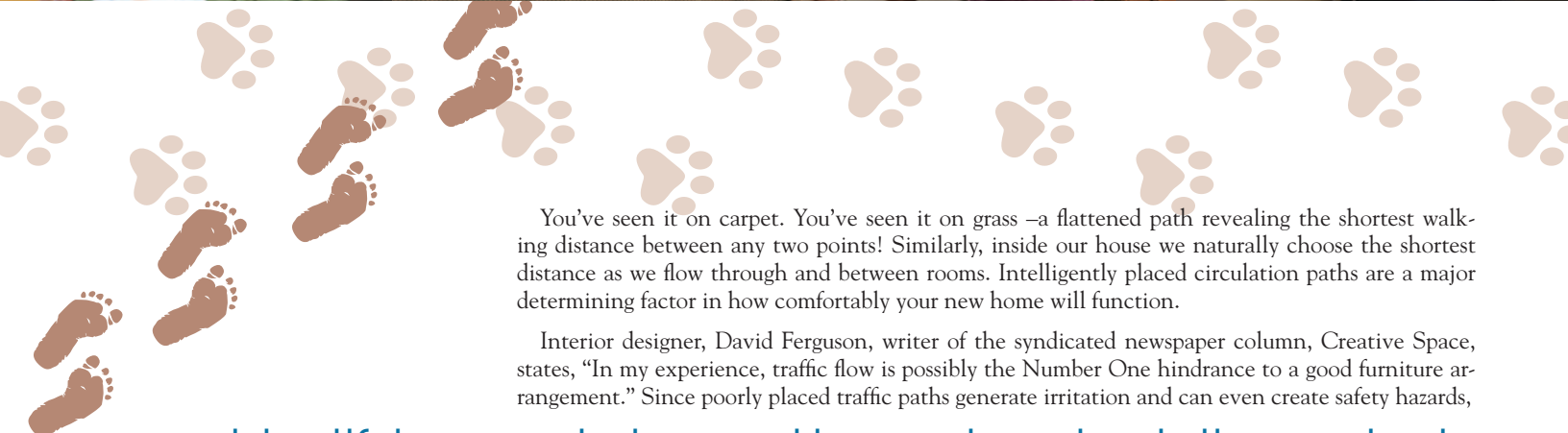


INTELLIGENT Traffic Flow

De-Stresses Your
Home Life!

by Nita Hull



You've seen it on carpet. You've seen it on grass –a flattened path revealing the shortest walking distance between any two points! Similarly, inside our house we naturally choose the shortest distance as we flow through and between rooms. Intelligently placed circulation paths are a major determining factor in how comfortably your new home will function.

Interior designer, David Ferguson, writer of the syndicated newspaper column, Creative Space, states, "In my experience, traffic flow is possibly the Number One hindrance to a good furniture arrangement." Since poorly placed traffic paths generate irritation and can even create safety hazards,

identifying, analyzing and improving circulation routes in your proposed floor plan during the planning process will ensure your creation of a calming, stress-reducing new home design!

PLAN ONE: TROUBLESOME TRAFFIC PATHS

STEP ONE: Identify Traffic Paths

① Draw in all the natural circulation routes.

An easy way to do this is to place a dot in the center of each door, doorway, room entrance, hallway and stairwell and then connect each dot to all its ADJACENT dots. The network of lines created represents exactly where you will naturally walk as you move from room to room in your new home.

Within a room, such as a bathroom, continue to draw the path from the entry door to each fixture; in a bedroom extend the path to the closet(s).

To mark a traffic path to a sliding patio door, you need to decide which side the door will slide open from –left-hand or right-hand opening. A triple slider may open from either end or the ends could be stationary and the center panel moves. A 4-panel slider may have both middle panels slide open from the center towards each side.

