

**Making new homes more accessible:
Accelerating Accessibility Coalition launches three ‘how to’ tools for home builders after celebrating 77 members at two-year anniversary**

The Daniels Corporation sets new standard with published Accessible Design Standards Guide

Toronto, ON (February 13, 2025) – Hopes just got brighter for a Canada with homes that are liveable and visitable for people of all ages and abilities, thanks to today’s launch of three tools by the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC).

The AAC, a first-of-its-kind community of real estate, accessibility, and civic leaders, announced a record 77 organizations and individual members as it celebrated two years of action and impact. ULI (Urban Land Institute) Toronto serves as the Coalition’s secretariat and will host a free [webinar](#) showcasing these ‘how-to’ tips on March 5.

The vast majority of new homes built today do not meet the needs of people with disabilities and aging Canadians. Yet many builders and their partners aren’t clear *how* to make homes more accessible beyond the building code. These new tools address that barrier, including a [video](#) that demonstrates what builders can do to design accessibility into new developments and the unprecedented publishing of [standards](#) by The Daniels Corporation (Daniels) and design and cost [considerations](#) by Penguin Living.

“The AAC is about building empathy for *why* a home needs to be more accessible and showing builders *how* to do it in a cost-effective way,” said Luke Anderson, Co-Chair of the AAC and Executive Director of StopGap Foundation.

“The video, standards, and specifications demonstrate the ground-breaking contributions these leading developers are making to the vision of a more accessible Canada.”

The AAC is working to create a more accessible Canada by making accessibility a greater priority as developers build the millions of new homes Canada needs in the next decade. These tools will help lead to homes where accessibility is built in, not bolted on afterwards at extra cost to the homeowner or tenant. They are the latest resources available in the Coalition’s [Accessibility Toolbox](#).

“Accessibility is a critical pillar to building equitable communities, and yet it has not always been a hallmark of the development industry,” said Richard Joy, Executive Director, ULI Toronto. “ULI Toronto, as a broad based, multi-disciplinary industry association with over 2200 public and private sector members across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, is leveraging our network of professionals to significantly boost the know-how we need to make homes accessible.”

1/ A Tale of Two Homes - Accessible Home Design video - The video shows how the vast majority of new condo or rental homes create barriers for people with disabilities and aging Canadians, as well as what helps make these homes more habitable and visitable and the difference it makes.

It is produced by ULI Toronto and Daniels with Confound Films and is funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) under the National Housing Strategy Demonstrations Initiative. Thanks to collaborators StopGap Foundation and AccessNow, and participants Luke Anderson, Neisha Mitchell, Kate Chung, Doug Buck, and Jake Cohen.

Watch the video [here](#), the Descriptive Video English at this [link](#) and the Descriptive Video French at this [link](#).

View accompanying slides with information about the market need and potential for accessible homes as well as about costs, and space and revenue considerations at this [link](#) and then fill out the [survey](#).

2/ The Daniels Corporation's Accessibility Designed Program Technical Standards Guide

The Daniels Corporation, a builder, developer and leader in creating vibrant, inclusive communities across the Greater Toronto Area, is proud to announce the public release of its [Accessibility Designed Program \(ADP\) Technical Standards Guide](#).

The Accessibility Designed Program, introduced by Daniels in 2017, offers thoughtfully designed suites that exceed the Ontario Building Code (OBC) standards. Designed primarily around individuals with mobility challenges, the program also aims to meet the needs of individuals with vision, hearing loss, intellectual and cognitive disabilities and people looking to age in place. By openly sharing these technical standards, Daniels aims to encourage developers, builders, architects, and designers to not only adopt these practices but to start their own conversations, develop their own set of standards, or use Daniels' as a benchmark for raising the bar on accessibility in housing.

"At Daniels, we believe accessibility is not just a feature—it's a fundamental right," said Jake Cohen, Chief Operating Officer at The Daniels Corporation. "Sharing our Accessibility Designed Program Technical Standards is a true demonstration of our commitment to the collective good. By releasing what could easily be seen as a competitive advantage, we're signaling that inclusivity is a shared responsibility and that collaboration is essential to creating a more accessible future."

This sentiment is echoed by Heidi Green, Co-Chair of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and Director of Development at RioCan, who recognizes the broader impact of Daniels' efforts.

“Daniels’ decision to release their Accessibility Designed Program Technical Standards is a pivotal moment in the push for more accessible housing in Canada,” said Green. “By sharing this invaluable resource, Daniels is not only raising the bar for accessibility in housing but also empowering developers, architects, and builders to join the movement toward more inclusive communities. This step exemplifies the leadership and collaboration needed across our industry to make accessible housing a cornerstone of Canada’s future.”

