

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-___

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

RE: Universal Design and Visitability Program

WHEREAS, housing characterized by universal design promotes social sustainability, enabling occupants to “age in place” through a healthier, safer, more accessible and productive home environment; allows elders and others to maintain their dignity, security and independence and may reduce-healthcare expenses; and

WHEREAS, visitability further promotes social sustainability, enabling the physically challenged and others to more readily and safely visit homes in those developments that meet visitability standards and increase opportunities for social interaction;

WHEREAS, the County has demonstrated its commitment to promoting “aging in place,” and to account for the diverse needs of all segments of the population through passage of the County’s “Community for a Lifetime” Resolution No. 2006-120; and state-wide recognition from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs in August 2008 for making substantive progress toward becoming a “Community for a Lifetime;” and joining the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Communities Network in 2015; and

WHEREAS, although universal design and visitability serve physically challenged residents of all ages, older adults are more frequently among those physically challenged; and

WHEREAS, the median age of Sarasota County residents is 53.1 years and those over 65 years of age account for 31.7% of the population as compared to 18% statewide; and that is projected to increase to 38% of the County population by 2040; and

WHEREAS, the County is committed to serve the burgeoning elder population through elder-friendly policies and procedures, an integral aspect of our community’s social sustainability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Sarasota County, Florida, in public meeting assembled:

The policy of the County shall be that all providers and builders of housing in the County be encouraged, through appropriate means, to design and construct housing and communities which enables the residents to safely and easily visit neighbors (visitability) and to “age in place” (universal design).

Sarasota County will provide a voluntary, certification-based Universal Design and Visitability Program for all newly constructed or remodeled housing in Sarasota County.

The Program will promote both:

- A housing and neighborhood environment in which physically challenged individuals, parents with strollers carrying young children, and others with miscellaneous wheeled carriers may more easily visit others (Visitability); and
- A home environment in which residents, particularly older adults, may “age in place” more easily, and also those who, due to injury or illness, need to rehabilitate themselves, may find their rehabilitation enabled by their home environment (Universal Design).

The Program shall be voluntary for all housing projects, whether new construction or remodeling of existing housing.

The Program shall provide incentives designed to encourage the application of Universal Design and Visitability principles in local housing projects which may include, but are not limited to, fast track permitting for building permits, marketing incentives and awards.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners of Sarasota County, Florida, this ____ day of _____, 2015.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

By: _____
Chairman

ATTEST:

KAREN E. RUSHING, Clerk of the
Circuit Court and Ex-Officio Clerk
of the Board of County Commissioners
of Sarasota County, Florida

By: _____