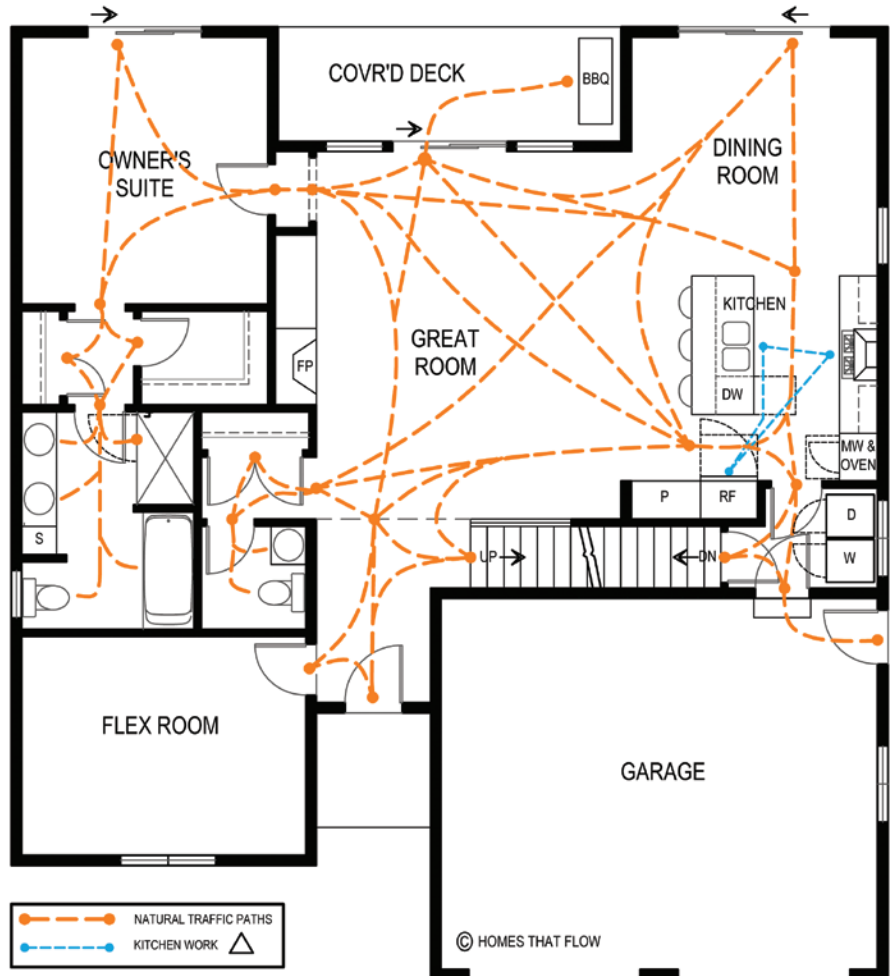
② Mark in the Kitchen Work Triangle.

The kitchen work triangle is a traffic path between the sink, range and refrigerator. Designers have long recommended using it to study the interaction between convenient food preparation, cooking and clean-up with the location of appliances and counter space.

To mark the triangle on your plan, draw a dot at the center of sink, cook top / range and refrigerator and then connect the three dots. If something (like an island or peninsula cabinet) prevents you from forming an actual triangle, move your lines around the obstacle, just as if you were walking in the real kitchen.

③ Indicate door swings.

Most floor plans show the swing path of room doors open at 90 degrees. If yours doesn't, or only shows them open 45 degrees add the full swing so you can see clearly the actual space they take when in use.



STEP TWO: Analyze Traffic Paths

Analysis requires observing how the traffic paths intersect with open doors and their impact on furniture arranging.

PLAN #1 greets residents with traffic troubles immediately upon entering from the garage. Conflicting door swings interrupt flow. What if another person is coming through the basement stair door or changing laundry loads as you are entering?

A long trek is required to the front door closet to hang up coats.

Conflict between this major traffic path and the cook opening the hot oven door (safety issue) or using the refrigerator is inevitable and a recipe for intense frustration.

The direction the patio doors in the Dining Room and the Owner's Suite slide open creates longer traffic paths and interferes with furniture placement more than if the opening direction were reversed.

This NOT-SO-Great Room functions as a giant hallway. Any furniture grouping will feel like an obstruction and it will be a challenge to fully relax in this thoroughfare room.

In the Owner's Suite, the person accessing

the smaller closet will block passage to the En Suite Bath. (Sliding closet doors would make more sense in this arrangement.) The En Suite Bathroom door conflicts with the shower door and crowds the person using the first sink.

