

Members and Statements of Support

November 2025

Following are public statements of support for accessible housing from the 93 members of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. The * indicates the organization is a founding member since 2022.

Members

Real Estate (52)

1. Aird & Berlis LLP
2. ARISTA Homes
3. BentallGreenOak*
4. BILD (Building Industry and Land Development Association)*
5. Cadillac Fairview*
6. Canada Lands Company
7. Choice Properties REIT*
8. Collecdev-Markee
9. Crosswalk Communities*
10. Cumulus Architects
11. Devron
12. DiamondCorp
13. Diamond Schmitt Architects
14. Nevin Dunn
15. EllisDon Community Builders*
16. Arlene Etchen
17. Riva Finkelstein
18. Giannone Petricone Associates
19. Greenwin
20. GWL Realty Advisors
21. Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area
22. HOK
23. Human Space*
24. Jeffrey Kerr, RE/MAX Prime Properties Unique Group*



25. Jensen Hughes
26. Killam Apartment REIT
27. Kindred Works
28. KIRKOR Architects and Planners
29. LGA Architectural Partners
30. National Homes
31. Northcrest Developments*
32. Percy Ellis*
33. Penguin Living
34. Ron Wickman Architect
35. RioCan REIT
36. Sapphire Balconies (Canada) Inc.
37. SHS Consulting
38. Shift Accessibility Contractors Ltd.
39. Spanier Group
40. Spotlight Developments
41. SvN Architects + Planners
42. TAS*
43. Tenblock
44. The Daniels Corporation*
45. Toronto Society of Architects
46. Tridel
47. ULI (Urban Land Institute)'s Toronto District Council*
48. Jennevieve Virata
49. Verve Senior Living
50. Vortex Fire Consulting Inc.
51. Woodbourne Capital Management International, LP
52. WoodGreen

Accessibility (33)

1. Accessible Housing Network*
2. AccessNow*
3. Aequum Global Access Inc.
4. Atlantic Accessibility Consulting*
5. Bellwoods Centres*
6. Beautifully Inclusive
7. Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network
8. CNIB Access Labs*
9. Community Living Toronto*
10. Direct Access Consultancy*
11. Harrison's Hope
12. Kim Fullerton
13. Inluzia Inc.
14. Intentional Community Consortium
15. Thuvaraha Jeyakumaran
16. L'Arche Toronto Homes Inc*
17. Yazmine Laroche
18. Level Playing Field Inc.
19. Anthony Lu
20. March of Dimes Canada*
21. Pedesting Corporation
22. Lara Pinchbek
23. Reena
24. Regroupement des organismes pour aînés et aînées du sud-ouest de Montréal (ROPASOM)
25. Rick Hansen Foundation*
26. RPATH Committee (Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing)
27. Safehaven
28. Spinal Cord Injury Ontario*
29. StopGap Foundation*
30. Sunnybrook Research Institute*
31. The Right Fit Program, Disability Alliance BC
32. KITE Research Institute at UHN (University Health Network)
33. Jessica Weisberg, Mortgage Agent | Enrich Mortgage Group

Civic and Education (8)

- 1 Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR)*
- 2 City of Vaughan
- 3 CivicAction*
- 4 PEACH Research Unit, Dalhousie University
- 5 Design Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC)
- 6 John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design,
University of Toronto
- 7 Waterfront Toronto
- 8 Centre for Feminist Research, York University*

Members' Statements of Support (in alphabetical order)

At AccessNow we focus on empowering people with disabilities to be independent and better connected to the places where we live, work, learn and play.

We do this by collecting and sharing information about the accessibility of places everywhere on the AccessNow app. We highlight both the successes and barriers present within hotels and hospitals, stores and schools, attractions, restaurants, parks, and so much more.

We hear far too often how Canadians with disabilities still face barriers to access safe, accessible, and affordable housing.

Every person should have equitable access to basics of daily living. As a collective and as a country, we can and must do better to ensure disabled people are treated equitably, and with dignity.

Leveraging The Accessibility Toolbox now is the time to address systemic barriers that hold disabled people back. In direct engagement with people with lived experience of disability, it's time to unlearn the practices that have established generations of inaccessible design and replace them with inclusive methodologies that reflect the authentic diversity of needs that people with and without disabilities require throughout life.

Maayan Ziv, Founder and CEO, AccessNow*

The Accessible Housing Network is a collaboration of Canadian non-profit organizations, advocating in support of people of all ages to live as they wish, in housing which is fully accessible.

We invite other individuals and groups to support our campaign by contacting their elected representatives at all levels, municipal, provincial and federal, urging them to use all means at their disposal to bring about an end to housing discrimination against people with disabilities.

However, we cannot wait for politicians to take action. Change must come from everyone, including builders, developers, architects, designers and the general public. Housing is a human right, recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Human Rights Code, and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The need for accessible affordable housing is a crisis. A quarter of Canadians have a disability. Anyone can have been born with a disability, and we're all just a fall, accident or illness away from a disability - temporary or permanent.

Universal design will accommodate anyone of any age or ability, going beyond mere accessibility. We know that the cost of building an apartment, whether accessible or not, is the same, when planned from the design stage. It is renovations to existing housing which are extremely expensive. We must act on this knowledge now.

We look forward to working with all members of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to continue pushing for an end to housing discrimination. Let's create more accessible homes and buildings today!

Kate Chung, Co-chair, Accessible Housing Network*

Aequum is Latin for equal footing and equity. Aequum Global Access Inc. is led by Pina D'Intino, M.Des., PMP, CPACC with 29 years of experience in the financial industry plus 20+ years as the founder of a cross-institutional hub for accessibility and inclusion.

Aequum assists organizations with training and awareness, digital and mobile best practices, building collaboration among users and consumers, developers, and implementers; and implementing current research and practices.

The firm's partners and affiliates include the Disability Inclusion Business Council, G3ict, IDRC at OCAD, the Canadian Accessibility Network and Standard Accessibility Reporting Inc. Aequum believes that accessible housing is fundamental to supporting those with disabilities. It is among the first priorities in creating disability inclusive and safe communities.

Pina is joined by occupational therapist David Wysocki, M.Sc., OT Reg. (ON.) and urban planner, Barbara Myers, MCIP, RPP. This team works with private and public service organizations, not-for-profits, and federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

We are confident that through expert design and on-site education and training, we can contribute to systemic and economic change resulting in inclusive housing for all. We look forward to joining and supporting the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

Barbara Myers, Associate, Aequum Global Access Inc.

Aird & Berlis is committed to serving the diverse needs of our clients, as well as the broader community, by prioritizing accessibility for all people. Accessibility is a foundational aspect of our workplace culture. We endeavour to support each firm member so they may bring their best selves to work and succeed in their professional and interpersonal goals.

Guided by the principles outlined in provincial human rights codes and accessibility policies, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Accessible British Columbia Act, we have established a baseline for inclusion. However, we strive to go beyond compliance whenever possible. We recognize there is still work to be done and have initiated efforts to elevate our organization's accessibility standards.

Collaborating with accessibility advocates and offering complimentary thought leadership programs raises awareness among our clients and the general public regarding relevant legislation and the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

We provide legal consultation to help clients integrate accessibility into their workplaces and meet standards for the built environment—acknowledging that accessibility must be shaped by the distinct needs of those with physical and neurological impairments, including considerations related to the changes we experience as we age.

Additionally, our internal educational programming emphasizes the important role of family and community caregivers and draws insights from our recurring workplace experience surveys. This approach allows us to assess the realities of firm members with diverse perspectives on accessibility, informing our approach to inclusion and related initiatives.

Aird & Berlis is honoured to join the Urban Land Institute’s Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, and we pledge to advocate for the experiences of individuals living with disabilities both as legal counsel and as supportive employers. We invite you to join us in this commitment!

Municipal & Land Use Planning Group, Aird & Berlis LLP

Atlantic Accessibility Consulting is committed to being part of a positive process to create meaningful access wherever possible; refining spaces, experiences, and perspectives, so everyone can be included. Accessible housing is vitally important and has been overlooked too long; now is the time to bring transformation to our country.

We recognize that barriers have been unknowingly created in buildings over the years and we are committed to being part of the change. As we work together, we can provide detailed guidance to help others understand Universal Design principles; we can be part of eliminating barriers in the built environment, educating, and leading with the goal of increasing access for people of all abilities.

We believe that the only way we can effectively increase equitable access in every community here in Canada, will be through the process of collaboration; thus, we are honored to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition in partnership with the organizations who are also committed to creating a more accessible future for all Canadians.

Kristen Habermehl, CEO, Atlantic Accessibility Consulting*

ARISTA Homes proudly reaffirms our unwavering commitment to the principles and objectives outlined by the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. Accessibility and inclusivity are not only fundamental Canadian values but also integral to ARISTA's "Life-Friendly" sustainability and inclusion initiative.

As a sponsor and significant supporter of the Peaceful Hearts Georgina Foundation, ARISTA Homes is deeply committed to championing fundraising initiatives that provide essential services for families and individuals with special needs. We acknowledge the crucial role housing availability plays in facilitating access to day and weekend programs, overnight respite, and reducing service wait lists. Our enduring dedication to fostering inclusive communities is underscored by our three-decade legacy as innovators in residential home construction.

Acknowledging the pressing need to address the deficit in accessible housing, ARISTA Homes embraces its responsibility to contribute actively to creating a built environment that celebrates diversity. We firmly assert that housing should transcend regulatory standards and function as a catalyst for enabling fulfilling lives, encouraging community engagement, and nurturing both physical and mental well-being.

As we position ARISTA Homes as a catalyst for positive transformation in the residential development industry, we embrace the profound responsibility to shape a more accessible Canada. Our vision foresees a world where every individual experiences the "Life-Friendly" benefits of meticulously designed, innovative and inclusive housing, embodying the principles of accessibility, inclusion, and vibrant community living.

Adrian DeGasperis, Director of Operations, ARISTA Homes Ltd.

Adults living with complex physical challenges need accessible and affordable housing along with the necessary service supports to enable them to enjoy independent living. The first prerequisite for achieving this goal is to help individuals secure an accessible home in the community. This is a difficult challenge that is further complicated by the prohibitive costs of retrofitting homes or apartment units.

The short supply of accessible and affordable housing is a serious problem that will require the commitment of a strong coalition vested in change. Efforts to resolve the housing challenges need to also consider the increasing difficulties being faced (and felt) by people who require stable support services to meet their needs and goals of independent living. These are long-term growing problems that require significant government action.

Supportive housing and attendant outreach services are an important part of addressing the current crisis in hospitals and an untapped alternative for some individuals who currently have no option but to transition to a long term care home.

Here is just one story among many. Jenn, 40, suffered a hit and run by a garbage truck that left her with a neurological disorder affecting her ability to coordinate her limbs. She was discharged to a shelter where she lived without adequate services and supports and with little privacy. Given these challenges, her health deteriorated resulting in re-hospitalization and eventual transition to a long-term care home living amongst older adults where she became depressed. Two years ago, she was offered a supportive housing unit at Bellwoods. Her health has improved, she has made friends and is now part of a vibrant community, realizing her full and independent potential.

Together with the members of the coalition and with support from government we can enhance the lives of many with safe, friendly, supportive opportunities to be part of the community.

Susan Jewell, Acting CEO, Bellwoods Centres*

BentallGreenOak's firm-wide commitment to building and managing spaces that create equitable social environments for all stands to be strengthened through the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC) and its critical mission. The real estate industry is at its best when we work together to address common challenges through our collective experience and skill sets, and we are proud to extend our support to this initiative that meaningfully addresses an area of clear need with practical solutions that we can all abide by.

The communities where we live, work, and invest can only thrive with the full participation of society, and compassionate consideration for the life experiences of citizens with accessibility needs within and surrounding the built environments that we create.

