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July 17th 2018

Mayor and Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council,

**Re: Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law and Building By-law -
Accessible Path of Travel Policy Review**

I am writing to express Disability Alliance BC's (DABC) disappointment regarding the amendments to the Zoning and Development By-Law going before Council on Wednesday July 18th.

DABC was greatly encouraged when the City of Vancouver passed an adaptable housing bylaw five years ago that required good internal accessibility/adaptability in all newly built dwellings in Vancouver. At the same time, the lack of a mandated accessible path of travel was a flaw and a missed opportunity. We were pleased that Council asked staff to report back about accessible exterior paths of travel to dwelling entrances.

Unfortunately, the staff's June 5th report (*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law and Building By-law - Accessible Path of Travel Policy Review*) appears to be a step back for people with disabilities in our city as staff are not recommending that an accessible exterior path of travel be required for most low density housing.

We are also disappointed that the report recommends the elimination of a requirement for wider stairs in all townhouses with less than 90 feet frontage, and in 80% of houses with frontages of more than 90 feet. Another disappointment is the recommendation that the requirement of three piece adaptable bathrooms in multilevel units be changed to two piece bathrooms.

Accessibility features, both inside and out, are good for everyone. Accessible exterior paths of travel reduce the incidence of falls, helps ensure that people can age in place, and make it easier for people with strollers.

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Accessible housing is key to the ability of people with disabilities to live with independence and dignity in the community. Accessible exterior paths of travel are essential for people with disabilities to be able to access housing and to visit their networks of family and friends, something that most people take for granted.

Vancouver has made significant inroads in improving our city's accessibility. Unfortunately, we believe some of the recommendations in this report will fail to move us forward in this important work.

Sincerely,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

Jane Dyson
Executive Director