

To the Planning & Housing Committee <phc@toronto.ca>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/decisionBodyProfile.do?function=doPrepare&decisionBodyId=1943#Meeting-2020.PH14>

Re agenda item:

PH14.3 Housing Now Initiative - Annual Progress Report (Ward All)

Thank-you for accepting my deputation.

My name is Kate Chung.

I'm chair of the Housing Committee of the **Older Women's Network**,
and Co-chair of the **Accessible** Housing Network.

The **Older Women's Network** is a non-profit organization which challenges discrimination on the basis of age, gender, religion, or disability. We are entirely volunteer-run.

The **Accessible Housing Network** is a group of voluntary organizations, active in advocating for housing justice for all people with disabilities.

I will never forget her . She was about 8 years old and used an electric wheelchair. In warm weather, she could play outside with other children as long as they stayed on the paved driveway. But she could never have a play date at other children's homes because all the other townhouses in our co-op had steps front and back. I am still thinking of her today, 30 years later, and I ask you to keep her in mind too.

As you review the **Housing Now** program, we are asking that you add **universal design** to the requirements for all **new** residential buildings.

Universal design aims to create housing which could be used by anyone regardless of ability. It goes beyond mere accessibility, and demonstrates an underlying commitment to including as wide a range of users as possible, including those with vision, hearing or other disabilities.
(**NOTE:** I have emailed related definitions from **CMHC**)

Many **things which began as aids for people with disabilities**, make life more convenient for everyone. For example - automatic doors at stores, push buttons for heavy doors, curb cuts.

The **Principles of Universal Design** are exemplified by the utility of those simple aids - which help all of us.

(I have emailed a one-page handout about these principles)

Visible public spaces are included under the AODA and the Ontario Building Code.

BUT - Housing for people with disabilities is **invisible**, so it is ignored.

I suspect this is simply because those who make decisions about public policy do not have any experience of the struggles of people with disabilities living in **NON- accessible** housing.

No other group is so blatantly discriminated against.

The City would never set limits on housing units for people of a particular ethnic background, or people of certain faiths, or people with blonde hair.

We're all just an accident or illness - or age - away from disability.

Think of the child with a broken leg, the young adult hit by a truck while out

on their bike, the mother diagnosed with MS, the child born with cerebral palsy, the worker who had a stroke, your grandmother who fell and broke her hip.....

The **Angus Reid Research on Accessibility** shows that **more than half** of Canadians want accessible housing for themselves or for friends & family.

As of 2017, according to Statistics Canada, **22%** of Canadians have a permanent disability.

- yet there is **NO** law requiring that any housing be accessible.

This makes it crucial that the **City** take action where possible. **Housing Now** is an example of where action is possible.

Any housing built with **any** subsidy of any kind from the City - whether in the form of dollars, land, tax deferrals, development fees waived, - **all** that housing should be required to be universal design. - And if you make that a requirement for **every** developer, they will comply.

There is a **misperception** that universal design housing is **expensive**. But, in fact, the **cost** is **only about 1% more** if it is included from the planning stage.

Costs can be further kept down by making **every** unit in a building universal design. When there is no need to build some units according to one standard and some to another, efficiency and cost savings are considerable.

I am told by architects and designers that the issue is not really cost, or extra space needed for accessibility, but rather it's the **attitude** with which design is approached. Designing for accessibility involves a **different set of priorities** - and with conscious design, the additional costs can be kept to a minimum.

Universal design allows people to **age in place**.
It also helps to **prevent care-giver burn-out**.
Enabling people to stay in their own home keeps them out of **long-term care**. **That saves money for the City.**

Remember- **People with disabilities pay taxes**, but they cannot live in the housing that's been built with **their** tax dollars.

No tax dollars should ever be used to create or increase barriers to accessibility.

Denying people with disabilities the right to adequate housing contravenes the **Ontario Human Rights Act**, the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, and the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

Housing is a human right - for everyone.

Please see 2 brief attachments;

- CMHC Definitions related to accessibility
- 7 Principles of Universal Design

Definitions

Visitable: A visitable home includes basic accessibility features that allow most people to visit, even if they use a wheelchair. Basic features include a level entry, wider doors, and an accessible washroom on the main floor.

Adaptable: An adaptable home is designed to be adapted economically at a later date to accommodate someone with a disability. Features include removable cupboards in a kitchen or bathroom to create knee space for a wheelchair user.

Accessible: An accessible house includes features that meet the needs of a person with a disability - open turning spaces within rooms, wheel-in shower stalls, and kitchen work surfaces with knee space below.

Universal design: Universal design aims to create housing which could be used by anyone regardless of ability or disability. It goes beyond mere accessibility, and demonstrates an underlying commitment to including as wide a range of users as possible, including those with vision, hearing or other disabilities.

For more information: http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/acho/acho_001.cfm
and <http://unitariancommons.ca/>



What is Universal Design?

Universal Design is a set principles that are integrated through the design process to help create a built environment that can be used by as many people as possible regardless of age and ability.



7 Principles of Universal Design

1	Equitable Use	The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2	Flexibility in Use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3	Simple and Intuitive Use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4	Perceptible Information	The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5	Tolerance for Error	The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6	Low Physical Effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7	Size and Space for Approach and Use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Resources: IDEA Center: Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access. <http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu/> Institute for Human Centered Design. <http://www.adaptenv.org/> and "The Principles of Universal Design" NC State University, The Center for Universal Design