

The City of Toledo Plan Commission and The Ability Center have worked together to allow people with disabilities to more easily modify their homes by automatically allowing exceptions to the zoning code for ramps and lifts. In most cases, people with disabilities will be able to install a ramp or lift simply by applying for a building permit through the City of Toledo. Because most of the homes in Toledo are old, automatic exceptions already existed for things like balconies, fire escapes, porches, and metal awnings. The new Text Amendment allows those same exceptions for ramps and lifts. Because of this Text Amendment, people with disabilities will more easily be able to make their homes more accessible for themselves and for future homeowners.

***Why is the Text Amendment needed?***

Because many houses are not built for accessibility, few people can build ramps and lifts on their homes that fit directly within local zoning codes. However, requesting a variance to zoning codes is a long and burdensome process involving application fees and a hearing. Some people don't understand the process or don't have the money to go through the process. Sometimes neighbors will object at the hearing, leading to conflict within the neighborhood. People with disabilities have the right under the Fair Housing Amendments Act to request a reasonable accommodation of local zoning laws where a home modification is necessary to allow them to live in their homes. If that request is reasonable, necessary, and based on their disability, local jurisdictions are required to allow the home modification under federal law. However, invoking rights under a federal law can also be burdensome and time consuming for people who simply need to be able to leave and enter their homes.

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