This AAC serves an important purpose that BentallGreenOak is proud to support and actively draw learning from, and we look forward to broadening our understanding of the issues and becoming active participants in the solutions that we can deploy where they are most needed.

**Ross Strowger, Managing Director, Portfolio Manager,
BentallGreenOak***

Beautifully Inclusive is a small consulting company making meaningful ripples in a vast pond. Joining the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition would enable those ripples to reach further.

There is strength in numbers, and collaboration is crucial in this endeavour. The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition has done an incredible job gathering resources and creating a web of support while collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations to create change and a shared drive to create inclusive spaces for persons with diverse disabilities.

Beautifully Inclusive started as a "passion project" and has grown into much more. Jayde Malam officially launched Beautifully Inclusive as a full-time accessibility consulting business in 2021 and has consulted on hundreds of projects since then.

Jayde believes that inclusivity is beautiful! In the built environment, inclusivity is the sweet spot where design and function blend seamlessly to unite people. It's the sweet spot of knowing you are respected, considered, supported, loved and safe. It's understanding that inclusivity is not an option; it's a fundamental human right, and we must work together to ensure we are inclusive in our spaces, services, policies, and procedures.

As someone with multiple disabilities, Jayde has gained unique insights into navigating a world that is not always accessible. She leverages this personal experience and her professional training to drive change in the built environment. A deep belief in the importance of inclusivity for quality of life, equity, and equality fuels her advocacy for accessibility, health and wellness, and human rights.

Jayde is, among other things, a Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC), Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility, Adaptiv Home Renovations, and Fitwel-certified professional who is passionate about using universal design practices to create inclusive, accessible spaces that everyone can enjoy.

In the face of a national housing crisis and an aging population, we are significantly behind where we should be. The shortage of homes suitable for aging in place and the lack of care facilities for those in need are stark realities. Unfortunately, in our rush to build housing quickly, we often sacrifice accessibility. This is a critical issue, as disabled individuals are disproportionately affected by homelessness and face significantly higher risks than those without disabilities.

People with disabilities are four times more likely to experience homelessness. There are various contributing factors increasing the housing crisis for disabled people. These include financial constraints, cuts to support programs, and a lack of understanding among builders about what meaningful accessibility entails. However, one of the most alarming factors is the prevalence of violence against disabled people. Often, this forces people with disabilities to either endure abusive living conditions or flee, where, all too often, they end up in situations where they have nowhere to go and not enough support to help them.

Affordable, accessible housing and shelters can significantly impact our society and save lives. We must not overlook accessibility in our eagerness to create more housing. Universal design, which ensures accessibility for all, is a set of principles that benefits everyone. This is known as the curb-cut effect – a feature designed for a specific group of people, such as those with mobility disabilities, enhances the experience for everyone (parents with strollers, cyclists, people with wagons or carts, etc.).

We must all work together and continue to break down common misconceptions about accessibility, meet people where they are while encouraging them to do better, include diverse disabilities in all we do—not just mobility disabilities—and continue to work with builders, developers, architects, designers, and families to build better spaces. We must also acknowledge that we cannot have sustainability without accessibility.

Jayde Malam, Founder, Accessibility Consultant, Beautifully Inclusive

With 1,300 member companies, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) is the voice of the home building, land development and professional renovation industry in the Greater Toronto Area.

We work diligently to promote the positions and perspectives of the industry, and on behalf of its customers (new home buyers), in the delivery of the complete communities required to accommodate the robust growth being experienced in the region.

Understanding accessibility barriers from the perspective of those that experience them is essential to creating inclusive, welcoming and complete communities. BILD is pleased to work with stakeholders and the industry to educate, promote awareness and find common ways to removing barriers in communities our members build.

Justin Sherwood, SVP, Communications and Stakeholder Relations, BILD (Building Industry and Land Development Association)*

Cadillac Fairview (CF) is in the business of creating connected communities and this cannot be accomplished without accessibility and inclusivity being top of mind. CF serves millions of guests, partners, clients and employees with varying needs and we have a responsibility to continue to improve our offering in existing buildings and envision accessibility for the future.

CF has been on a deliberate accessibility journey since 2018 and this has only reinforced the importance of being more inclusive and the many benefits to our community.

Looking forward, through projects like East Harbour, CF will continue our journey with best in class partners like the Rick Hansen Foundation and now, the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

Wayne Barwise, EVP Development, Cadillac Fairview*

Canada Lands Company CLC Limited (CLC) is pleased to offer this statement of support to the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC).

For more than 25 years, CLC has developed some of the most sought-after real estate communities in Canada while serving as an innovative steward of some of the country's most iconic tourist attractions: the CN Tower and Downsview Park in Toronto, and the Montréal Science Centre and the Old Port of Montréal in Montréal.

CLC is committed to improving accessibility and inclusion by removing barriers. CLC realizes that providing an accessible and inclusive environment across Canada is a shared effort; communities, businesses, and services must work together to make accessibility a reality.

CLC is committed to treating all persons in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, equal opportunity, access, and participation, and are committed to ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone.

We are committed to meeting the needs of all persons with disabilities, adhering to all applicable federal and provincial accessibility laws, and by looking to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessibility. CLC is equally committed to providing advice, policies, tools, resources, and governance structures which promote an inclusive workplace and supports employees in delivering accessible goods, services and facilities.

CLC is advancing accessibility efforts and inclusion in numerous ways, including through a multi-disciplinary and cross-corporation Accessible Canada Committee and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MAP), and working with various organizations and third parties, such as the Rick Hansen Foundation.

We appreciate the work by the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. By working together, we can accelerate the development of accessible, inclusive homes, communities, and environments that welcome everyone.

Teresa Law, Chief Human Resources Officer, Co-Chair, Accessible Canada Committee and Deana Grinnell, Executive Vice-President, Real Estate, Canada Lands Company

The Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR), previously known as the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA), is Canada's leading non-profit organization working to advance the right to adequate housing. For 35 years, we have worked tirelessly at the intersection of human rights and housing, providing free services to renters facing evictions and human rights violations to remain housed, providing education and training about housing rights across Canada, and advancing rights-based housing policy through research, policy development, and litigation.

Advancing the right to adequate housing means securing many conditions, for example, that a home must be affordable, habitable and guarantee security of tenure for residents. Ensuring a home is accessible for everyone, including seniors and people with disabilities, is also a significant element in advancing the right to adequate housing for all. We believe that such conditions need to be met so that people can live with dignity and thrive in their communities.

We would like to offer our support for the newly formed Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to better achieve housing outcomes for residents of Canada, of all abilities.

Our long-standing relationships with community groups across Canada have helped our organization understand the common and unique housing challenges faced by people across the country. We have also supported marginalized renters and people experiencing housing precarity, through our tenant services and training programs while also engaging with renters and housing organizations across the country. These experiences provide us with a unique perspective into the varied housing needs of Canadians.

Through our non-partisan policy work, we develop rights-based recommendations that are rooted in evidence and best practices, all of which can help the coalition explore the available levers to improve outcomes related to accessible housing. In addition, our relationships with all orders of government can help drive policy on matters related to accessible housing.

We support the AAC's efforts to work with homebuilders and service providers to make accessibility a greater priority in future development initiatives.

We are looking forward to an opportunity to support the work of the coalition in any way possible and would welcome further discussions on this matter.

Bahar Shadpour, Director of Policy and Communications, Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR)*

The Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network (CLELN) is a collective of diverse people with lived experience of homelessness and expertise in grassroots organizing, advocacy, mentorship and peer support.

CLELN works to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience are in the forefront of all matters regarding homelessness—and to eliminate homelessness and housing insecurity through research, policy, advocacy, training, and collaboration.

We have multiple intersectional identities tied to disability advocacy and transformative solutions for addressing homelessness and housing insecurity. We collaborate, educate and provide educational support for advocates, power holders, and organizations including the development sector and Canadian Standards Association.

We applaud and support the actions of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and acknowledge that unaffordable housing, insecurity and the homelessness crisis will largely impact all of us living with various disabilities.

We need a coalition of stakeholders to advise and inform our power holders, including all public and private sector decision makers, to understand that changes are needed to ensure everyone has access to a place to call home that is appropriate, accessible and affordable.

Michelle Bilek, Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network

On behalf of Vaughan Council, I am delighted that the City of Vaughan will be the first municipal government to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC).

The City of Vaughan is committed to fostering an inclusive community where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can thrive. Accessibility is an essential feature of such inclusive societies, which requires built form to meet residents' needs for their day-to-day lives across all life stages. Almost one in seven residents of Vaughan has a form of disability.

Consequently, the availability of accessible housing options is critical for building a diverse, welcoming, and prosperous city. We can and must do better to ensure that people with disabilities are treated equitably and with dignity.

I applaud the work of the AAC and believe your mandate complements Vaughan's commitment to championing accessibility, empowering people with disabilities, and building inclusive and diverse communities in alignment with our [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan](#), the [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#), and the [Age-Friendly Community Action Plan](#).

Understanding barriers to accessibility from the perspective of those who experience them is essential to creating a complete community. When homes are accessible, people can be more independent and active in their communities. Accessible homes ensure people can comfortably visit family and friends.

Accessing and enjoying one's community, like participating in recreational activities in an accessible and inclusive environment is essential for everybody.

Many people with disabilities – including seniors – face significant accessibility barriers. The ability to age in place in the community will become an increasingly important issue as our population ages. Accessible housing options that facilitate independent living are critical for the health and well-being of seniors and those who have experienced a life-altering injury or disease.

When a person with a disability has access to affordable and accessible housing, it can be transformative, unlock opportunities, and enable dignity. As we move forward with getting more homes built across the city, accessibility must be a priority.

Disability is part of being a human. At some point in our lives, we all end up experiencing a shift in the way we navigate our homes, community, and beyond. We all have unique and valuable lived experiences. Therefore, improved accessibility results in a society where everyone can contribute and participate equitably. Accessibility planning is essential to Vaughan's future, and we remain dedicated to working with our valued partners to foster a barrier-free community.

Collaboration is the only way through which we can build neighborhoods where people can thrive and belong. We are, therefore, honoured to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and encourage other municipalities to do so to create a more accessible future for all of us.

I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the strong advocacy of the members of the City of Vaughan's Accessibility Advisory Committee, led by Ward 5 City Councillor Gila Martow, in driving transformational changes to help Vaughan become a place where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can live comfortably, and with dignity.

Steven Del Duca, Mayor, City of Vaughan

Now more than ever distrust and polarization are ripping our society apart. Cities need diverse leaders to bridge these widening divides and break this cycle in order to build better, more inclusive cities.

At CivicAction, we are committed to building an urban region that is more inclusive and prosperous for all. We believe that every sector, community and person needs to be part of the region's rebuilding. Catalyzing for a common purpose together will generate a more equitable and inclusive recovery. That is why neutral, trusted, and safe spaces where all work together, can turn ideas into impact.

It is important that communities of practice work together to provide more pathways to accessibility. Removing barriers in public and private spaces that exclude those with different abilities and replacing them with communities where everyone's unique qualities are valued, and where more of us feel a deeper sense of belonging.

Leslie Woo, CEO, CivicAction*

At Choice Properties, building a sustainable and equitable future is integral to our purpose of creating enduring value. As one of Canada’s largest landlords and a long-term owner of real estate, we recognize we have a great deal of influence over how our communities come together to live, work and connect.

We believe in creating spaces that are accessible to and provide a sense of belonging amongst the diverse communities we serve, and we are excited to participate in the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (“AAC”).

The AAC will help bring the voices of Canadians living with disabilities to the forefront of shaping our built environment.

We are eager to learn from and exchange ideas with other organizations in our industry who share our values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

We look forward to leveraging the expertise of AAC members to evaluate and apply universal design concepts that support inclusion of people of all abilities in our properties.

