

Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS)

Project Title: Collaborative Knowledge Building and Action for VISIBLE Housing in Canadian Cities (“Visibility Project”)

Funder: Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnerships Program- Disability Component

Project Period: 3 years from May 1, 2013 to March 31, 2016

## **Richmond Task Force Meeting 1: Exploration Meeting**

November 27, 2013 (Richmond City Hall)

This project intends to promote VISIBLE housing for all Canadians, including persons with disabilities and seniors. Visibility is a “movement to change home construction practices, so that all new homes incorporate a few specific features that make home easier for mobility impaired people to live and visit in”.

The project objectives include, but are not limited to:

- 1) To Increase understanding of VISIBLE housing (i.e. preferred practices, lived experiences, review of current policies, and identifying barriers and opportunities);
- 2) To develop and implement strategies to promote VISIBLE housing among buyers, builders, policy makers, and other stakeholders; and
- 3) To increase awareness of VISIBLE housing by highlighting positive impacts, such as: safety, social inclusion, and active living, inclusive community building, and sustainable housing.

Task forces are being developed in 5-7 municipalities across Canada to explore these topics and to promote awareness about visible housing in their local communities. The Task Forces will consist of representation of: consumers, housing professionals, and policy makers. CCDS will provide coordination, information, resources, facilitation of knowledge sharing, input and oversight.

### **Summary of Task Force Recommendations/Deliverables:**

#### 1) Development of a Register

- How to identify adaptable, accessible, basic universal, and visible units that have been constructed.
- Target audience/Stakeholders: (i.e. homeownership/rental consumers, service providers/organizations, non-profit housing providers, realtors, developers, government-policy analysis)
- Is there a way to develop Real Estate codes to identify units?
- Associated fields: built features, social supports, and community linkages
- Match housing stock inventory with a registry of individuals that desire/require this type of housing.
- Contacts: Harriet Permet, BC Real Estate Board, Government Relations Manager (604-730-3029)
- Contacts: Tony Gioventu, Condominium Owners Association (604-584-2462 or [tony@choa.bc.ca](mailto:tony@choa.bc.ca))

## 2) Development of a Tool Kit

- Best/Preferred Practices
- Multi-stakeholder usage
- Web site
- Education, Awareness Building, and Applied practice information
- Target Audience/Stakeholders: homeowners, builders, developers, realtors, housing providers, consumers, service providers/organizations, and associations).

## 3) Builder/Developer Sensitivity to Water entering Units (e.g. Zero grade entrance)

- Develop awareness about water issues/challenges when constructing visitable housing
- Support process through preferred practices/collaborative technical knowledge
- Work through alternative solutions that meet code requirements and address issue
- Target Audience/Stakeholders: Builders, Developers, City Building Code Officials/Design Panel/Planners, AIBC, Ministry Responsible for Housing, Homeowner Protection Office
- Homeownership Protection Office (development of a warranty program)
- Contact: Denise Ionescu (778-452-6455 or [dionescu@hpo.ca](mailto:dionescu@hpo.ca))
- Contact: Architect Institute of BC (AIBC)- Specific person to address water issues
- Contact: Ministry Responsible for Housing (Building and Safety Management Branch designate)
- Richmond specific- Engineering impacts from Dike protection program/requirements to build at a higher grade to support future flood or water tables rising. How does this impact- access between existing and new development? Costs? Visitability standards/application?

## 4) Looking at Visitability based on housing types

- Realistically, what housing types can accommodate visitability features?
- Challenges: Townhouse units, existing homes with various grades (i.e. water table issues)
- Richmond specific application (i.e. multi-family buildings, single family dwellings, coach house/secondary suites)

## 5) Education

- What does visitability look like?
- How to break the stereotypes of it being institutional looking
- Bringing design-marketing-consumers together (e.g. Winnipeg marketing students were presented challenge of how to shift the public perception of visitability being clinical to preferred marketing)
- Example: Aging in Place (e.g. Lifetime Homes/England)

## 6) Potential for Housing Co-Ops

- Expiring CMHC Operating Agreements (i.e. November 21, 2013 announcement that CMHC will approve co-ops with existing subsidy support funds to be utilized after the operating agreements have expired: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2013/2013-11-21-1315.cfm>)
- Many Co-ops will be available for redevelopment within the next 10 years
- Underutilized lands (potential to maximize ability to support affordability and visitability through redevelopment and mixed tenure.
- Modification of existing units

- 7) How does visitability meet on-going local trends?
  - Population, demographics, culture, needs, market
  
- 8) Exploring Incentives and Policy Measures
  - Keeping in mind the removal of obstacles and disincentives to support the development and provision of visitable homes/developments
  - Explore tax barriers (Federal level)
  - Density bonus incentives
  - What are the accessibility requirements for coach house and secondary suites through rezoning/development processes.
  
- 9) What Social Structures are Required to Encourage Sustainable Visitability?
  - Example: freedom to access home and community, mental health, social isolation, belonging, informal and formal supports, belonging, community participation
  - Relationship of Visitability to: 1) Built form, 2) Social Supports, and 3) Community Linkages
  - Access to transportation, services, and multi-sector participation
  - Contacts: Burnaby Association for Inclusion and Community Living Society; Vancouver Resource Society, and Development Disabilities Association

**Stakeholders:** Richmond Centre for Disabilities, City of Richmond, Urban Development Institute, Greater Vancouver Homebuilders Association, Condominium Homeowners Association, Building Operators and Management Association, BC Real Estate Board, Ministry Responsible for Housing, Homeowners Protection Office, Ministry Responsible for Transportation, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, Architect Institute of BC, BC Non-Profit Association, CLBC, CACL

Richmond Task Force- Next Steps:

- 1) Research Asset Mapping: Review research, literature and best practices that have already been completed in the identified areas (Year 1)
- 2) Stakeholder identification and initiative involvement (Year 1)
- 3) Communication Plan (Year 1)

Suggestion for National CCDS Support: Design of a National Database to provide taskforces with information on:

- Resources
- Initiatives
- Policies
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Preferred Practices

**Meeting Attendees:** RCD (Tom Parker and Francis Clark); City of Richmond (Alan Hill and DenaKae Beno), Urban Development Institute (Jeff Fisher); Community Living BC (James Whyte and associate), Richmond Homelessness Coalition/Richmond-VCH Family Committee on Mental Health Issues (Sahil), and Richmond Poverty Response Committee member (De Whalen)