

CONDO LIVING

Bathroom redesign is all about accessibility



JULIE MCNICOL
**BEFORE
AND AFTER**

I was hired by my client to renovate his mother's powder room to include a shower. Her declining mobility meant getting upstairs to the master ensuite for a shower was increasingly more difficult. He also asked that I plan for the bathroom to be wheelchair accessible.

Although we couldn't get the required five-foot turning radius for a wheelchair (not without taking away access to the laundry room and garage) we were able to move the wall between the powder room and adjacent hallway to widen the room enough for a wheelchair to go straight in and back

out. She has a live-in care provider so we decided this would be suitable for her with some help.

We installed a shower where the sink and vanity were previously. We left the toilet where it was to avoid the hassles of moving the drain. Then, by widening the powder room by one foot and taking some space from the adjacent closet, we were able to get a thirty-inch wide vanity and sink, the minimum required for someone in a wheelchair.

Previously, the hallway width was a generous four-feet in width. After bringing it down to the minimum three-

feet required for a wheelchair to comfortably fit through, we were able to maintain this path as a secondary way for his mother to enter and exit the house through the laundry room and garage (pending installing of ramps).

The floating vanity allows 29" from the floor to the underside of the unit to allow for the users legs and the arms of the wheelchair to comfortably fit under.

By sitting close to the vanity my client's mother will be able to reach the lever-handled faucet with ease. Since the vanity lacked storage, we installed two mirrored medicine cabinets to store toiletries and extra bathroom supplies.

We installed a wall-mounted toilet to allow for the foot rests of the wheelchair (and the users feet) to easily glide underneath. This allows for more circulation space in the bathroom.

The shower stall is the most

specialized item in this bathroom. We wanted a curbless shower so that a wheelchair could easily be pushed into the stall.

While this so easy to do in new construction, the logistics of retrofitting this into an existing bathroom is a lot harder. Instead, we opted for a gradual lip that is 1/2" in height (the maximum allowed for a wheelchair to easily roll over it). This allowed us to slope the floor of the shower to the drain as required for water to properly exit from the stall.

Grab bars were installed around the toilet and shower as required. Accessories to hang towels, robes and toilet paper were also installed. Additional recessed potlights were installed to make the bathroom brighter.

This dramatic bathroom renovation allows for my clients mother to be able to stay in the



BEFORE: A dramatic bathroom renovation will allow the resident to be able to stay in the comfort of her home as long as possible.

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— Julie McNicol is a Mississauga, Ont.-based interior designer specializing in residential

and commercial projects. Contact her at mcnicolid@rogers.com or visit her at www.mcnicolinteriordesigns.com.



A wall-mounted toilet allows for the foot rests of the wheelchair (and the user's feet) to easily glide underneath and for more circulation space in the bathroom.



A floating vanity 29" from the floor to the underside of the unit allows the arms of the wheelchair to comfortably fit under.



A curbless shower makes it easy for a wheelchair to be pushed into the stall.