Together, we can help close the gap between building codes and the real needs of people with disabilities, all of whom deserve a welcoming environment that respects their dignity and independence.

Becoming an active member of the AAC will empower Choice Properties to further our ESG pillar of Advancing Social Equity. We are proud to deepen our commitment to embedding social sustainability practices in our business, and we encourage others to join the coalition in our collective mission of building a more accessible Canada.

Mario Fatica, SVP, Development & Construction, Choice Properties REIT*

Accessibility isn't just the right thing to do. It's a smart business decision.

More than 6.2 million people live with a disability in Canada, and they represent purchasing power of \$55 billion annually. Canadians with disabilities, along with their families and friends, frequent commercial buildings, financial institutions, hospitals, airports, and many other venues.

The ability to access and enjoy your community is essential for everyone. When places are inaccessible and lack inclusiveness, everyone misses out.

For many people who are living with disabilities, businesses and community spaces can be inaccessible because of the built environment, attitudes of customer service representatives, and discriminatory policies. These barriers have become even more evident since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At CNIB Access Labs, we advocate, consult, and provide innovative solutions for businesses and governmental organizations in a variety of sectors to make their built-environment accessible. Our Navigation & Wayfinding solutions integrate embedded digital technologies with existing infrastructure, to help people with disabilities navigate built environments safely and with confidence.

It starts with accessibility and doesn't end until everyone is included.

David Demer, President, CNIB Access Labs*

Neighbours, friends, a place to belong and call home. These gifts of community, taken for granted by so many, are out-of-reach for too many of us.

Community Living Toronto has been a source of support for people with an intellectual disability and their families since 1948. Today, we continue to advocate for inclusive communities and support the rights and choices of people with an intellectual disability. Community Living looks different for everyone, with some requiring supports every day and others requiring much less support to live independently.

We need to work together to address the deepening housing crisis for people in Ontario living with intellectual disabilities. Closing the housing gap requires the necessary accessibility tools and guidance to go beyond current Building Code compliance.

We have seen first-hand how working with developers to address accessibility barriers from the planning stages makes all the difference in the lives of people we support.

Our vision is a society where everyone belongs, a society where everyone is valued. Community Living Toronto is looking forward to working with the new Accelerating Accessibility Coalition on creating homes and communities that are accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Brad Saunders, CEO, Community Living Toronto*

Accessibility is the key to inclusion, and inclusion is the key to creating a sense of belonging, which is what 'city building' is really all about. Yet accessibility remains a challenge for so many Canadians, whether for physical, psychological, socio-cultural or financial reasons, which means they are not able to participate fully in their communities.

The good news is that we actually have the knowledge and resources to build more accessible and more inclusive cities for everyone, of all ages and abilities, which is why initiatives like the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition are so important and inspiring.

Crosswalk Communities is a new, not-for-profit affordable housing development company with a fresh new approach to building rental apartments that are truly affordable for lower-income earning, hard working Canadians, including our essential workers, newcomers, single parent families, youth and seniors. By bringing together private, corporate, public, philanthropic and community partners in innovative new ways as our strategic collaborators, supporters and allies, we aim to build healthy communities that are welcoming and accessible for all.

Jeanhy Shim, Founder & CEO, Crosswalk Communities*

At Cumulus Architects, we believe that architecture has the power to shape how people live, connect, and thrive. Our practice is rooted in collaboration—with clients, communities, and end users—to create environments that are not only functional and inspiring, but also equitable and inclusive.

Accessibility is at the heart of this commitment. Too often, buildings and public spaces are designed to minimum standards, leaving people with disabilities to adapt to environments that do not reflect their needs. We believe true design excellence comes from reversing this expectation: creating spaces that reflect the diversity of people who use them.

By engaging directly with end users throughout the design process, we ensure that lived experiences inform and shape our work. These conversations allow us to move beyond assumptions, weaving accessibility into every stage of design as a guiding principle rather than an afterthought. The result is architecture that removes barriers, fosters independence, and creates spaces where everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging. We integrate this approach to universal accessibility into all residential, cultural, institutional, and healthcare spaces.

Cumulus Architects is proud to support the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. We share its vision of prioritizing physical accessibility in our built environment. Together with our partners and the communities we serve, we are committed to designing homes, neighborhoods, and cities that are inclusive and welcome everyone.

Kendra Spanton, Associate Principal, Cumulus Architects

Planning for Equity, Accessibility, and Community Health (PEACH) Research Unit is part of Dalhousie University's School of Planning in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

We are a team of dedicated faculty members, students, and partners who lead and support projects exploring how planning can better achieve more equitable, accessible, and healthy communities. Our work aims to inform urban design and planning practices that shape the places in which we live, work, and play through the PEACH lens.

We believe in learning through collaboration and first-hand experience. A big part of our research is learning from those who have personal knowledge of the barriers that exist in the built environment. Being part of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition will allow us to connect with, and learn from, other member organizations spearheading great initiatives on accessibility.

Mikiko Terashima, Ph.D., LPP, MCIP (Pronouns: she/her), Associate Professor/Associate Dean, Research and Global Relations

School of Planning, Faculty of Architecture & Planning; Lead: Planning for Equity, Accessibility, & Community Health (**PEACH**) **Research Unit, Dalhousie University**

The Design Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC) is a think tank and cross-disciplinary research group established by the City of Toronto in 2001. DIAC is a separate not-for-profit organization funded by its members – the professional design organizations of Ontario and the City of Toronto. DIAC's purpose is to leverage Ontario's design capability to address economic, social and environmental priorities.

As an organization tasked with promoting the economic and social value of Design and Designers, the Design Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC) appreciates the critical importance of inclusion in all design activities, including housing. DIAC is strongly aligned with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition's goal to create a more accessible Canada by challenging home designers and builders to make physical accessibility a greater priority.

Kevin Stolarick, Strategic Director, Design Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC)

At Devron, our mission is to create sustainable developments and homes that enhance the lives of residents. We have recently realized that meeting only the minimum code requirements is insufficient to address today's accessibility challenges. This approach is not sustainable, as it limits the future use of our buildings as residents age. We are committed to understanding these challenges better to create improved living conditions for people with diverse needs.

Safa Safapour, President, Devron

DiamondCorp prides itself as a leader in progressive city building with an eye to developing high-quality, innovative and award-winning residential and mixed-use projects.

Whether it's a large-scale master planned community or a single infill building, we always look to enhance the local community with new housing opportunities, open spaces and public realm improvements that can be enjoyed by everyone of all abilities. We look forward to working with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and learning how we can design and build our communities with better accessibility in mind.

Stephen Diamond, CEO, DiamondCorp

At Diamond Schmitt, we design buildings that elevate and enrich communities. We believe architecture can and should inspire and empower people to realize their full potential.

The status quo in the contemporary built environment requires people with disabilities to adapt to buildings. In order to create inclusive spaces, our design approach embraces a broad range of experiences and instead adapts to the diversity of people that use them.

Rather than limiting ourselves to code minimums or regulatory requirements, we employ this design ethos into our projects from the beginning, to make certain that accessibility is incorporated into every aspect of our design process; and remains a core consideration rather than an afterthought.

We are proud to have a team of certified professionals under the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification, offering expertise that benefits all our clients. Our firm collectively creates innovative design solutions for leading cultural, academic, research, healthcare, residential, and civic spaces worldwide, prioritizing environments that provide meaningful access to everyone and where all are welcome.

Nigel Tai, Principal, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Direct Access is a Disability Owned and Operated international accessibility consultancy that works with building developers to design wheelchair accessible homes and with governments to increase independence of people with disabilities at home. Our team of people with disabilities gives us a unique insight into how to improve accessibility.

When homes are accessible, people can be more independent and engage more in their communities. It is not just about individual homes, if you want to visit friends and families, accessible homes ensure people do not have to think or plan ahead for a visit.

Steven Mifsud, MBE, President and Founder, Direct Access Consultancy*

My name is Nevin Dunn, and I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition as an individual alongside my participation with CollecdevMarkee.

As a 35-year-old husband and father of two boys who has worked in real estate development and construction and is now a double amputee, my passion for real estate development remains unwavering.

Joining this coalition allows me to merge my professional expertise with my personal experience, advocating for accessibility in development. I believe that accessibility should be a fundamental consideration in every construction project, ensuring that all individuals can navigate and thrive in their environments.

I am eager to collaborate with fellow coalition members to make a meaningful impact in promoting accessible designs and practices. Together, we can create a future where everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, can enjoy equal opportunities in the built environment.

Thank you for welcoming me into this vital coalition. I look forward to contributing to our shared mission.

Nevin Dunn, Toronto, Ontario

EllisDon is proud to be one of the most trusted builders to deliver on projects that are vital to our communities. With a wide variety of professionals across many disciplines, we have a history of coming together to build something greater. We are drivers of change.

As progress is fought for on the front of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access, we must continue to innovate and build relationships that create and promote the inclusion of those with disabilities.

EllisDon believes in partnering collaboratively so that together we can innovate beyond the boundaries traditionally associated with construction.

Our teams approach design as a complete experience, and we are supportive of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition's important work of educating and creating an Accessibility Toolkit to enable the design and building of more housing that is accessible.

Ashwin Vadivelu, CFA, Director, Strategy & Origination, EllisDon Community Builders*

With the growing number of people with disabilities in Canada, along with the aging population, accessible housing is more important than ever. Homes that are accessible can provide benefits for people of all ages.

Arlene Etchen, Toronto, Ontario

As someone who has built a career in communications in Canada's real estate development industry, helping shape and influence many conversations about new ideas and best practices in architecture and city building, barrier-free residential design and the everyday challenges experienced by people with accessibility needs was never at the forefront. But now it feels as if there is no more time left to spare. I am excited by the opportunity to contribute my expertise to help engage and educate the industry about this growing area of research and to help build our collective understanding about how we can produce more inclusive, barrier-free homes with a higher standard of quality and design.

Riva Finkelstein, Strategic Communications and Public Relations Consultant, Toronto, Ontario

Since becoming a wheelchair user in 2012, I have had four homes modified in order to live in them. From a century farmhouse to a condo to a unit in an artists' co-op, all of these renovations have been challenging but ultimately successful because of the contractors I've found who know how to do this work.

Finding these contractors was not easy, there are so few, which is why I support the goals of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition one hundred percent. Rather than forcing people to modify existing inaccessible living spaces, I believe it's crucially important to be building new housing that is, from the beginning, accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities. The artists' co-op I'm currently living in was built in 1993 and included, from the getgo, five units designed for and dedicated to mobility aid users, so I know it can be done.

I got involved in disability activism in 2015 when I joined the Board of Directors at Tangled Art + Disability in Toronto. In 2016, I spearheaded the organization Access Visual Art to promote barrier-free galleries in Ontario in partnership with AccessTO. In 2018 I cochaired ArtsBuild Ontario's Accessibility Advisory Committee which produced a webinar series and toolkit for Ontario's public galleries.

Since 1983, I have worked in the Canadian visual art sector as an artist, curator, writer, consultant and founder of Akimbo Art Promotions. In 2017, I was awarded the RCA Medal by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts for my service and contributions to the visual arts in Canada and in 2020 I received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ontario Association of Art Galleries.

Kim Fullerton (she/her), Toronto, Ontario

Giannone Petricone Architects is founded on a commitment to design excellence at every scale of occupation. Critical to its measure is the universality of its reach, its inclusion, and its durability for lasting impact on future generations.

We resist a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in favour of a design specificity that is tailored to urban opportunities, project objectives, and a multivalent public made of diverse individuals with diverse needs. At the centre of this work is acknowledging the power of removing barriers for an integrated accessibility that is inseparable from all aspects of a project. In this way, accessibility cannot be designed as an accommodation; rather, it must be seminal and central to the spatial experience.

