

## SENIOR HOUSING GUIDELINES



This document provides a framework to help guide the planning, design, and review of new senior housing developments in the City of Pleasanton. The Guidelines represent preferred standards for senior housing design, features, safety/security, services, and operational considerations.

The Senior Housing Guidelines were approved by the Pleasanton City Council on September 19, 2006. The Guidelines are intended to be an informational tool for local community groups, architects and developers of both private and nonprofit senior housing and by City staff involved in planning and development of senior housing in Pleasanton.

If you have questions or would like additional information concerning the Senior Housing Guidelines, contact the City's Housing Division at **925-931-5007**.

## 1.0 Neighborhood

- 1.1 Senior housing is defined as rental and/or ownership housing restricted to individuals a minimum of 55 years of age or other age as approved by the City. Specifically, senior housing means housing that is in a facility or community intended for occupancy of at least 80 percent of the units by at least one person 55 years of age or older pursuant to the definition of "Housing for Older Persons" as stated in the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3607(b)(2)).
- 1.2 Senior housing projects should preferably be located in an area that provides convenient access (vehicular as well as pedestrian) to community amenities including transit, shopping, services, (including medical), parks and recreation, social, and educational activities. Once a specific project site has been selected, adjacent and surrounding walking routes in the immediate area should be assessed by the developer to determine if there are any hazards such as non-existent or narrow sidewalks, unmarked crosswalks, inadequate lighting or other environmental factors which could be mitigated (either by the developer and/or the City) to improve seniors' independence and mobility.
- 1.3 Senior housing projects should preferably be located where they are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The area should preferably include residential housing, and should also include shopping, services and other community amenities. The senior housing should be integrated into the surrounding neighborhood, and impacts caused by the project such as vehicle traffic, servicing, parking demands, and scale and character of development should be considered.

## 2.0 Building Design

- 2.1 The building design should be residential (as opposed to institutional) in character, density and scale, and should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
- 2.2 The building design should be consistent with the goals of accessibility, aging in place, and facilitate community.
- 2.3 The building design should comply with the City's Commercial & Civic Green Building Ordinance.
- 2.4 The building design should be consistent with all City and applicable design codes.
- 2.5 The project should be designed to emphasize durability and longevity of materials and finishes.
- 2.6 The building design should incorporate "green" features to the extent possible (e.g., solar water heaters, solar energy generation, use of recycled materials, drought-tolerant landscape design, etc.).

- 2.7 The landscape design should emphasize aesthetics, safety, low maintenance, and long-term cost efficiency and should be designed to meet urban storm water mandates.
- 2.8 All buildings (including accessory structures, garages, and carports) should be fully fire sprinklered.
- 2.9 Facilities should include fully protected and monitored fire alarm and smoke/heat detection throughout with audible and visual annunciation.

## 3.0 Facility Access

- 3.1 Safe, convenient and comfortable access is required for pedestrian and vehicular circulation between the building(s) and the street. Provisions are to include:
  - a) Automatic doors at key building entrances with security system including monitoring capacity.
  - b) Weather protection at entrance to maintain comfort in the lobby and waiting areas at the entrance.
  - c) Protected access to all units (e.g., via inside corridors, central hallways, or covered walkways).
  - d) Seating within the building that allows visual surveillance of the entry area so that residents can comfortably wait to be picked up by a car or taxi.
  - e) A covered portico at the passenger pick up/drop off area. This area is to be located at or near the front entrance if possible and be able to accommodate paratransit vehicles.
  - f) A continuous and level (i.e., meeting accessibility standards) walkway, suitable for walking, scooters and wheelchairs, from the building entrance to the public sidewalk. The walkway is to be separated from vehicle circulation, or, as a minimum alternative, be delineated as a defined walkway (for example, with contrasting paving).
  - g) Lighting along pathways and at the approach and entrance to the building.
  - h) Designated wheelchair accessible short-term parking near the main building entrance.
  - i) Wheelchair access near every main building entrance in conformance with ADA requirements.
  - j) Consideration should be given to providing sufficient covered parking spaces on site to enable covered parking for each resident who has a car (based on City and developer experience).
  - k) Stairways should be avoided, and if no other acceptable access is available, a ramp is required adjacent to the stairways, where feasible, to provide suitable alternative access.
  - l) Entry phones and signage should have large-scale buttons and large scale, high contrast lettering and numbering. Entry phones are to be located to facilitate access and use by persons in wheelchairs.

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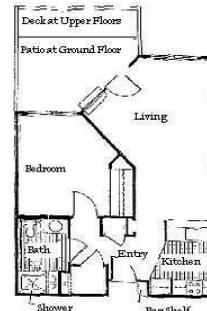
Web: [www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/housing/index.html](http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/housing/index.html)



## 4.0 Features to Support Aging in Place

- 4.1 The residential units should comfortably accommodate persons using walkers, canes, wheelchairs, or scooters (including storage for the latter). Options include but are not necessarily limited to:
- An electrical box above the unit entrance, to provide wiring for the potential future installation of a power door opener.
  - Lever handles on all doors (must meet ICC Building Code and State of California handicap criteria).
  - Large, offset lever style deadbolts for unit entrance and any balcony or patio doors.
  - Individual control for heating and ventilation.
  - Theater-style or recessed ceiling light fixtures in all rooms and electrical sockets on most walls to enable floor-lighting.
  - Easy grip handles on all cupboards, drawers and any pocket (sliding) doors.
  - Window hardware that is of a lever type, with the hardware located no higher than 4 feet above the floor. Window placement and hardware must ensure that the window is easy to reach and to open and close.
  - A small shelf at each front door (accessible to residents in wheelchairs or on scooters) to provide a convenient place to temporarily store items being carried while a resident is entering his/her unit.
  - Built-in night lights to illuminate main traffic areas.
  - Visual / lighted alert in addition to traditional door bell within units, and visual fire alarms in addition to audible alarms in common areas. Handicap units must meet the same standard as common areas.
  - Features for unit bathrooms:
    - A toilet with grab bars along the adjacent wall.
    - A counter with a sink with storage drawers provided below the counter.
    - A roll-in shower stall with a telephone style shower head, a modular seat, grab bars within the stall, and vertical grab bars at the front edge of the shower stall at both ends.
    - Lever style faucets at the sink and in the shower.
    - A heat lamp or heat fan.
    - Grab bars to be used as towel rails (i.e., no standard towel rails).
  - Doorways should be at least 36 inches wide to allow easy maneuverability.
  - Hallways should be at least 48 inches wide to promote accessibility and to facilitate fitting with well-designed hand rails, if necessary.
  - Use of non-glare window and lighting treatments.

