standards in this chapter; and
  - 6. The anticipated nature of the use of the project by people with disabilities.