Whether designing furnishings or interiors, buildings, or new urban communities, we take-on the responsibility to shape the city at every scale and understand that quality design is essential for the wellbeing and inclusion of every citizen. Designing for diversity, equity, inclusion, and durability are at the core of this mandate. A seamless, universal accessibility that creatively exceeds legislated standards, makes it possible.

Ralph Giannone & Pina Petricone, Founding Partners, Giannone Petricone Associates

Greenwin is proud to support the ULI Toronto-supported Accelerating Accessibility Coalition because we understand that accessible housing is not only a moral imperative but also a smart investment in our collective future. When we prioritize accessibility in housing, we create communities where everyone can thrive.

This not only enhances the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also fosters a more vibrant and diverse society for all.

Since our establishment in 1948, Greenwin has been committed to providing quality rental communities for all individuals across Ontario. Our firm belief is that everyone, regardless of ability, deserves to experience inclusivity within our organization and at our properties. We are committed to upholding equal rights and opportunities for every individual, ensuring that our buildings, facilities, and services are designed to accommodate diverse needs. We recognize that achieving true accessibility requires ongoing dedication and collaboration, and we are proud to stand alongside the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition in advancing this crucial mission.

Accessible housing isn't just a necessity for some; it's a fundamental right that benefits everyone. A truly inclusive society is one where individuals of all ages and abilities can fully participate, including having access to homes that are barrier-free.

Jenn Green, Director, Affordable Housing & Corporate Social Responsibility, Greenwin

GWL Realty Advisors is driven by our core values: integrity, ambition, empathy, and creativity. We believe that these values define who we are and guide our interactions with partners, clients, residents, and employees. Our commitment to empathy underscores our understanding of the diverse needs and concerns of those we serve.

By recognizing and prioritizing what matters to others, we establish a foundation for fostering meaningful connections, reaching mutually beneficial agreements, and ultimately delivering results that matter.

We acknowledge the responsibility to continually enhance our offerings within existing structures while envisioning a future where accessibility is paramount. This commitment and joining the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC) aligns with our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles and serves as a testament to our dedication to fostering a more inclusive and accessible environment.

We take pride in deepening our commitment to accessibility through our collaboration with the AAC and encourage others to unite with us in our collective mission of building a more accessible Canada. Together, we can make a lasting impact and contribute to a society where inclusivity is not just a goal but a reality for all.

Glenn Way, President, GWL Realty Advisors

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is deeply committed to its mission of helping working families build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable homeownership. We focus on creative solutions to address the housing affordability crisis in Toronto, Brampton, Caledon, York Region, and Durham Region. Since 1988, Habitat GTA has built over 25 new communities, providing a hand up to more than 500 families so parents and children can have a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.

Recognizing that equitable access to housing, specifically through the lens of accessibility, is a core building block of inclusive communities, Habitat for Humanity GTA collaborates with various stakeholders, including government bodies, builders, developers, and the public, to address systemic barriers. In collaboration with our government partners, such as CMHC, we actively seek to create homes that are accessible to all.

Through providing accessible housing options, Habitat for Humanity GTA aspires to contribute to the overall well-being and dignity of its partner families.

As an example, our Old Weston Road development in Toronto includes four fully accessible units out of 20. We are very conscious of the fact that we have much to learn, and we are eager to both endorse and be a signatory of this incredibly important coalition.

As a member of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, Habitat for Humanity GTA looks forward to collaborating with like-minded organizations and advocating to accelerate progress toward a more accessible and inclusive future for all Canadians. We very much look forward to being part of this important organization and movement.

**Ene Underwood, CEO and Emily Rossini, Director of Planning
Habitat for Humanity GTA**

Harrison's Hope is pleased to submit this Statement of Support for ULI Toronto's Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

After seeing the LinkedIn post regarding the recent tour of the Lou Fruitman Reena Residence, we were excited about the powerful demonstration of the potential for truly accessible and inclusive multiunit housing. Reena has created a model that moves beyond compliance to foster an environment where residents with diverse abilities and challenges can genuinely thrive—both within their homes and as integrated members of their broader community.

At Harrison's Hope, we believe that accessible housing is a foundational requirement for social equity and community resilience. The design principles, integrated community services, and robust social programming witnessed at Lou Fruitman are precisely the elements needed to ensure people of all abilities have the opportunity to live full, independent, meaningful and dignified lives. This model proves that the real estate industry in conjunction with inclusion informed organizations can—and must—develop housing solutions that support the well-being and success of all residents.

Harrison's Hope stands firmly to its commitment to universal design and meaningful access. We stand ready to collaborate with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to promote and implement these best practices across the development community, ensuring that accessible housing becomes the standard, not the exception.

Mary Byrnes, Founder & Executive Director, Harrison's Hope

At HOK, accessible housing is not a special feature, it's a fundamental right.

Our commitment to accessible design is rooted in the belief that everyone deserves a home that supports independence, dignity, and long-term livability, regardless of ability. This philosophy guided our work with The Daniels Corporation on their Accessibility Design Program (ADP), where we developed a comprehensive suite of accessible features for residential units and common areas.

What makes this work meaningful is that accessibility was embedded into the base construction — not treated as an afterthought or an upgrade. These homes are not only designed with wheelchair users in mind, but also respond to a broader spectrum of needs, including visual impairments and limited dexterity. Our team worked to ensure that every specification — from clearances to appliances and fixtures — was both functional and buildable, making universal design practical and scalable.

For me personally, accessible housing represents the future of inclusive design. It means building communities where people can age in place, invite guests with different mobility needs, and feel a sense of belonging in their environment. It's about creating spaces that respect and reflect the full range of human experience.

At HOK, we see accessible housing not as a niche solution, but as a necessary standard — one that elevates quality of life and fosters true equity in the built environment.

Laura Jones, Senior Principal | Regional Leader of Hospitality, Canada, HOK

At Human Space, we are a global collaborative of experts and specialists working with place makers and city builders to create spaces for all people. We believe in a human-centred approach that considers people first and incorporates the broadest perspectives to arrive at better solutions.

This means pursuing a comprehensive approach to community building and design that includes accessibility, wellness and inclusion as essential components to creating safe, equitable and resilient built environments.

As a consultancy of BDP Quadrangle, we work across various sectors and across the globe to collectively raise the bar for building a more inclusive and accessible environment. We recognize the privilege, and responsibility we have within the architectural and design community to shape the built environment.

We all have a role to play in creating more accessible housing and within our various spheres of influence believe that we can all be part of the solution. What will your contribution be?

Lorene Casiez, Accessibility and Wellness Lead Senior Associate, Human Space, a consultancy of BDP Quadrangle*

New findings from the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) showed that 27% of Canadians aged 15 years and older, or 8.0 million people, had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. We know disability is also more prevalent as people age and a majority of older adults in Canada are sharing their desire to stay living in their homes as they age.

The existing housing stock falls short of meeting the accessibility needs of our current population, and the basic human right to adequate housing is not being met for many equity-deserving groups.

It is through collective action such as demonstrated by the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, that will undoubtedly address this Accessible Housing Crisis, with measurable and collaborative actions.

Incluzia's vision is to reach and maintain a sustainable state in Canada where accessible housing options are equitable and available to all Canadians who need or desire them and all systemic barriers are removed. Our mission is to collaborate with stakeholders and engage older adults and people with disabilities to inform the development of technology-based innovations and training aimed at creating equitable and accessible housing options for all Canadians who need or desire them.

Incluzia is committed to engaging in collective action with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and its stakeholders as well as learning from and contributing to the Accessibility Toolbox to share knowledge, resources and move forward the shared priorities of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

Marnie Courage, Accessibility & Inclusion Strategist, Incluzia Inc.

The Intentional Community Consortium (ICC) is a collective of organizations dedicated to pioneering inclusive housing solutions for individuals with developmental disabilities. Our united mission is to ensure that everyone who needs it can live in a supportive and inclusive community that values their contributions and meets their unique needs.

Since our coalition was established, we have been at the forefront of advocating for and implementing innovative housing models that promote inclusivity and independence.

Ontario's current housing crisis for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities demands immediate and focused action. The ICC is committed to bridging this housing gap by fostering partnerships with all levels of government, agencies, and community organizations to create housing solutions that not only meet but exceed the minimum accessibility standards mandated by the current Building Code.

Our collaborative efforts have underscored the critical importance of community engagement early in the planning process to address and remove accessibility barriers. This approach has consistently resulted in meaningful improvements in the living conditions of those we aim to serve, reinforcing our belief in a society that embraces everyone, regardless of ability.

We are enthusiastic about the opportunities for collaboration with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. By working together, we can accelerate the development of accessible, inclusive homes and communities that welcome everyone.

The ICC and its member organizations are ready to lead the way towards a future where inclusive living is not just an ideal, but a reality for all.

Gary Gladstone, Chair, Intentional Community Consortium

As a global health advocate, I deeply believe that accessible housing is a fundamental right and a critical determinant of health. Housing is not just about having a roof over one's head — it is about having a space that is safe, empowering, and conducive to living a dignified life. For individuals with disabilities, accessible housing can be the difference between isolation and participation, dependence and independence.

As someone committed to addressing social determinants of health, I recognize that ensuring equitable access to housing is essential for reducing disparities and fostering inclusive communities. Accessible housing is a cornerstone of well-being and a tangible representation of a society that values diversity and inclusion.

By supporting initiatives to improve accessible housing, we acknowledge the intersection between health, equity, and human rights. We create environments where all individuals, regardless of ability, can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. Accessible housing is not just about transforming buildings; it's about transforming lives.

Thuvaraha Jeyakumaran, Toronto, Ontario

Accessibility in the built environment is inherently complex shaped by a web of overlapping laws, codes, standards, and initiatives. At Jensen Hughes, we are deeply committed to advancing accessible housing because we believe that everyone, regardless of age or ability, deserves to live with comfort, dignity, and independence. By prioritizing inclusive, future-ready design, we aim to remove barriers and create spaces that empower people to thrive, not just adapt to their surroundings.

Our team offers end-to-end support for accessible and adaptable housing projects focusing on regulatory compliance and forward-thinking design. We work closely with developers, architects, engineers, and other stakeholders to address complex accessibility requirements and ensure a seamless human-centered approach throughout the project lifecycle.

Since 1939, Jensen Hughes has been a leader in fire protection engineering – first in the United States and now worldwide. Today, our work extends far beyond our roots, encompassing accessibility and universal design, risk and hazard analysis, process safety, forensic investigations, security risk, emergency, digital innovation, and more.

We are proud to partner with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, united by a shared vision for a more accessible Canada.

Samantha Awad, Project Consultant, RHFAC, JENSEN HUGHES

I am a Barrier Free Real Estate Specialist, and my focus is helping people with disabilities buy and sell accessible homes.

I work with people of all ages to help them find a home where they can live safely and independently. And I help homeowners sell their accessible homes to the right buyers.

One of the biggest challenges in my business is finding accessible rental units. Demand far exceeds supply and I've seen first hand the impact that a shortage of rental housing options have on my clients. I've had clients in their 30's living in a retirement home because that was the only accessible accommodation option available. I've had many clients living in a hotel because that was the only location with a roll in shower. In all of these instances, a suitable accessible rental apartment was not available. We need more accessible housing. I support the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and its mission to significantly increase the supply of accessible housing.

[Jeffrey Kerr](#), Broker*, Barrier Free Real Estate Specialist, RE/MAX Prime Properties Unique Group

Killam Apartment REIT is eager to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. As one of Canada's largest housing providers, we recognize our responsibility to ensure that our properties offer accessible homes for all.

