

**Richmond VisitAbility Task Force
12 - 2 p.m., May 22 Meeting
Executive Airport Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre**

MEETING NOTES

3 steps to implementing “VisitAbility” were discussed

1. “Research Asset Mapping” reviews the practices already in place that are similar to what the Task Force wants to achieve, especially highlighting practices that work
2. “Stakeholder identification/initiative involvement” concerns those who may be affected by or have an effect on the VisitAbility effort. We want broader representation such as: users, consumers, policy makers, real estate members, builders, developers.
3. “Communication Plan” – What is “visitable” housing? The task force wants to build and share knowledge relating to the topic of visitable housing.

Things to deliver this year

Richmond VisitAbility Website?

- There is a need to have a specific web presence for Richmond and BC alone. There are different bylaws, trends, and circumstances around the country; hence a specific web presence will enhance effectiveness and efficiency for sharing resources and information for Richmond Task Force members.
- Another concern brought up is what will happen to the website after the 1 year of funding is up?

Topics of Discussion

- ▶ Website “Concrete Change” – an American website which has a similar goal to the Visitability project.

www.concretechange.org

Concrete Change calls for “basic home access” with a focus on influencing the policy, perhaps the market is not yet large enough to warrant a change.

It does not look like that many policy makers are fully aware of “basic home access” despite the benefits are apparent. Sometimes developers/builders are not enticed to include visitability features because of not enough incentive, lack awareness, etc.

▶ Cost of implementing “Visitability”

On the Concrete Change website, the “cheap” cost of building visitable housing can be misleading as the possible inclusion of a ramp/small lift is quite expensive!

Counter view for that is – does the cost of implementation matter? Because visitable housing is the right thing to do and we should be doing the right thing. In fact, many visitability features incur no additional cost in a new building

▶ News updates regarding Visitability

- It was suggested that we should try to involve the minister of municipal affairs in our effort.
- The City of Vancouver’s 2014 New Edition of Building by-law’s was brought up as a good change because it calls for many features that visitability wants to push for.
- Discussion regarding marketing visitability to seniors as the changes will benefit them too.

▶ Convertible Housing Design Discussion

- Convertible units incorporate designs that can be readily changed to improve accessibility. They make better use of the building area by creating more storage space.
- There is proof that convertible units are more desirable than non-convertible ones.
- In Richmond, developers get an incentive to include convertible features - they get more sq ft. on the units. Nonetheless the incentive does not seem to be attractive enough. Perhaps more generous in the incentive may help, such as allowing the developers to accumulate the bonus building space and build an extra unit or two in the complex.
- The Yamamoto Plan includes outlets close to the bed and door, which would allow remote opening and closing of the door as needed, for instance by someone with mobility challenge.
- Regarding “accessing to living level”, more info is required to learn how much to raise the level of the living quarter which may be different in different part of Richmond.
- In addition to the visitability features, other features to consider is lower electrical switches, more conveniently located electrical outlets and wall reinforcement.

Next Steps

- ❖ Raise awareness about “VisitAbility” for single dwelling residences – web presence, brochure/fact sheet
- ❖ Resources sharing – HAFI (Home Adaptations for Independence Grant)
- ❖ Influence the new building trend

In Attendance:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Aileen McCormack | Richmond Senior Advisory Committee |
| Alan Hill | City of Richmond, Diversity Services |
| De Whalen | Richmond Poverty Response Committee |
| Ella Huang | Richmond VisitAbility Task Force Coordinator |
| Francisco Molina | Planning Design Research Consulting |
| George Pope | Community Living BC, Richmond Council |
| Jamee Justason | BC Real Estate Board |
| Janice Barr | Richmond Society for Community Living |
| John Hopkins | City of Richmond, Planning & Development |
| Rich Green | Accessibility Analyst |
| Sarah Ho | Community Living BC, Richmond Council |
| Sunil Mathure | Richmond Homelessness Coalition / Richmond VCH Family Committee on Mental Health Issues |
| Tom Parker | Accessibility Specialist |
| Viet Vu | Richmond Centre for Disability |
| Vince Miele | Accessibility Specialist |
| Ryan Chung & Zaynah Khan | Note takers |