



Accessible housing is housing that can be approached, entered, used and/or occupied by persons with physical or sensory disabilities.

Adaptable housing is housing that is designed and built with basic universal housing features that do not affect the traditional look or function of the housing unit but add considerable utility to an occupant with mobility challenges.

Adaptable housing is limited to housing that is a single storey (i.e., apartment units).

Consistent with the BC Building Code, the basic universal housing features in adaptable housing include:

- one washroom with accessible:
 - toilet;
 - sink;
 - tub areas;
- one accessible bedroom:
 - doors and space;
 - window hardware and sill height;
 - closet;
- accessible kitchen:
 - counters;
 - cupboards;
 - plumbing;
- one living area:
 - window hardware and sill height;
- corridor widths and floor surfaces;
- outlets and switches;
- patio and/or balcony.

Additional basic universal housing features in Richmond include:

- task lighting at sink, stove and key working areas;
- easy to reach and grasp handles on cupboards;
- floor surfaces to be slip resistant.



3.4 Accessible Housing

OVERVIEW

The City of Richmond has always taken a proactive role with respect to accessible housing.

For example, in 2007, after consultation with the development industry (i.e., Urban Development Institute—UDI) and disability community (i.e., Richmond Centre on Disability—RCD), City Council adopted basic universal housing features in its Zoning Bylaw. Essentially, this provides an optional incentive for developers to build some apartments as adaptable housing. Where this is the case, 1.86 m² (20 ft²) per dwelling unit is excluded from the floor area ratio (maximum density) calculations. Over the past five years (2007–2012), it is estimated that approximately 10% of all the new apartment units that have been approved in Richmond were accessible (13% if you include one large project where nearly all of the apartments were accessible).

Similarly, Richmond has also endeavoured to ensure that some of its new townhouses are accessible. Over the same period of time (2007–2012), nearly every new townhouse project has provided at least one convertible housing unit within its development. Furthermore, close to half of all the projects involving more than 20 townhouse units provided two or more convertible housing units. All of this was done without any specific Zoning Bylaw provisions or density bonus (i.e., these convertible housing units were built by the developer through the Development Permit process).

All multiple family residential developments in Richmond are required to have aging in place features in all their new units.

With an aging population, it is expected that more people will require accessible housing in the future and/or have physical or sensory disabilities. Therefore, City staff want to continue working with RCD, seniors, UDI and the Small Home Builders group in Richmond who aren't part of UDI to come up with appropriate accessible housing requirements and incentives over the next year or two.



Convertible housing is housing that is designed and built to look like traditional housing but has features that are constructed or installed for easy modification and adjustment to suit the needs of an occupant with mobility challenges.

Convertible housing is limited to housing that is more than a single storey (i.e., townhouse units).

Typical convertible housing features include:

- vertical circulation such as wider staircase or the ability to install an elevator using stacked storage space;
- doors and doorways to entry, main living area, one bedroom and one washroom;
- corridor widths of hallways;
- one accessible parking space in garage and wider door to living area;
- one accessible washroom with toilet, turning diameter in kitchen;
- one window in living room and bedroom;
- outlets and switches;
- patios and/or balconies;
- wall reinforcement at top of staircase for future gate.

Aging in place is housing that is designed and built so that some accessibility features are provided now and so that others can be added more easily and inexpensively after construction.

Typical aging in place housing features include:

- stairwell handrails;
- lever type handles for:
 - plumbing fixtures;
 - door handles;
- solid blocking in washroom walls for future grab bars beside toilet, bathtub and shower.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Meet the existing need and future demand for accessible housing for the increasing population that has difficulties with or a reduction in their daily activities (e.g., mobility challenges).

POLICIES:

- a) aging in place continue to be required in all townhouses and apartments;
- b) adaptable housing features continue to be provided in apartments;
- c) convertible housing features continue to be provided in townhouse projects;
- d) City staff discuss with RCD, seniors, UDI and the Richmond Small Home Builders group ways to:
 - establish a certain percentage of apartments with:
 - visitability;
 - adaptable housing;
 - establish a certain percentage of townhouses with:
 - convertible housing (e.g., the larger the project, the more convertible housing);
 - 1 storey design; or
 - adaptable features, master bedroom, kitchen and accessible three piece washroom on the ground floor;
 - provide incentives for all forms of accessible housing (including customer-driven barrier free housing).



Barrier free housing is housing that is designed and built for universal access at the time of construction for an occupant/owner with mobility challenges.

Typical barrier free housing features include:

- wheel-in shower stall in one bathroom;
- grab bars in washrooms(s);
- lower countertops;
- kitchen work surfaces with knee space below;
- accessible appliances and cupboards;
- wider corridors and circulation areas;
- adaptable housing (basic universal housing) features or convertible housing features noted above.

Visitability is housing that is designed and built to enable a visitor with mobility challenges to enter the unit, visit with the occupant and easily use one bathroom.

Typical visitability housing features include:

- one entrance with no steps and flush threshold;
- wider door and space at this one entrance;
- one accessible washroom on the visiting floor, with wider door and space.