We believe that our experience in both developing and managing apartments uniquely positions us to contribute meaningfully to the Coalition's mission. By embedding accessibility within our operations, we aim to create positive impacts for our tenants and the communities we serve. We look forward to collaborating with fellow members of the Coalition to explore creative solutions and best practices that enhance accessibility, understanding the importance of designing spaces that meet the diverse needs of Canada's population.

Mairi McKinnon, Manager, ESG, Killam Apartment REIT

At Kindred Works, we know that accessible homes contribute to vibrant, diverse communities. We develop and manage low carbon rental housing that is beautiful and functional, thoughtfully designed to meet a wide range of accessibility needs. We recognize that people with accessibility needs are not just beneficiaries of inclusive design but are valued contributors to the neighbourhoods in which we all live, work, and play.

By joining the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, we are proud to align with like-minded organizations and individuals who share our collective goal of making greater accessibility the standard in housing development.

Through collective action, we can ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, has access to homes that meet their needs and support their ability to live independent, fulfilling lives and to thrive in their communities.

Janet McCausland, Head of Corporate and External Affairs, Kindred Works

At Kirkor Architects and Planners, we are proud to stand alongside industry leaders in joining the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. As an architectural practice who has worked principally over the past 45 years with the residential development industry, we truly recognize both the responsibility and opportunity to influence the built environment in ways that make housing more inclusive for all Canadians.

We approach accessibility not as an add-on, but as an essential part of good design. Through our work, we have consistently demonstrated that accessibility features can be incorporated into new housing in ways that are efficient, cost-effective, and responsive to real needs – especially when these considerations are embedded early in the design process and are integral to the many decisions which shape our new communities.

The additional costs are often modest, yet the long-term benefits for residents and communities are profound.

Our projects reflect a belief that well-designed homes, at scales large and small, should support people – individuals and their support networks – at every stage of life and ability.

As the population changes and demand for inclusive housing increases, the development industry has an important role to play in shaping a future where people can live independently, safely, and with dignity.

By joining this coalition, we are committing to continued learning, collaboration, and innovation – so that the spaces we create are not only functional, but equitable and future-ready. Accessibility is essential to building resilient, thriving communities, and we are committed to making it a fundamental part of our design practice.

On behalf of the partnership at KIRKOR Architects and Planners,

Brent Whitby, Partner, Architect, and Mahzad Yalpanian, Associate, Architect, RHFAC Professional, KIRKOR Architects and Planners

For close to 50 years, L'Arche Toronto has brought to life the mission of L'Arche, where women and men, with and without intellectual disabilities, create mutually beneficial relationships in the community by engaging with a wide circle of family, friends, volunteers, and neighbors. Building relationships and sharing life are L'Arche cornerstones.

The necessity for fully accessible and affordable homes is at the heart of the current and ever-increasing housing crisis for people with intellectual disabilities. It is vital that key stakeholders come together— that people with intellectual disabilities, developers, and human service organizations share best practices, break down barriers, and generate innovative and effective strategies to address this crisis.

Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states in Article 19 that people with disabilities have an equal right to appropriate housing.

It is paramount that people have access to accessible and affordable housing in neighborhoods that enhance individuals' feelings of belonging and safety.

"We are part of the community. There are a lot of things around -- homes, the bank, grocery stores, restaurants, drug stores -- we want to be where the community is." - Stephen Richardson, L'Arche Toronto, Core Member

Only if we all work together and all voices are represented in these conversations can we create a world where everyone belongs.

Cassie Willson, Executive Director, L'Arche Toronto Homes Inc.*

I am passionate about the built environment. As someone who loves beauty and admires great design, I feel that communities and individuals thrive when people live, work and play in great environments.

As a person with a neuromuscular disorder, I have lived experience of feeling marginalized and excluded by the built environment.

My wish is that noone should feel unwelcome or that they do not belong.

And I believe that it is time for the design, architecture, building, construction and development communities to step up and help create and re-create spaces and places that work for everyone.

Yazmine Laroche, Ottawa, Ontario*

At Level Playing Field Inc., we focus on delivering practical, proven solutions to ensure that developments are inclusive and accessible to all. Accessible housing is a critical component of creating environments where people of all ages and abilities can live with independence, dignity, and fully participation in their communities.

Our approach goes beyond just compliance with building codes, as we emphasize the importance of equity through Universal Design that's included from the earliest stages of planning and development. We collaborate with developers, architects, and other stakeholders to ensure that accessibility and visit-ability are integrated into every aspect of housing projects, creating homes that successfully meet the diverse needs of all residents.

The current crisis in accessible and affordable housing requires immediate action, and we are committed to working with our partners to address these challenges head-on. By implementing thoughtful, user-centered design, we help clients create housing that not only accommodates but welcomes individuals with disabilities.

We are proud to contribute to the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition's efforts, using our expertise to close the gap between what is currently being built and what is actually needed to create the inclusive future for housing needed in Canada.

Darby Lee Young, ADAC (She/her), Founder & Principal, Level Playing Field Inc. An Accessibility Consulting Agency

At LGA Architectural Partners, as designers of community and residential buildings, we recognize that we have a responsibility to design for inclusiveness that transcends simply accommodation. Accessibility should be seamlessly integrated with a building's function and architectural quality. By privileging the experiences of those who are differently abled, we believe we can create buildings that are responsive to the needs of that constituency.

Our approach to all our projects is to consider barrier-free code requirements and AODA standards through the lens of universal design: that is to consider equability, flexibility, simplicity and intuition. We value both the demonstrable metrics for accessibility but also, the perceptual and experiential such as low physical effort strategies. Inclusive design is not simply the application of a set of prescriptive rules and guidelines.

Inclusive design is, simply put, good design that is achieved through inclusive, flexible and comprehensive principles rather than a checklist.

We design spaces that amplify the impact of forward-thinking organizations while contributing to the healthy growth and vibrancy of the communities they serve. LGA's approach to accessibility is based on Kat Holmes' lens of temporary, situational, and permanent needs. This approach leads us to well-designed spaces and buildings that meet the needs of all users by eliminating physical, cognitive, and perceptual barriers.

The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and the Accessibility Toolbox is a valuable resource for the latest standards, codes and requirements to ensure our projects are always reflecting the latest best-of practices. LGA is looking forward to supporting Accelerating Accessibility Coalition in their mission to promote accessibility in built projects in Canada.

Janna Levitt, Partner, LGA Architectural Partners

Anthony Lue Consulting Inc. and The Anthony Lue Foundation are committed to advancing equality and access for all. Our mission is to empower people with disabilities to lead active, healthy lives through recreation, technology, and mobility aids - while acknowledging the significant barriers that still exist in our world like housing. Safe, accessible housing should be a fundamental right, not a privilege. Yet, far too many are forced to rely on others simply because accessible housing is in short supply.

My own journey reflects this reality. One morning, I left my home, unaware it would be the last time I could truly live there. After sustaining a spinal injury, zoning laws prevented my childhood home from being renovated for accessibility. The result was a separation from family, friends, and the community I loved. Sixteen years later, the shortage of accessible housing persists across our society. Although my experience is just one of many, initiatives like the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition offer real hope for a future where accessibility is the standard.

I am hopeful for a world where universal design is integrated into every space, where accessibility isn't an afterthought, but the norm. One of my favourite sayings is, "If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together!" - African Proverb. By collaborating with others who share this vision of accessibility and inclusion we are creating a momentum that is both powerful and unstoppable!

Anthony Lue, Anthony Lue Consulting Inc. and The Anthony Lue Foundation

Founded over 70 years ago, March of Dimes Canada is a national charity committed to championing equity, empowering ability, and creating real change that will help people living with disabilities across the country unlock the richness of their lives. As a leading service provider, resource, and advocate, we have a long history of delivering supportive housing services and accessible home modifications.

In our 2021-24 Strategic Plan, we further committed to ensure people with disabilities can live safely and independently, by promoting increased access to appropriate, affordable housing solutions that give people more choice and control in where they live.

Through our many decades of experience, we have seen firsthand the life-changing impact that accessible, supportive housing can have for individuals and families. When a person with a disability has access to affordable, accessible housing and the in-home supports to live independently, it is truly transformative: it opens up opportunity, enables dignity, and unlocks participation and joy.

Unfortunately, far too many people with disabilities continue to wait years for a home that meets their needs, in the meantime struggling to make ends meet or living in unsafe conditions. In this way, we have a front row seat as to how the deepening housing crisis in Toronto, Ontario and Canada is impacting some of our society's most vulnerable people.

As a major supportive housing provider, we often work in partnership with developers and others who share the goal of increasing accessible housing stock for all who need it, now and in the future.

We are pleased to be joining the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and are looking forward to continuing to work with advocates and community organizations, builders and government to develop creative, practical, and thoughtful solutions to truly accelerate accessibility in housing.

Len Baker, President and CEO, March of Dimes Canada*

*At National Homes, we're committed to changing the way people think about homes. We believe the needs of the customer should be the driving force behind every home we build. We think about how people are actually going to live in their homes. Then we design them from the inside out. It's a different way of thinking. But then, we don't measure ourselves against what other builders have always done. Because, at National, **YOU ARE THE BLUEPRINT**, our commitment to creating inclusive, vibrant communities aligns seamlessly with the mission of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC).*

We believe that the true value of our developments is measured by their ability to serve all members of society equitably. By joining the AAC, we would be proud to contribute to a collective effort that addresses accessibility challenges with innovative and practical solutions.

The importance of accessibility in the built environment cannot be overstated. Ensuring that our homes and communities are accessible to everyone is not just a responsibility but a vital component of our vision for a more inclusive society. Through the AAC, we aim to enhance our understanding and implementation of accessibility standards, ensuring our projects reflect the diverse needs of our residents.

We look forward to collaborating with industry peers within the AAC, sharing knowledge, and fostering advancements that make our communities more inclusive and welcoming. National Homes is dedicated to integrating these principles into our designs, creating spaces where everyone can thrive.

**Deena Pantalone, Managing Partner | Chief Innovation Officer,
Venturon | National Homes**

Northcrest Developments is leading the redevelopment of the 370-acre Downsview Airport Lands into a series of vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods connected by green space. Our vision is to create a place that is welcoming to all, regardless of age, ability or income. Over the last three years we have been engaging with local residents and businesses, community service agencies and non-profits, indigenous rights-holders, and stakeholders from across the city to ensure our plans are responsive to the diverse needs and priorities in our area.

To us, accessibility is an essential ingredient in building thriving neighbourhoods and it will closely guide our decision making as we develop a city-within-a-city in Toronto's north end over the next number of decades.

We look forward to collaborating with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition as we continue this important work.

Derek Goring, Chief Executive Officer, Northcrest Developments*

Pedesting is a mobile app that helps people with a disability find accessible routes through our cities and buildings. We are committed to assisting the community of people with a disability as they navigate around the built environment while gaining an education, becoming employed, enjoying a meal in a restaurant, and visiting a sports or cultural venue.

Accessible housing is very top of mind to our company because one's residence should be a safe harbour to return to after a day in school or at work.

Since about 15% of the Canadian population has a mobility or visual limitation, we specifically maintain that the same ratio of new housing developments should provide accessible units (15%).

Pedesting believes that accessible housing should be significantly increased in our Canadian cities.

The Pedesting team is also interested in working towards some accessible housing development in transit-oriented developments and near the downtown cores of cities as these are typically pedestrian focused areas.

Our goal with Pedesting is to provide a tool that persons with disabilities can use to navigate through the built environment. As the disabled community becomes better represented in the day-to-day activities in which we all partake, it seems reasonable to create accessible housing options that are available to this important segment of the housing market.