3/ Penguin Living Accessible Apartment Design and Cost Considerations

Penguin Living is pleased to share a [summary](#) of its past two years of research and experiences designing and constructing eighteen fully accessible apartments in the Toronto region. This work was presented at the AAC’s recent 2nd anniversary meeting and highlights primary design considerations, cost implications, and select features.

“Our goal was to understand what our future residents need to live independently. We then created a home that helps them live more freely,” said Guy Solomon, President of Penguin Living.

About The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition

[The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition \(AAC\)](#) is a pioneering community of real estate development, accessibility, and civic leaders who share a vision for a more accessible Canada. Through education, resource-sharing and thought leadership, the AAC challenges and encourages home builders to make physical accessibility a greater priority as they build new homes for the growing and evolving needs of the Canadian population. ULI Toronto serves as the AAC’s secretariat.

About The Daniels Corporation

[The Daniels Corporation](#) is one of Canada's preeminent builders/developers, building nearly 40,000 new homes across the Greater Toronto Area for over 40 years. Daniels is the developer of TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto's Entertainment District and the City of the Arts community on Toronto's East Bayfront. Among its many initiatives, Daniels partnered with Toronto Community Housing to revitalize 53 of the 69-acre Regent Park community in Toronto. Regent Park is home to the World Urban Pavilion, a collaboration between the Urban Economy Forum, UN-Habitat, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Daniels. Understanding that quality of life is created by much more than physical buildings, Daniels goes above and beyond to integrate building excellence with opportunities for social, cultural, and economic well-being.

About Penguin Living

[Penguin Living](#) is changing the way accessible homes are built, making it easier for people to live independently. By carefully studying accessibility standards and working with experts, the company has created a new type of living space designed for everyone.

- 30 -

For more information or to request an interview, please contact AAC Communications Committee Co-Chair Kasia Gladki at kasia.elise@gmail.com or 647-444-7782.

Key Facts: The market is growing for homes that are accessible beyond the building code. Additional costs for accessibility features can be negligible or dramatically lower if designed into a home up front.

Market Need and Potential: More and more Canadians are looking for homes that are accessible, including features beyond those required to meet the building code.

- As of 2022, StatsCan reports that 7.3 million or about **19%** of Canadians were 65 and older—and could reach **20%** by 2025 and **25%** by 2059.
- The prevalence of people with one or more disabilities has risen – [jumping from 22% of the Canadian population aged 15 years in 2017 to 27% by 2022](#) or 8 million people - roughly one fifth of Canadians.
- [Almost half a million persons with disabilities](#) report being unable to access the aids and assistive devices they need to live independently in their homes (StatsCan 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability)
- **57%** of Canadians rate the level of access of the buildings where they live, work and learn as fair or poor (*National Accessibility Study, Leger, 2024*)
- An overwhelming majority of older adults (over **85%**) would prefer to age in place within their own homes and communities. (*National Research Council*)
- **Two-thirds** of Canadians are concerned about future mobility challenges (*Angus Reid Institute, 2019*)
- **53%** want Canada-wide standards for universal access (*Angus Reid Institute, 2019*)

Little to No Additional Cost for Accessibility

- There are measures beyond the building code that make a home more accessible that DO NOT cost more. They just require thinking and decisions up front.

- Some measures do cost more in terms of labour or materials, such as a power door opener at entry and balcony doors, and universal kitchen appliances. They can add up to **less than 1%** of the overall project budget for a multi-residential building – provided they are incorporated up front.
- A 2020 Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) study found that the average construction cost increase to achieve RHF Accessibility Certified Gold with a score of at least **80%** is estimated to be less than an additional **1% (0.4%)** for high-rise residential or **1.8%** for affordable housing projects.
- A developer's sample cost estimate for a rental building shows that the costs per unit are negligibly higher to incorporate accessibility measures that go beyond the building code in 15% of the suites and interior and exterior common areas. When these costs are spread across the building overall, the total construction costs are **0.49%** higher (based on a rental building of 302 suites where **45 (15%)** are accessible beyond the building code.)

Incentives make accessibility more attractive

- As of June 2024, CMHC increased the number of points a borrower can gain for accessibility measures for rental housing under its multi-unit mortgage loan insurance product, MLI Select (**up to 30 or 100 points**). This reduces premiums and offers longer amortization periods.
- The federal \$27 billion Apartment Construction Loan Program requires **10%** of constructed units to be accessible, while the Rapid Housing Initiative requires **5%**.
- Developers may better qualify and compete for public sector Requests for Proposals by showing experience in building homes that are designed with accessibility or 'aging in place' considerations and amenities.