



## Universal Design for an aging market



The Census Bureau estimates that the 60+ population will grow to an astounding 73 million by the end of the decade. At the same time, surveys show that as many as 89 percent of seniors will want to remain in their homes. Significantly the National Association of Home Builders predicts that the aging-in-place remodeling market will be between \$20 billion and \$25 billion – quite a market niche!

As Boomers age, their changing physical abilities will be reflected in home design, both remodeling and new construction. A significant trend is already being seen, with architects designing more single-level homes, since the traditional two-story home will no longer be ideal for homeowners as they reach their 70s, 80s and 90s.

Whether designing new homes or creating plans for remodeling projects, architects are keeping crucial Universal Design elements in mind. Look for no-step entries, wider hallways and doors, wheelchair-accessible sinks, and lower light switches and thermostats. The challenge for architects is to incorporate these design elements without sacrificing the beauty of the home.

Many builders also are looking to expand their remodeling efforts, to meet the desires of Boomers who opt to age in place. Remodeling options can include opening up the home for more natural light, placing all the necessities on the main level while leaving the upper level for guests, and reconfiguring baths to accommodate the needs of senior adults.

A Zero Step Entry eliminates steps into the home from the front porch and garage.



### Universal Design checklist:

- Single-story living quarters, including full bath
- Main-floor master bedroom and bath
- Doorways a minimum of 36 inches wide
- Wide, well lit hallways
- Levered door hardware
- Upper wall cabinetry 3 inches lower than conventional height
- Base cabinet with roll out trays and lazy susans
- Light switches, thermostats and other environmental controls placed in accessible locations no higher than 48 inches from floor
- Electrical outlets 15 inches on center from floor
- Slip-resistant flooring in bathroom and shower
- Grab bar bracing in walls around tub, shower, shower seat and toilet
- Bathtub lower for easier step-in access
- Curbless shower with fold-down seat

Contact Glantz & Associates Architects, Inc., for more information on Universal Design.



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