Erin Shilliday, Architect, AAA, Chief Creative Officer, Pedesting Corporation

Percy Ellis (James Burton and Emery Daniels) has been in the business of building purpose built rental apartments for over 14 years. Through more than 40 projects we have learned how to identify what matters to us and our tenants the most: creating happy, healthy, and equitable communities.

We aim to be a force for good in our communities and accessibility is a critical factor in being that positive force.

From our experience over the last couple of years, we have identified that simply meeting the accessibility requirements in the building code is not enough to make spaces accessible and help get those in need into those spaces. Often these spaces just end up being built bigger in size but are not essentially equipped with the needed accessibility features. The process of finishing off the fit-out for full accessibility often then gets overlooked in favour of a speedy, less costly leasing process to a tenant that does not require accessibility.

The financial pressures of this business and other priorities often take over.

Additionally, it can be difficult to reach those who are actually in need of these spaces, which is another reason that the path of least resistance is often taken; leading to the space being used just as any other non-accessible space and results in missing the opportunity to meet the originally intended need.

As developers, we feel that real estate can be used as a tool to create huge positive social impacts and tackling unaffordability and its effect on people with disabilities is part of what's needed right now in solving this housing crisis in an equitable way.

James Burton, Co-founder, Percy Ellis*

I, Lara Pinchbeck, am committed to advancing accessible and inclusive housing for all people in Canada. As a Professional Human Ecologist and Design Anthropologist, my work centers on Universal Design in the built environment—ensuring that our homes, neighbourhoods, and communities are welcoming and functional for people of all abilities, ages, and circumstances.

Since the 1990s, I have been deeply engaged in researching, designing, developing, and advocating for inclusive housing solutions for people with disabilities. My projects have included housing for older adults, multigenerational and congregate living models, community initiatives for neurodivergent youth and young adults, live-work options for people with mobility challenges, and homes for those with complex medical needs. I have also supported the creation of inclusive play areas for children with visual impairments, therapeutic landscapes for people living with mental health challenges and addictions, and community environments that support those who have experienced trauma.

Through my professional practice and collaborations, I strive to make inclusivity a core principle in every stage of the design and development process—from engagement to evaluation. I contribute my experience to broader community efforts such as the development of accessibility standards, design assessments, inclusive policy frameworks, user engagement campaigns, and project evaluations.

I am excited about the development of the Accessibility Toolkit and keen on ensuring that it can be successfully implemented into all residential projects. Every person deserves the dignity of living in a space that supports their independence, well-being, and sense of belonging. I am proud to support this shared vision and to work alongside others dedicated to making Canada inclusive for all.

Lara Pinchbeck, Lara Pinchbeck: Research + Design

At Reena, we are committed to creating inclusive communities for people with developmental disabilities, providing much-needed support services and advocacy to enhance the quality of life of individuals and their families. Since our inception in 1973, our mission has been to advocate for the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in every aspect of community life.

The housing crisis in Ontario for individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities is an issue that requires our collective attention and action. It is crucial that we come together to bridge the housing gap with accessible solutions and comprehensive support that surpass the minimum standards set by the current Building Code.

Our successful previous experiences have taught us the importance of collaborating with developers from the outset to eliminate accessibility barriers. Such proactive measures have proven to significantly improve the quality of life for the people we serve. At Reena, we envision a world where inclusivity is the norm, and every individual is valued and belongs.

I am excited about the potential of working alongside the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. Together, we can make significant strides in creating homes and communities that are truly accessible and welcoming for all.

Reena is dedicated to this cause and looks forward to contributing to a future where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can live independently and with dignity.

Bryan Keshen, CEO, Reena

The Regroupement des organismes pour aînés et aînées du sud-ouest de Montréal (ROPASOM) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life of seniors in the South-West. Its objectives are to help seniors improve their living conditions by offering them services such as support, referral, information, counselling and education.

We are aware that over the next 25 years, the population aged 85+ is expected to triple (Source: StatsCanada). In the 65+ age group, falls are the cause of 87% of injury-related hospitalizations, 95% of hip fractures and cost more than \$5.6 billion a year. (Source: Public Health Agency of Canada).

The design of one's home can have an impact on physical and mental health: a step or threshold at the shower entrance, a slippery floor covering, a toilet that's too low... These are all unnecessary obstacles incorporated during traditional construction.

Unfortunately, tens of thousands of people have no choice but to live in homes that don't meet their needs and where they can't live safely. A universally accessible (UA) dwelling, designed without obstacles, will adapt to meet the evolving needs of the person over the years.

Federal Housing Advocate Marie-Josée Houle sounded the alarm in her open letter of May 22, 2024, saying that "Swift action is needed if Canada is to meet its obligations under the National Housing Strategy Act and achieve its goal of becoming a barrier-free society."

The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition is a much-needed opportunity to bring together architects, developers, industry experts interested in accessibility to work with disability and seniors' advocates. It is an opportunity to innovate together and to create beautiful home environments that will appeal to the mainstream public while accommodating the needs of as wide a spectrum of users as possible, regardless of age or level of mobility/disability.

We look forward to working with the AAC towards this goal.

Jody Negley, Founding member, Comité des influenceurs et influenceuses du design universel en habitation du Regroupement des organismes pour aînés et aînées du sud-ouest de Montréal (ROPASOM)

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988 following Rick Hansen's epic two-year, two-month, and two-day Man In Motion World Tour. RHF is a registered Canadian charity with a mission focused on ensuring people with disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing are not left behind.

Now more than ever, we need to encourage decision makers such as building owners, operators, industry influencers, architects and designers to view their spaces through an accessibility lens to truly understand what people with disabilities experience. The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) is a national measurement and recognition tool that rates the meaningful accessibility of buildings and sites based on the perspective of persons with varying disabilities.

RHFAC is meant to be used as a complement to help to fill the critical gaps that exist between codes and the real needs of users to give site owners and operators the opportunity to apply innovation to enhance accessibility beyond code compliance.

Accessibility and inclusion are not a fad; in fact, they're growing in importance. Working with partners is absolutely imperative to the success of the RHFAC program and to address the need for an accessible Canada. We are looking forward to working with the new Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to discuss the potential development of a toolbox to provide industry with tangible solutions to address the need for improved accessibility in their spaces.

Greatly improved accessibility will result in a Canada where everyone can contribute and participate. It's the sustainable, resilient, and equitable future we are all working towards.

Sarah McCarthy, Vice President Strategic Initiatives, Rick Hansen Foundation*

The Responsible Personal Accessibility in Toronto Housing (R-PATH) Committee is a group of Toronto Community Housing tenants who live with physical disabilities that advocate for accessible housing. We recognize there is insufficient fully accessible housing with adequate build standards to accommodate currently used mobility devices and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

People with disabilities need the support of organizations who can/will initiate change so they have choices in places to live and can age in place longer. We want to continue to be a part of the change.

We have co-authored the Toronto Community Housing Accessibility Build Standards for new and existing builds. You can download the standards at: <https://www.torontohousing.ca/accessibility-in-built-environment-policy>.

Cathy Birch, founder and chair of R-PATH, is a recipient of the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility from the Province of Ontario in December 2022.

We support all work with AAC that will provide equal opportunity for people with all kinds of disabilities to live anywhere, not in just a few isolated communities. The lived experience expertise is critical to effective usable change and we believe the ACC will help move this change forward so people with disabilities can age in place longer and have safer homes.

Cathy Birch, Founder and Chair, R-PATH Committee*

Safehaven emerged 30 years ago to provide exceptional care to children with complex care needs in a home-like setting. We have 6 locations in the GTA, with more on the horizon, that support over 200 clients per year. We have now expanded to meet the growing need of supporting youth and adults with disabilities. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for our clients, where they can live with dignity and respect.

As an advocate for inclusivity, Safehaven recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts in driving meaningful change.

The Accelerating Accessibility Coalition's dedication to fostering partnerships among industry leaders, service providers, innovators, and advocates to build more accessible housing aligns seamlessly with our values. By working together, we can harness collective expertise to break down barriers and pave the way for a more accessible future.

Susan Bisailon, RN, BN, MSc (Nursing), ICD.D, CHE, President & Chief Executive Officer, Safehaven

We would like to express our support for the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and its mission to advance universal access and inclusion across Canada's built environment.

Accessibility has always been more than a professional priority for me, having a close family member who is wheelchair-bound has given me firsthand insight into the everyday challenges faced when buildings are designed without true inclusivity in mind.

We believe that every balcony and building element should contribute to an equitable and liveable environment for all. We have successfully advocated for features such as minimum turning circles, level thresholds, and compliance with lifetime homes criteria to be built into balcony design standards globally and glad to have seen it mandated in several European countries now. Yet accessibility extends beyond these technical details — it's about ensuring independence, dignity, and equal opportunity for every person interacting with the spaces we help create.

Commitment to accessibility should be embedded in our design philosophy worldwide and industry wide collaboration between architects, developers, GC's, manufacturers and policymakers Canada wide will undoubtedly be the key for building the momentum. We support the promotion of meaningful, practical and scalable accessibility solutions that enhance comfort and usability for residents of all ages and abilities.

We commend the Coalition's leadership in driving collective progress and look forward to contributing our expertise and advocacy to shape a more inclusive built environment across Canada.

Nick Haughton, ESG Director, Sapphire Balconies (Canada) Inc.

A critical component of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG), accessibility initiatives are embedded within each of RioCan's ESG pillars: resilient business, purposeful impact, and strategic partnerships. We constantly strive to create positive impact for our environment, people and communities by supporting the way in which we operate through purposeful design and economic and social growth initiatives, as well as monitoring and improving our standing portfolio's accessibility to ensure that our assets meet the diverse needs of Canada's population.

RioCan's developments are strategically designed to contribute to the growth of complete communities – places where homes, jobs, schools, community services, parks and recreation facilities are accessible to all.

To increase our community impact, we leverage partnerships such as our connection to the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. By working with and learning from the Coalition's members, together, we can build more accessible and inclusive communities.

Anton Katipunan, Vice President, Development, RioCan REIT

Accessibility in the built environment is at the heart of what we do here at Shift. We specialize in modifying homes and spaces to meet the needs of people of all abilities, with a focus on safety, comfort, and long-term usability.

From widening doorways, creating zero-threshold showers and installing grab bars to retrofitting elevators and reworking layouts for better mobility, our work is about more than construction — it's about removing barriers and empowering people to live fully in their homes.

We take a hands-on, collaborative approach to every project, working closely with homeowners, caregivers, and healthcare professionals to create tailored solutions that support real-life needs. Whether it's a full-home renovation or a focused upgrade to a bathroom or entrance, we prioritize functionality, craftsmanship, and thoughtful design at every stage. Our crews are trained not just in skilled trades, but in understanding how to make spaces more accessible, intuitive, and welcoming for everyone who uses them.

Creating accessible housing throughout Canada isn't just important for individuals with disabilities or mobility challenges—it benefits all of us. Families can stay in their homes longer, caregivers can support loved ones more easily, and communities become more inclusive and resilient. As our population ages and our housing needs shift, accessible design is a proactive solution that supports health, independence, and quality of life on a national scale.

That's why we're committed to leading this change—one renovation at a time. By combining technical expertise with empathy and a deep respect for the people we serve, we're helping build a future where every Canadian can feel safe, supported, and at home.

Josh Peill, Shift Accessibility Contractors Ltd.

At SHS Consulting, we are a team of urbanists and strategists creating solutions to foster community inclusion and housing opportunities for all. Accessibility is at the core of our work and begins with understanding and listening to lived experience and translating that into solutions. Accessibility must be intentional and permeate throughout the design process from early project conception through to construction, and to occupancy where its impact can be felt as soon as tenants interact with their new home.

