

Universal Design . . .

. . . increases usability, safety and health through design and services that respond to the diversity of people and abilities. (Global Universal Design Commission, Inc.)

These seven principles can take a community into the future:

1. Equitable Use:

The design does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users.

Restrooms at many airports have large entries that allow for easy traffic flow and are usable by all



2. Flexibility in Use:

The design supports a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Accessible fishing pier in South Bay, Lake Champlain, NY allows everyone to fish



3. Simple and Intuitive Use:

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

The Apple iPod Touch is a good example of simple, intuitive use



4. Perceptible Information:

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Walking sign at the Kohl Children's Museum, Glenview, IL



5. Tolerance for Error:

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Playground handle openings provide support for climbing and limit the opening size for safety



6. Low Physical Effort:

The design can be used effectively and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.

Seamless transitions in sidewalks and curb cuts require less effort for everyone



7. Size and Space for Approach and Use:

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility.

Larger security gate openings provide more room for all to maneuver through



Universal Design Adds Value:

Economic: The use of universal design (UD) impacts the bottom line. When used from the outset, the cost difference is minimal. Making adaptations after construction is completed can be astronomical - so use UD from the beginning.

Businesses that occupy universally designed spaces are more accessible. Greater accessibility means more people visit these businesses resulting in increased revenues.

Societal:

Demographics are changing not just in the US but around the world. This is a global world where individuals freely travel from country to country. Universal design embraces people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. General population statistics as of 2000 are

- ✧ Over 18% of the population has limited ability
- ✧ Those 65+ will grow dramatically in the next 20 years.

The incorporation of universal design in a community will allow all members to continue to be active and involved, resulting in a better quality of life.

Figure 2.5
Population Aged 65 and Over: 2000 to 2020
(in billions)



Note: The reference population for these data is the resident population.
Source: 2000, U.S. Census Bureau (2001), Table B012, 2000 to 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. For full statistics, see <http://www.census.gov>.

Empowerment: Many members of a community lose occupations as a result of temporary or permanent injuries. Universal design allows these individuals to feel empowered in light of difficult life-situations. Many are able to gain employment, return to work earlier, and remain engaged in their community when universal design principles are embraced by the community.

Creative Functionality: Universal design seeks to find a creative solution to allow all to be part of the community. This often results in solutions that benefit all within an aesthetically pleasant package.



Sustainability:

"The graphic to the [left] illustrates how universal design is a basic element of sustainable design, as it relates to resource efficiency and economic empowerment under the umbrella of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

http://www.works.qld.gov.au/downloads/tdd/ss_house/ud_booklet.pdf

- ✧ **Environmental sustainability** relates to the green movement and natural resource conservation and efficiency.
- ✧ **Economic sustainability** relates to concepts of life cycle costing, equity and fair trade value of products and services.
- ✧ **Social sustainability** relates to systems that support people by creating safe, secure and independent communities."

(Is Universal Design Green? John P.S. Salmen, AIA, Universal Design Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 8 (Oct. 2009))

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