- 4.2 Provision should be made in both common areas and within residential units to accommodate individuals with impairments of reach, strength, dexterity, balance and vision. Provisions include but are not necessarily limited to:
- All electrical outlets located a minimum of 18 inches above the floor.
  - All switches and thermostats located a minimum of 3 feet 6 inches above the floor.
  - Lighted rocker type switch plates for all light switches with timers to promote energy efficiency.
  - Thresholds should be flush to the greatest extent possible. Particular attention should be paid to transitions in flooring, and doorways.
  - Elevator controls designed for accessibility and legibility for the visually impaired and including a delay setting for wheelchairs.
  - Non-skid and non-glare surfaces should be considered throughout common areas and residential units.
  - Contrasting floor and wall coverings throughout common areas and residential units.
- 4.3 The development should include an emergency call system with 24-hour on-site response, including wireless alarms or pull cords located within units near places where the need is likely to be the greatest (e.g., kitchen, bathroom, bedroom).



## 5.0 Private Unit/Space

- 5.1 Private residential units should be fully self-contained and sufficiently large to provide comfortable, appropriate and accessible accommodation. The minimum unit size is generally 450 square feet, but the City may consider smaller unit sizes if it can be demonstrated that they meet the above criteria. Desirable space includes:
- Five foot wheelchair-turning radius on the inside of the unit entrance.
  - Clearance on the latch side of all doorways: one foot for doors that swing away, and two feet for doors that swing toward the person.

- Five foot turning radius in all rooms in the units.
  - A total clear area around toilet of not less than five feet deep from the wall behind the toilet and 35 inches wide;
  - A clear floor area of not less than 30 inches in front of the shower stall with slip resistant flooring.
  - Hallways that are at least 48 inches wide.
- 5.2 Unit kitchens with the following features:
- Cabinetry above and below the counter; upper cabinets should be low enough to be conveniently accessible to seniors with mobility limitations.
  - Not less than four feet of clear, continuous counter space, excluding the sink. Provide appropriately located electrical outlets for a toaster oven, coffee maker and other appliances.
  - A sink with a single, lever style handle.
  - A reasonably sized refrigerator, with a separate, frost-free freezer compartment preferably located on the bottom. The refrigerator should be mounted to reduce the need for bending and reaching by occupants of the units.
  - The stove or range within each unit should be optimally located so that it does not conflict with the front entry door or other doors and/or appliances within the kitchen.
  - Task lighting under kitchen cabinets should be considered.
  - Pull-out shelves should be considered under counter cabinets.

## 6.0 Common Areas

- 6.1 Provide common amenity areas, for the use of residents. Amenity areas may include a central meeting area of adequate size to accommodate a majority of residents, sitting rooms and social areas. Other amenities that may be considered include a private dining room for family visits, library, computer room, hair salon, exercise facilities, guest suite, family kitchen, "spa" tub room or other amenities for the use and enjoyment of residents.
- 6.2 Consideration should be given to space for on-site or visiting health care professionals.
- 6.3 Provide single occupancy, wheelchair accessible washrooms in common areas.
- 6.4 Provide common laundry facilities for residents in sufficient quantity to reasonably accommodate the projected resident population.
- 6.5 Adequate, accessible, outdoor landscaped area and patio space is required for residents' access and use. Outdoor amenities may also include space for gardens.
- 6.6 Adequate wheelchair access to the parking area.
- 6.7 Adequate storage space both in private units and common areas (e.g., storage rooms or sheds located near parking and/or elsewhere on site for use by all residents).

- 6.8 Trash areas should be sited so as to be as unobtrusive as possible while still offering convenient access (e.g., in the interior or at the rear of buildings).



## 7.0 Operations/Management

- 7.1 The guidelines for operations and management are important to the development of a successful senior housing project and should be considered throughout the project development process.
- 7.2 The site administrator is the key to a successful development. Excellence in administration and management are encouraged.
- 7.3 Operators should provide a level of resident services to adequately address the unique social service needs of seniors. These services should be developed with input by the City's Parks and Community Services department. Whenever feasible, developments should include provisions for a part-time or full-time services coordinator based on the site.
- 7.4 The development should provide in-house transportation services accessible to all residents. Transportation services must be in place as soon as occupancy reaches 20 percent or earlier.
- 7.5 Transportation providers, emergency services, senior service providers, and similar parties should be consulted and involved during the planning phase of the project.
- 7.6 Management should develop and maintain a comprehensive emergency and evacuation plan in collaboration with the City and other emergency agencies. The plan should include accounting for any residents who are missing, training residents on 911 and Fire Department response services, and providing assistance and direction to emergency personnel as required.
- 7.7 The development should include an emergency call system with 24-hour on-site response, including wireless alarms or pull cords located within units near places where the need is likely to be the greatest (e.g., kitchen, bathroom, bedroom).