Tristina Sinopoli, Principal, Real Estate Development, SHS Consulting

Spinal Cord Injury Ontario (SCIO) supports people with spinal cord injury (SCI) and other disabilities, assisting with service, support, and advocacy throughout all life transitions. Among everything, accessible and affordable housing is one of our communities' largest barriers. SCIO is pleased to be a founding member of the coalition to bring forward meaningful opportunity to improve accessible housing in Ontario and beyond.

Peter Athanasopoulos, Director, Public Policy, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario*

At Spotlight Development, we believe that housing is not just about buildings - it's about dignity, opportunity, and community. As a developer committed to creating inclusive, affordable, and sustainable housing across Ontario, we are proud to express our interest in joining the ULI Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

Through our flagship initiative, The Inclusive, we are building Canada's largest series of affordable housing developments that embed wrap-around supports into the community fabric. Everyone is welcome in our model: at least 10% of suites in each project are intentionally dedicated to Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+ residents, and members of the Black community.

We recognize that accessible housing must go beyond physical design - it must reflect the diverse needs of those most often left out of traditional real estate.

We are currently collaborating with the CNIB to ensure our future buildings support residents who are blind or vision-impaired through tactile navigation tools, smart technology, and barrier-free design standards that go beyond code.

We are also proud to work alongside Veterans' House Canada, Homeless Connect Toronto, Enska Advisors, and the BlackNorth Initiative to co-design housing that addresses intergenerational poverty, systemic exclusion, and the lived experience of disability and trauma.

We know that accessibility must be embedded at the planning stage-not as a retrofit or afterthought. As such, we are eager to learn from and contribute to the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition's work to develop tools, policies, and practices that scale accessible housing across Toronto and beyond. We also want to explore new strategies to increase the supply of accessible units - particularly within the affordable and supportive housing landscape, where supply is critically lacking.

We believe real estate can be a tool for empowerment - and we want to help lead the shift toward a built environment where everyone belongs. We look forward to collaborating with ULI and coalition members to accelerate accessibility as a foundational principle of housing development.

Sherry Larjani, President & Founder, Spotlight Development Inc.

There's a general lack of understanding about the importance of barrier free and inclusive spaces. StopGap has identified the need for elevating our collective awareness about our human right to equal access and the tremendous value associated with having a space that everyone can enjoy. Our programming is rooted in awareness raising, meeting people where they are at in their learning journey, and building community.

Disability is part of human nature. At some point in our lives we will all experience a shift in the way we navigate our homes, community, and beyond.

We all have unique and equally valuable lived experiences, therefore having as many voices contributing to the creation of a built environment is crucial. My own lived experience, gained from my adventures using a wheelchair, has led me to understand that many of the design features that help make my life easier generally make life easier for many others.

I'm honoured to share my perspective and broaden it through our collaborative work together.

Luke Anderson, Executive Director, StopGap Foundation*

SvN Architects + Planners is proud to affirm our commitment to the principles and objectives of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition. As a regenerative practice, we understand that the design of our environments is deeply entwined with the well-being of the communities that occupy them. We aim to build connections between people and place, in order to make life better for all, and we know that accessible homes and spaces play a crucial role in this mission.

We are committed to creating spaces that are equitable, inclusive, responsible, and connective— spaces that welcome everyone, foster community on multiple scales, and establish meaningful relationships. We recognize that the professions of architecture, planning, urban design, and landscape architecture have historically played an unwitting part in creating barriers for persons with disabilities, and we commit to dismantling these barriers. We seek to build cities, homes, and public spaces where people of all ages and abilities can participate fully in society.

For the last thirty years, SvN and our predecessor firms have been responsible for the design of over 5,000 social housing units, which have served a wide variety of households, including persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses; ageing populations; former psychiatric patients; refugees; aboriginal and non-aboriginal chronically homeless singles, couples, and families; and large and small families often living in mixed residences. As a firm, we have dedicated considerable resources to equity-based placemaking, building relationships with non-profit housing groups, Indigenous communities, faith-based organizations, and charities.

We look forward to collaborating with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to address the pressing need for accessible housing.

**Aaron Budd, Principal and Director, Regenerative Practice, SvN
Architects + Planners**

Sunnybrook Research Institute (SRI), the research arm of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, is developing innovations in care for the more than 1.3 million patients the hospital cares for annually. Housing is a health issue and a human right.

For patients who are older adults or who have experienced a life-changing injury or disease, the need for accessible and affordable housing solutions that link them to the right services to let them live independently is critical for their health and wellbeing.

As the population ages, and the demand for housing increases, accessible housing will be critical to enable people to participate in their community and to age in place.

Researchers at SRI are committed to identifying ways to generate evidence to co-create housing solutions so that everyone can have a home that respects their dignity and independence.

SRI is pleased to support the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to achieve its goals of making physical accessibility in new housing a greater priority, which will lead to a housing landscape that values diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Sander L. Hitzig, Program Research Director & Senior Scientist, St.
John's Rehab Research Program, Sunnybrook Research Institute***

The people and organizations that shape our built environment play a huge role in determining who can actively and comfortably participate in society and who is left behind. At TAS, we recognize that real estate can be used as a tool to deliver transformative positive outcomes for communities. We want to build neighbourhoods where people thrive and belong – and designing projects that are healthy, safe, and inclusive is a big part of that.

We're committed to using inclusive design principles that accommodate a range of mental and physical health and accessibility needs.

And we recognize that it's not simply about removing or alleviating barriers for people. It's also about prioritizing their health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for social connection, and making sure they feel welcome.

We're in the early days of our accessibility and inclusion journey, and we know that we can't do it alone. We admire the work of so many in the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, and look forward to tackling this urgent challenge together.

Liza Stiff, VP, Impact Implementation and Innovation, TAS*

Tenblock builds sustainable communities people proudly call home, and our residents enjoy sustainable and healthy living, family-friendly amenities, and a generous public realm. We also work to fulfill our responsibility to build communities that are accessible for residents of all abilities and life stages.

The design and program decisions made during new community development present a unique opportunity, with lasting decisions that will impact residents for decades and beyond. Tenblock seizes this opportunity, working with designers and stakeholders to ensure our communities are free of barriers, supporting residents' abilities to participate fully in society.

Stephen Job, Vice President, Tenblock

We have been building homes and communities for over 38 years. Over those years we have invested significant resources into creating homes that are affordable for both our tenants and homeowners. These initiatives, implemented in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, Woodgreen Community Services, Egale Canada, Peel Non-Profit Housing Corporation and a host of other partners, have made a significant impact.

Until recently, however, we have not put nearly enough effort into ensuring our homes and communities are accessible for people with mobility, visual, auditory and other accessibility challenges.

Our Accessibility Designed Program, launched in 2017 with input and support from StopGap Foundation and BDP Quadrangle, has been an important step in the right direction.

Subsequently, our partnerships with StopGap, L'Arche Toronto, AccessNow, and the Rick Hansen Foundation have taken us further down the road to creating communities that are truly inclusive.

It is time, however, to challenge others within our industry to do the same...to step up on inclusion. Let's do the right thing today, rather than wait until we're required to do so. The Accessibility Toolbox makes it easy to take those important first steps, and the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition provides a broad based community within which knowledge and best practices can be shared.

Together we can create a world in which everyone is welcome everywhere.

Jake Cohen, Chief Operating Officer, The Daniels Corporation*

The Right Fit originated as a multi-agency partnership that provides a community-wide response to the critical shortage of wheelchair accessible housing. The Program connects wheelchair users to affordable, accessible housing along with independent living supports in the Vancouver region of British Columbia. Led by Disability Alliance BC (DABC) in partnership with the Individualized Funding Resource Centre Society (IFRC), the program provides peer-led navigation to wheelchair users and their families, which includes a holistic assessment and the coordination of all their disability support needs (home support, equipment, and assistive technology).

The Right Fit maintains a detailed inventory of accessible units through a standardized Accessibility Checklist.

The program supports housing providers by matching vacant accessible units with wheelchair users in a manner that ensures each match is a “right fit” for the diverse accessibility needs of the tenant(s), thus assuring the effective use of accessible housing stock.

The Right Fit advances accessibility and inclusion by ensuring that construction industry professionals and housing providers understand the impact of accessible housing. The program promotes a steady future supply of accessible, affordable housing through the development of partnerships with local governments and other stakeholders.

Fully wheelchair accessible housing, which is the highest bar of physical accessibility, is a scarce resource that must be accurately identified and quickly filled before housing providers surrender it to the first available, likely able-bodied, tenant. The Right Fit Program provides a person-centered approach focused on finding homes that are affordable, accessible and safe for wheelchair users. The Right Fit aims to be a centre for excellence and a knowledge hub that combines expertise with an understanding that accessibility for people with disabilities requires a holistic approach involving not only design but also addresses all the barriers that impede full inclusion.

The Right Fit recognizes and profiles the fact that the inability to acquire safe, secure, accessible housing constitutes homelessness. Wheelchair users often face intersecting forms of discrimination when trying to navigate the housing market, and The Right Fit Program works to create a more equitable housing situation.

DABC operates on the principle of “Nothing About Us, Without Us” and strives to involve people with lived experience of disability in all steps of decision-making processes.

Isabelle Groc, The Right Fit Program Manager, Disability Alliance BC

ULI Toronto's Accelerating Accessibility Coalition represents a significant and forward-thinking step in advancing inclusive design within the built environment.

The importance of ensuring that the built form supports individuals from all lived experiences, including varying accessibility needs, cannot be overstated. By participating in this coalition, Tridel aligns with the crucial goal of creating environments that are not only accessible but also adaptable to the diverse needs of our communities. This commitment reflects an understanding that accessibility is integral to fostering a more equitable and inclusive society, where all individuals can thrive.

Being a part of this Coalition means having access to the invaluable opportunity to learn from champions in the accessibility space who are at the forefront of innovation. As we recognize the increasing need to plan for aging populations and the necessity of adaptable housing solutions, it is essential that we remain informed about the latest standards and best practices.

By engaging with the coalition, we at Tridel can ensure that our future communities are in alignment with standards that redefine sustainability, health and wellbeing, and accessible design. This proactive approach will enable all in our industry to contribute meaningfully to the evolution of universal design.

Samson Fung, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Tridel

ULI Toronto is a chapter of the global Urban Land Institute which has a mission “to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide”.

We recognize that accessibility is a critical pillar to building equitable communities, and yet it has not always been a hallmark of the development industry. As a broad based, multi-disciplinary industry association with over 2200 members across the GTHA (private and public sectors), ULI Toronto is very pleased to serve as the secretariat and be an active participant in the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition.

We look forward to defining ways that we can leverage our network of professionals and anticipate playing a key role in disseminating the leadership ideas generated by this effort broadly across our many well-subscribed communication channels.

Richard Joy, Executive Director, ULI (Urban Land Institute) Toronto*

The KITE Research Institute is a leading rehabilitation health-research facility with more than 100 scientists dedicated to seeking solutions for those in our community who are living with the effects of disability, illness, injury and aging.

KITE provides validation and testing of assistive devices, mobility products and technologies for health, rehab and aging. This includes neuroprosthetics, rehab robotics, AI for robotics, human-centred design and smart garments for health care.

Our research teams are actively engaged in gathering evidence that guides changes to policy and public opinion with the goal of addressing accessibility challenges. This work has been used to inform changes to the National Building Code of Canada and develop new accessibility standards for outdoor spaces nationwide.

Organizations like the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition are critical to ensuring that everyone has access to inclusive, barrier-free spaces. We are proud to support the ACC and look forward to leveraging our expertise to assist with the development of homes, communities and public spaces that allow everyone, regardless of ability, to live with autonomy and dignity.

Dr. Milos R. Popovic, KITE Research Institute at UHN

The issue of accessible buildings is one that many people might think was addressed long ago in Canada by legislation and building codes, but the reality is that too many people with disabilities are still challenged by barriers both physical and systemic, especially when it comes to residential buildings. Through awareness and anticipation that not all users share the same capacities, these challenges could be mitigated at the building design stage for the construction of accessible housing.

