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RR-1(i)

General Accessibility Guidelines for Woodward's Housing

(Paul Tubbe; Chair, Advisory Committee on Disability Issues Vancouver)

Recommendations (general) for Woodward's Housing units:

1. **Lever-type handles on sinks and door handles**
2. **Reinforcement in bathroom walls for future installation of grab bars**
3. **Intercom system at main entrance**
4. **Colour contrast or pattern for stairs and ramps**
5. **Easy-opening doors (weight and handle-type)**
6. **Visitable washrooms (with accessible toilet and wash basin)**
7. **Interior main entry level floor of dwelling unit level with entry door threshold except where ramps provide entrance**
8. **Re-design all thresholds consistent with SAFER Homes designs**
9. **Clear space on each side of entry door to each dwelling unit**
10. **Lowered light switches**
11. **Higher outlets (1.5 feet)**
12. **Electrical outlet located on inside and outside of entry doors to allow future installation of electrical door-opener**
13. **Wide doorways (32")**

Rationale and Definitions

1. **Time to create a new vision in housing which:**

a. addresses the safety of children, increases comfort of aging family members, physical ability of almost all citizens, inclusive of population with varied heights
b. resolves 70% of access design requirements without labeling, segregation and looking institutional
c. avoids costly renovations
d. addresses changing physical abilities, due to older age, etc
e. becomes life-long asset instead of liability if abilities of user change
f. welcomes family and friends with different abilities to visit comfortably and with dignity
g. increases chances for persons on fixed incomes to afford housing if their health changes (decreases chance of forced homelessness and moving to institutions), thereby saving tax dollars

2. **Lifespan facts:**

a. Beginning of 20th century average lifespan = 47 years
b. Beginning of 21st century average lifespan = 76 years
c. Percentage of population living past 65 years = 80%

3. **Inexpensive to implement; huge health cost savings**
a. In 2000, Canada spent more than $3 billion caring for seniors who sustained injuries from a fall in their homes
b. 90% of all accidents happen in the home environment
c. allows all ages to remain independent as much as possible
d. allows aging persons more chance to remain in their communities of choice

4. **These designs changes:**
a. often unnoticeable
b. enhances aesthetic appeal
c. incrementally adds to value of housing on open-market
d. inclusive instead of traditional exclusive building designs

5. **Recent local leadership examples**: City of Vancouver Building Code: Enhanced Accessibility for Multi-family dwellings (2002).
a. Barrier-Free with some Universal Design.

6. **Cost/ Benefit analysis for Accessible Renovations vs. Original Barrier-Free Design)** (see attached)

7. **Barrier-Free not enough**. BF: A design system that standardizes the built environment to make it accessible and to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. (Current Building Code is BF).

8. **Universal Design**: An approach to design that acknowledges the changes experienced by everyone during their lifetime. It addresses the needs of children, seniors, people who are tall or short and people with disabilities. UD looks beyond the proportions and abilities of the mythical average person and provides solutions for an inclusive built environment that can better accommodate the needs of everyone. (Government of BC).

9. **Aim for UD (especially in new design and structures)**
a. Current legislation is for Barrier-Free Design.
b. Use a combination of BF and UD when renovating.
c. It is difficult and expensive to incorporate only UD in existing structures (unless you have dynamite and unlimited funds). Sometimes it is not possible.

Cost/Benefit Analysis

(Accessible Renovations vs. Original Barrier-Free Design)

STRUCTURE TYPE	COST INCREASE - ACCESSIBLE RENOVATION	COST INCREASE - ORIGINAL BARRIER-FREE DESIGN	COST RATIO
Convention Hall	0.12%	0.02%	6/1
Town Hall	0.20%	0.05%	4/1
College Classroom	0.51%	0.13%	4/1
Shopping Centre	0.22%	0.006%	35/1
High-Rise Tower Multi-Family Structure	1.0%	0.25%	4/1
Single-Family Home, One-Floor	21.0%	3.0%	7/1
College Dormitory	0.40%	0.10%	4/1