

COUNTY OF PLACER Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING

Administrative Policy
Accessibility and
Accessible Path of Travel

TO:

Building Department Staff

From:

Bob Martino, Chief Building Official

Approved:

Chief Building Official, Bob Martino

Effective Date:

February 25, 2008

ISSUE:

Application of the provisions of the 2007 California Building Code as it relates to California accessibility standards. More specifically; the requirement for a path of travel which crosses the property and connects the entrance or exit of a building to the public way, in primarily non-residential occupancies, if the public way does not consist of a pedestrian pathway (sidewalk)

Reference:

2007 California Building Code Chapter 11B, Section 1114B.1

Department of the State Architect Interpretive Checklist

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

In the past practice of enforcing this requirement there has been some confusion and inconsistency of application of this provision where the public way does not include a pedestrian pathway (public sidewalk). This is found mostly in industrial areas where sidewalks are normally not constructed with the street improvements. This confusion is not limited to the building department alone, but has transcended to other land use departments.

There have been some opinions that where a sidewalk does not exist, the need for a path of travel is unnecessary. There has also been concern that directing those with vision impairment to a public way that consists of only the street could itself create a personal hazard.

ANALYSIS:

Current code language has provided some clarity as to the application of this requirement. However, a formal policy was determined to be needed.

The building director has conferred with Placer County Counsel on this issue as a means to establish the county's direction in regards to liability, to provide a clear interpretation of this section, and development of a final policy on the application of this code section for non-residential developments subject to this requirement.

With counsels assistance, it is determined that the county has significantly more liability with not complying with the code than waiving a specific requirement arbitrarily deemed unnecessary. The building official has determined, given the circumstances, counsels insight, and the specific code language, that an accessible route of travel to the public way must be installed for those buildings that are required to be accessible, required to provide a path of travel to the "public way", and that this requirement applies regardless of whether the public way consists of a constructed public sidewalk.

POLICY:

As of the effective date of this policy, all buildings that are processed for a building permit that require accessibility, including an accessible path of travel to the public way, shall have accessibility features approved by the building department and shown on the improvement plans for the project (if applicable). A site plan shall also be provided to the building department that illustrates sufficiently how site accessibility requirements are being met in order to verify that site accessibility is being complied with. This includes, but is not limited to, the required accessible path of travel to the public way regardless of whether the public way includes a pedestrian pathway (sidewalk).

As authorized by the California Building Code, The building department shall have the sole enforcement responsibility for enforcement and interpretation of all site accessibility requirements prescribed in the county adopted code. No other department shall approve, change, or waive any accessibility requirements under the authority of the building department without prior building department written approval.