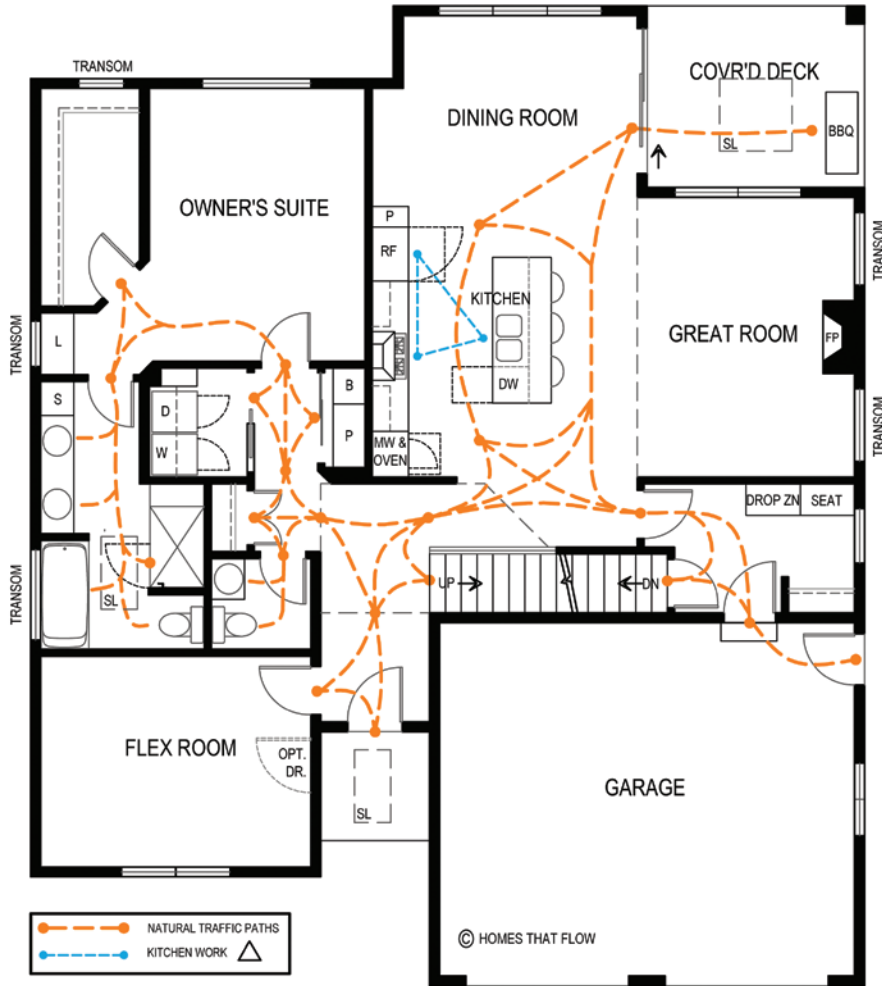
STEP THREE: Improve Traffic Paths

Improve traffic flow by choosing the number and location of doors, openings, hallways and staircases wisely.

PLAN #2 embodies all the principles of excellent traffic flow which are:

- Use short & direct routes
- Hug the edge or side of rooms

PLAN TWO: SMOOTH FLOWING TRAFFIC



- Create pools of uninterrupted space for comfortable furniture arranging
- Don't allow open doors to hinder passage
- Don't place a door behind a door (The ubiquitous coat closet positioned immediately behind an entry door is a typical bad example.)
- No MAJOR traffic path is allowed to break the kitchen work triangle

Invest time and energy during the planning stage on anticipating your needs and ensuring the layout accommodates them. ■

You will love living with the results every day in your new home!

Traffic & Appliance Doors

In preparation for assessing traffic paths, mark short dashed lines on the floor plan to show all the appliance doors in their open position.

Typical OPEN door depths are:

- Oven door – 21"
- Tall-tub dishwasher door – 26.5"
- Standard microwave oven door swing – 18"
- Over-the-range microwave door swing – 25" (Swing door microwaves are ONLY left-hand opening –NOT reversible.)
- 36" wide refrigerator with:
 - Side-by-side asymmetrical fridge doors (Not reversible)
 - 15" wide left-hand opening freezer door
 - 21" wide right-hand opening fridge door

Single fridge door (Sometimes reversible –many stainless steel single door refrigerators are not reversible even though the same model in other color choices is. You need to order either a Right Hand or Left Hand opening model.)

- Swing door identical to width of appliance
- Pull-out freezer drawer 24-26" (Depending on fridge depth)

Side-by-side symmetrical fridge doors (French Door Style)

- Each swing door – 18"
- Pull-out freezer drawer – 24-26" (Depending on fridge depth)

Refrigerator heights and depths vary greatly and the deeper models can have a negative impact on traffic flow. Be sure to note the total combined depth of the unit + the door thickness + the handle depth.

- Front-loading washer & dryer swing doors – 21"

Typically a dryer door swing is reversible but many Front Loading washer doors are not.

PLAN #1 reveals how a non-reversible washer door can become an annoying impediment to the transfer of clothes from the washer to the dryer depending on which side of the dryer it is installed on.

TIP: Choose your appliances early in the design phase so you have accurate sizes and door swing information to plan with.

Major Traffic Routes verses Minor

The likelihood of circulation paths conflicting with room function is directly related to how heavily the route is travelled. The busy 'Interstate' highways inside the house are to and from the:

- Family Entry (The exterior door located closest to the parking where residents enter and exit daily.)
- Kitchen
- Stairs going up to the bedrooms or down to a TV Room



Residential Designer Nita Hull fell in love with home design when reviewing blueprints for her family's new home—and she was just five years old! Even at that tender age, a connection between the language of drawings and the three-dimensional structure clicked, laying a foundation for her career and passion...creating homes that flow.

Hull founded Homes That Flow to work with home buyers and home builders, helping them understand the inherent livability of homes based upon traffic patterns within the home's design. With an exceptional ability to spot and solve irritating design flaws during the design phase and BEFORE construction begins, "Forget regret" is Hull's mantra.

In addition to creating distinctive, well-thought out home plans, Hull teaches space-planning at the British Columbia Institute of Technology and has been published in Canadian Homes and Cottages Magazine.

"Nita, your ideas were fantastic! Your time to analyze our two spec home plans, I feel was invaluable... thank you so much! I want to learn to see what you see!!!"



– Cheryl Martens,
Cherry Hill Ventures Ltd.



the Moraine | plan 29800-54AA

1641 main level sq. ft. | 1015 upper level sq. ft. | 2656 total sq. ft.

Livability at a Glance®

ENTERTAINING	50%
DE-STRESSING	40%
STORING	30%
FLEXIBLE	20%

Livability Index™

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