



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 9, 2007

**TO:** Department Heads

**FROM:** County Executive

**SUBJECT:** Board of Supervisors 50+ Report – Universal Design

On October 15, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors issued its report, *Fairfax 50+* that included recommendations concerning the promotion of universal design in both planning and building in Fairfax County.

***The communities we plan and build, and those we revitalize, must be livable communities for all ages.***

***Universal design concepts will ensure that our housing meets the needs of every age and can easily be adapted.***

Many activities now are underway. The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has a study group on the building review process for plans that include universal design. The Redevelopment and Housing Authority has adopted a policy “supporting accessible design and construction of affordable housing in Fairfax County for persons with disabilities.” The Community Services Board has developed a plan for incorporating universal design in future group homes. There are private town homes under construction in Burke, and the Foundation for Applied Technical Education, in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools, is developing a proposal to adopt universal design measures in the homes they plan to build in the Spring Hill subdivision of Fairfax County.

An informal cross-departmental group, including private sector members, has begun meeting to keep abreast of these developments and to advance the universal design concept.

To provide ongoing collaboration, I am formalizing the interdepartmental group, to be known as the Build for All Committee, to work together on these activities and to provide periodic written updates on universal design initiatives, activities and opportunities in the county. The role of this committee is to:

- Promote the merits of universal design features in housing
- Educate consumers and builders about the elements and benefits of universal design
- Identify opportunities for public policy support of universal design
- Identify and pursue universal design demonstration opportunities – public and private - within Fairfax County

County members of the committee will include staff from the Departments of Housing and Community Development, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Family Services (both Aging and Disabilities), Community Services Board, Health Department (Long Term Care Coordinating Council), and Planning and Zoning, with the understanding that the group shall be expanded to include additional representatives from the community. I am asking Grace Starbird, the Director of the Department of Family Services' Area Agency on Aging and who provided staff support to the Board of Supervisor's Committee on Aging, to be the initial convener of the staff group.

Members of the Build for All Committee will include the following representatives:

Housing and Community Development: Toni Clemons-Porter

Public Works and Environmental Services: Audrey Clark

Family Services: Aging: Jacquie Woodruff

Disabilities: Matt Barkley

Community Services Board: Pam Gannon

Health Department: Long Term Care Coordinating Council: Bob Eiffert

Planning and Zoning: Regina Coyle