The John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto has evolved from Canada's oldest school of architecture into a multidisciplinary Faculty that today uniquely hosts landscape architecture, urban design, visual studies, and forestry programs, as well as North America's largest program in architecture. As a public institution, we are committed to educating future generations in the principles of inclusion, equity, and social responsibility.

The design of accessible, affordable, and sustainable housing is foundational to our educational mission of generating knowledge toward the creation of inclusive cities and resilient communities.

With housing recognized as a basic human right, the lack of quality accessible homes in our communities is unacceptable.

The goal of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition to champion the creation of healthy, barrier-free housing is an urgent one. Based on my past experience of working with resident stakeholders, community groups and advocacy organizations, as well as with scholars and practitioners, I believe that transformative industry and societal change can be possible through our sustained and collective efforts.

Juan Du, Dean and Professor, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, University of Toronto*

Verve Senior Living is a Canadian-owned developer and operator of retirement residences, currently operating 31 residences in four provinces.

At Verve Senior Living, we are deeply committed to creating vibrant, welcoming communities that prioritize comfort, accessibility, and exceptional living experiences for seniors across Canada. We are excited about the opportunity to join and collaborate with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC) and represent the Senior Housing sector.

Whether developing new full-scale continuum care retirement residences or enhancing an existing community, we focus on providing innovative housing solutions, beautiful designs, and thoughtful public realm improvements that foster independence and inclusivity. Partnering with the AAC, we look forward to exploring new ways to enhance accessibility in our communities, ensuring every resident can enjoy a fulfilling and engaged lifestyle.

Joseph Gesualdi, VP, Development Planning, Verve Senior Living

At Vortex Fire Consulting, accessibility is not merely a regulatory consideration, it is a core value embedded in our technical practice and professional ethos. While we are widely known for building code consulting and fire safety engineering, our commitment extends further: we actively push for meaningful access in all facilities we touch, aiming for environments that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all users.

We support the objectives of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and are committed to promoting built environments that meet both the technical requirements and the broader intent of accessibility standards. Through our work with architects, engineers, developers, and Authorities Having Jurisdiction, we integrate accessibility as a fundamental requirement in the code interpretation and performance-based strategies we provide. Our team consistently champions solutions that go beyond minimum compliance, encouraging universal design principles that enhance dignity, independence, and safety.

To strengthen this practice, more than half of our Canadian technical staff have completed the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Foundation training.

This investment equips our team to identify barriers early, collaborate effectively with design partners, and recommend practical, cost-effective improvements that deliver more meaningful access.

We believe that accessible design is not a constraint, but a professional responsibility that supports the social and economic participation of all Canadians.

Vortex Fire is proud to stand with industry partners in accelerating the transformation toward a more inclusive Canada.

Oprite Bobmanuel, P.Eng, MAsc (Fire Safety Engineering), RHFAC Professional, Team Lead, Canada, Vortex Fire Consulting Inc.

Every Canadian deserves access to a safe, comfortable, and functional home that meets their needs and supports their independence. I have witnessed firsthand the struggles faced by individuals whose living spaces did not cater to their physical needs, and I have also seen how eliminating accessibility barriers have led to a better quality of life and allowed them to contribute positively to their communities. In addition to upholding a person's dignity, well-being and independence, accessible housing is also fundamental to fostering a diverse and inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute meaningfully to and be part of a community.

The progress towards a more accessible and inclusive Canada requires substantive action and collective effort, and I am proud to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition in the mission to turn this vision into reality. I look forward to collaborating with the Coalition members to advocate for meaningful change in delivering accessible housing and continue building a city where everyone can thrive.

Jennevieve Virata, Toronto, Ontario

Waterfront Toronto was established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto in 2001 to oversee and lead the renewal of the city’s waterfront. We work with many different partners, from property developers to conservationists and community groups, to create complete communities, parks and other public spaces.

Our goal is to build an inclusive waterfront for everyone, and we know that this vision is only possible through a strong commitment to accessibility in everything we make and do.

We are committed to the principles outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of the requirements of the AODA.

In 2020 we published our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020-2025), which outlines our specific commitments with regards to AODA and Section 4 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (“IASR”).

Building on these commitments, in 2023, we published the Waterfront Accessibility Design Guidelines, which help guide our work designing public spaces, and we formed the Waterfront Accessibility Advisory Committee to apply the guidelines based on lived experience.

Waterfront Toronto is committed to addressing the needs of persons of all ages and abilities by allowing them to maintain their dignity and independence. We’re pleased to have the opportunity to join the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition and work with our colleagues and neighbours to learn, share resources, and build a better city for everyone.

Christopher Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer, Waterfront Toronto

I am an Architect, Author and Activist who specializes in Accessible Architecture. I set up my own Edmonton based practice in 1995, and I specialize in providing consulting services for persons with disabilities and for projects focused on affording individuals with disabilities greater choices for independent movement.

I have firsthand experience with creating accessible environments because I grew up with a father who used a wheelchair. I have written many articles and two books on accessible design and have been a guest speaker and participant in sessions involving accessibility, innovative housing and urban and community planning. I have also won numerous awards for my work.

For Architects, affordable and accessible housing can only effectively work when we want to learn more and get better at our craft in this area of design.

I spend every day communicating and working with at least one person who has a disability. My practice generally focuses on small projects with practical hands-on “lived” experience. Most importantly, I work very closely with my clients who are the end users. The beauty in this architecture comes from addressing the needs of as many people as possible. This desire to work with the experiential design process leads to a better architecture that produces more than a building form to be visually admired. Fundamentally, a well-designed built environment must create a framework for people to live their best lives.

Accessible Architecture is Just Good Design. Therefore, we must never rely on accessibility guides, standards and codes, rather we must focus on actions to create an Architecture that is more Accessible and Inclusive for All. This is not just a technical issue but one that offers us the choice to invest ourselves emotionally. This design philosophy considers the needs of as many people as possible and focuses on the toughest populations which are typically persons with physical disabilities. In this way we can create the most accessible built environment possible.

Architecture and design quality is at the heart of accessible living which takes its form from the specific everyday users, site conditions and the cultural context of a particular region.

The human context is central, and we must understand the history and unique characteristics of Accessible Architecture to help us move from the medical model of disability to fix individuals with disabilities to become “normal”, to a social model that better tailors the built environment to meet everyone’s needs, including persons with physical, visual, hearing and sensory limitations. Curb ramps, no-step building entrances, better interior lighting, acoustics and wayfinding strategies are some examples of this.

Architects are trained to be problem solvers and to think outside the box. We can come up with practical and beautiful solutions no matter what the design issue is. For this to happen, especially when it comes to affordable and accessible housing, we need to understand culture and society and not just science and technology. We can start by encouraging such thinking in schools of architecture and other design disciplines. Education is the key. We need to educate ourselves and others to bring about change in a positive direction. Frankly, we must emotionally invest more of ourselves into the issue of creating truly affordable and accessible housing that benefits us all.

The best design projects start with great collaborations. This also means that the decision makers, who control the design project, must be willing to take on the “leap of faith” design journey with the Architects and other designers who are committed to producing a beautiful building or space that accommodates the largest community possible. Hope and energy are at the core of this design philosophy.

Ron Wickman, BA, BEDS, M. Arch., Architect, AAA, MRAIC, Ron Wickman Architect

At Woodbourne, we understand that the design and development of our built environment profoundly impact who can actively and comfortably participate in society. We believe that real estate can be a powerful tool for creating transformative, positive outcomes within communities. Our goal is to build neighborhoods where people not only live but thrive and feel a strong sense of belonging.

To achieve this, we are dedicated to incorporating accessibility and inclusive design principles into our buildings.

We aim to create spaces that are healthy, safe, and welcoming for everyone, accommodating a wide range of mental and physical health needs.

It is not just about removing barriers; it is about fostering environments that prioritize health, wellbeing, and social connection.

At Woodbourne, we recognize that we are early on in our journey towards greater accessibility and inclusion. We cannot accomplish this alone and are inspired by the efforts of many within the community. We are committed to working collaboratively with others to tackle this urgent challenge, ensuring that our developments contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Frank Vinodolac, Head of Development, Woodbourne Capital Management International, LP

Accessible housing matters to me because I've lived through the challenges of not having it. After becoming disabled at the age of 23, I experienced firsthand how something as simple as a doorway, a set of stairs, or a bathroom layout could become a daily barrier. These obstacles don't just make life harder—they chip away at independence, dignity, and the ability to feel truly at home.

Through my own recovery journey, I've seen how much difference an accessible environment can make. The right space isn't just safer—it restores confidence, freedom, and the ability to live fully. I know what it's like to rely on others for things that could have been possible on my own if housing were designed inclusively from the start.

As a mortgage agent, accessibility is also a professional priority. I see the challenges my clients face when trying to find homes that meet their needs, and I know that the right financial guidance can make a meaningful difference. Supporting accessible housing allows me to help people not only secure a home but secure a life that works for them—safe, independent, and inclusive.

For me, accessible housing isn't optional—it's essential. Everyone deserves a home that supports their needs, no matter their ability. When we prioritize accessibility, we open the door to equality, belonging, and a future where people don't have to fight their homes to live their lives.

**Jessica Weisberg, Mortgage Agent | Enrich Mortgage Group,
Specializing in Accessible Mortgage Solutions**

WoodGreen is proud to support the ULI Toronto-supported Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC) because we understand that accessible housing is both a necessary and smart investment in ensuring inclusive and healthy communities. Accessible housing isn't just a necessity for some; it's a fundamental right that benefits everyone.

A truly inclusive society is one where individuals of all ages and abilities can fully participate, including having access to homes that are barrier-free.

WoodGreen is one of the largest social service agencies in Toronto with a mission to achieve a Toronto where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. WoodGreen aims to enhance self-sufficiency, promote well-being and reduce poverty through innovative solutions to critical social needs, serving 37,000 people each year, from over 40 locations across Toronto.

WoodGreen offers services and expertise on the following areas: Youth, Child Care, Community Programs, Community Health, Senior Care and Housing and is the second largest housing provider in the city of Toronto. Supportive housing and attendant outreach services are an important part of WoodGreen's services to address the current crisis in hospitals and an untapped alternative for some individuals who currently have no option but to transition to long-term care.

The AAC serves an important purpose that WoodGreen is proud to support and actively draw learning from, and we look forward to broadening our understanding of the issues and becoming active participants in the solutions that we can deploy where they are most needed.

I applaud the work of the AAC for championing accessibility, empowering people with disabilities, and building inclusive and diverse communities in alignment with our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and multi-year investment in accessibility and age friendly communities.

Mwarigha, MSC, MA and CIH, Vice President, Housing Growth, Development & Asset Sustainability, WoodGreen Community Services

The Centre for Feminist Research at York University is deeply committed to equity, locally and around the world. We are strongly in support of the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, since we understand that accessible housing is necessary in Toronto, across the country, and globally, if we are to live in ways that include each of us and all of us.

Accessible homes and neighbourhoods are vital to vibrant communities in which everyone can participate fully and contribute their talents and energies.

Disabilities affect more women than men – nearly one in four women over our lifetimes, according to Statistics Canada -- making accessibility an especially important concern for feminists who seek to support women's agency.

Let us act, now, in Toronto, across the province and nationally, to ensure that homes are fully accessible. This means getting creative in design, progressive in our legislation and working together across sectors to make our homes and communities accessible today.

This is not only important for all those living with disability, but for all of us committed to ensuring that our communities and cities are welcoming spaces where each of us and all of us can flourish.

Elaine Coburn, Director of the Centre for Feminist Research, York University*