Advancing Accessible and Adaptable Housing: AAC Roundtable with MP Chi Nguyen & PS Jennifer McKelvie

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On September 10, 2026, the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition (AAC) brought together community, accessibility and real estate industry leaders for a roundtable discussion with federal Member of Parliament Chi Nguyen (Spadina–Waterfront) and MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax).

Hosted at The Daniels Corporation, the roundtable explored the barriers limiting the availability of accessible and adaptable housing, as well as opportunities to advance more inclusive housing policy, planning and development.

Participants emphasized that creating truly inclusive communities requires more than accessible units—it needs coordinated investment in housing, transportation, services, public spaces and meaningful engagement with people with lived experience. The discussion highlighted urgent barriers, including accessible homes that people with disabilities can't afford to live in and be supported in, and practical opportunities for governments, developers and community partners to build accessibility, adaptability and inclusion into community planning from the outset.

Read on for highlights of the discussion.

Challenges to the Supply and Availability of Accessible Housing

Participants discussed several challenges affecting accessible housing in Toronto and across the housing system.

One key concern was the lack of provincial funding for completed accessible homes. In some cases, purpose-built units developed through partnerships between non-profit organizations and developers remain vacant because the intended residents cannot secure adequate funding for support services or can't afford the rent. Without a solution, these units ultimately return to the broader for-profit housing market.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of building greater adaptability and flexibility into housing design from the outset, engaging people with lived experience more meaningfully in the design and development process, making better use of existing community spaces and infrastructure, and incorporating accessibility requirements into public RFPs.

Participants emphasized the need to think beyond individual buildings and projects and take a broader, more coordinated approach to creating accessible communities.

Building Supportive and Inclusive Communities

A recurring theme was the importance of looking at the bigger picture rather than planning in isolation.

Accessible housing is not only about the individual unit. People also need to be able to access transportation, community spaces, services, employment and other amenities. The ability to visit friends, family and neighbours was highlighted as an important consideration in creating truly inclusive communities.

Participants discussed the opportunity to leverage infrastructure and resources that are already in place, rather than continually creating new, disconnected solutions. Supportive communities require coordination across housing, infrastructure, services and public spaces.

The importance of involving people with lived experience throughout this process was also emphasized. Their perspectives can help identify barriers that may not otherwise be apparent and ensure that accessibility solutions respond to how people actually live, work and participate in their communities.

Examples of accessible and inclusive development were also shared, including Daniels' Accessibility Designed Program (ADP), with its roll-out balcony design, and Regent Park as an example of mixed-income community development.

The discussion also touched on the role of the Accessible Canada Act, the federal law passed in 2019 that aims to make Canada completely barrier-free by January 1, 2040, and the importance of continuing to build momentum toward a more accessible and inclusive built environment.

Key Takeaways for Ottawa

Following the discussion, PS McKelvie identified several areas to take forward to Ottawa:

1. **Empower municipalities through Build Canada Homes (BCH)** to fund housing projects, including existing infrastructure, and strengthen BCH's role as a "concierge" connecting non-profit organizations with the expertise they need.
2. **Explore co-operative housing funding through BCH** to support additional affordable, accessible and adaptable housing options.

3. **Increase federal and provincial collaboration on supportive housing**, recognizing that both levels of government have a role to play.
4. **Take a broader approach to community planning**, considering how housing, infrastructure, transportation, services and public spaces work together to support people across the lifespan.
5. **Consider new National Housing Strategy streams**, including opportunities to support Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and approaches that support communities designed to meet the needs of people across the lifespan, including the "ages 8–80" concept.
6. **Integrate accessibility, adaptability and flexibility into public RFPs** so these principles are considered from the outset rather than addressed later in the development process.
7. **Continue involving people with lived experience** in policy, planning and design decisions to ensure solutions reflect the needs of the people they are intended to serve.

The roundtable reinforced the value of bringing government, community organizations, housing providers, developers and accessibility advocates together to identify practical solutions and share examples of what is already working.

Creating more accessible housing will require more than individual projects. It will require collaboration, long-term thinking and a willingness to leverage the infrastructure, expertise and resources already in place while ensuring people with lived experience have a meaningful voice in shaping the communities they call home.

The AAC is grateful to MP Nguyen and PS McKelvie for joining the conversation, and to all the organizations and people who contributed their expertise and lived experience. Continued collaboration across sectors will be essential to ensuring accessibility and adaptability are considered from the beginning, rather than addressed as an afterthought.