



# **Cape Breton Regional Municipality**

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Agenda**

Thursday, May 7, 2026

10:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

### **Accessibility Advisory Committee Members:**

Councillor Steve Gillespie

Councillor Steven MacNeil

Mairibeth Reilly, Citizen Appointee

Denise McSpadden, Citizen Appointee

Kyron Coombes, Citizen Appointee

Kim Bates, Citizen Appointee

Kathy MacIntyre, Citizen Appointee

Sharon Costey, Citizen Appointee

Louise Gillis, Citizen Appointee

Adam Brown, Citizen Appointee

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**Call to Order**

**Land Acknowledgment**

**Roll Call**

1. **Approval of Agenda:** (Motion required)
  
2. **Presentations**
  - 2.1 **Building An Accessible Community:** Adam MacNeil, Chief Executive Officer of Breton Ability (See page 4)
  
3. **Conference Reports**
  - 3.1 **Accessibility Professional Network Conference Program – Rick Hansen Foundation:** Mayor Cecil P. Clarke; and Councillor Eldon MacDonald (See page 13)
  
4. **Accessibility Plan Verbal Update:** Kirk Durning, Director of Parks, Recreation, Buildings and Facilities

**Adjournment**

# Building An Accessible Community



Presented by: Adam MacNeil  
Chief Executive Officer



# About Breton Ability?

- Is an organization supporting individuals with varying abilities
- Supporting over 100 individuals in the community and transitioning others from facility-based care
- Providing housing, skill development, and employment opportunities



# What is the Nova Scotia Human Rights Remedy?

- A court-ordered shift to ensure people with disabilities can live in community with choice, dignity, and the right supports.



# 6 Key Directions of “The Remedy”

- Individualized planning
- Closing institutions
- Community based supports
- Regional multidisciplinary supports
- Individualized funding
- Strengthening system capacity



# Recommendations for the CBRM

## Expand Hani-Trans (Access-A-Bus)

- Increase capacity (vehicles/hours) and reduce wait times where possible for mobility-accessible, door-to door service.
- Review eligibility and booking rules to ensure residents with non-visible disabilities and complex behavioural needs are not excluded from accessible options.

# Recommendations for the CBRM Support Person Rides Free (Transit Accommodation)

- Adopt a policy allowing one support person to ride free when accompanying an eligible rider who requires assistance (training phase or ongoing).
- Establish a simple verification mechanism (e.g., support-person ID card, letter, or agency validation) that minimizes burden and protects privacy.

# Recommendations for the CBRM

## Improve Physical Accessibility & Accessible Parking Supply

- Increase the number of accessible parking spaces in priority areas (municipal buildings, recreation, service hubs, downtown core and health services).
- Consider a drop-off/pick-up priority for individuals supported by supporting agencies.
- Review signage, enforcement, snow clearing, and maintenance to ensure spaces remain usable year-round.



# Recommendations for the CBRM Police and Municipal Staff Education/Training on Disability Information Interactions

- Implement disability-informed training for police/peace officers and dispatch, focused on: communication, de-escalation, sensory needs, IDD recognition, and safe decision-making.
- Establish a liaison pathway between police services and Breton Ability for consultation and joint problem-solving.
- Promote optional tools such as an “information card” approach (resident or caregiver voluntarily discloses communication needs) where appropriate.

# Building Inclusive Communities

- Inclusion happens in everyday spaces.
- It is shaped by how communities are designed and how people are supported.
- Small changes create real impact.

*CBRM has the opportunity to lead the way in building communities where everyone belongs.*



**APN 2026**  
Inclusive by Design

Presented by



Accessibility Professional Network  
**Conference Program**

March 30 & 31, 2026

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## **Land Acknowledgement**

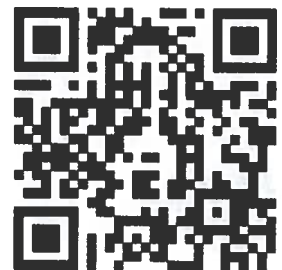
We are grateful to be physically gathered for this conference on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit (Toronto, ON). We also respectfully acknowledge that delegates will be joining virtually from across the globe, from many traditional and unceded territories. As a community committed to accessibility and equity, we recognize that the work of designing inclusive spaces and systems is inseparable from the histories, peoples, and places in which that work occurs.

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**Q&A and audience participation  
will be facilitated through Slido.**

Scan the QR code to join and  
submit questions or visit  
[tinyurl.com/APN2026](https://tinyurl.com/APN2026).



## Welcome to APN2026: Inclusive by Design

**More than 40 years ago, the Man In Motion World Tour set out to change how the world views disability. That same spirit of leadership and possibility brings us together today at APN2026: Inclusive by Design.**

This conference is both a celebration of progress and a reminder of the work that remains. In Canada, 27% of people aged 15 and over have a disability, and globally more than 1.3 billion people – about 16% of the world's population – experience disability.

This year's theme, 'Inclusive by Design,' challenges us to move beyond compliance and minimum building code standards and instead design spaces that work for everyone. Grounded in the principals of Universal Design, it asks us to anticipate diverse needs from the outset and create environments where people with disabilities can participate fully in community life.

Over the next two days, APN2026 brings together experts and people with lived experience to share knowledge, explore real-world solutions, and examine how intentional design decisions can shape more inclusive communities.

Meaningful progress happens when people come together with purpose and a shared commitment to a world where everyone can go everywhere.

We are honoured to welcome you to APN2026 and to the ideas, partnerships, and leadership that will shape a more equitable built environment for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Hansen".

Rick Hansen, C.C., O.B.C.  
Founder,  
Rick Hansen Foundation



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doramy Ehling".

Doramy Ehling  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Rick Hansen Foundation

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

## Registration Opens

East Registration

**8:00 am - 9:00 am**

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## Welcome Coffee Social

East Registration

**9:00 am - 9:30 am**

## Welcome Remarks

Room 205 & 206

**MC: Marco Pasqua**, Co-Founder and Accessibility Consultant, Meaningful Access Consulting

### Speakers:

- **Trina Moyan**, Nehiyawak Nation, First Peoples Advisory Office, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, Design, Visual Arts & Forestry, University of Toronto
- **Leslie Church**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families
- **Raymond Cho**, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, Ontario Government
- **Amanda Basi**, Senior Director, Programs, Rick Hansen Foundation

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**9:30 am - 10:30 am**

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## **Beyond Compliance: Designing for Real-World Impact**

Room 205 & 206

Minimum building code compliance alone falls short in creating inclusive spaces. Through powerful real-world stories and expert insights, the opening plenary session champions the theme 'Inclusive by Design' and challenges participants to move beyond compliance towards a people-centred approach. Speakers will share how embedding inclusion as a core design principle leads to stronger outcomes, deeper belonging, and measurable impact across projects and systems.

### **Speakers:**

- **Edward Steinfeld**, Director Emeritus, Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access, University at Buffalo
- **Jeffrey Ma**, Senior Design Director, Lemay
- **Jesse Klimitz**, Principal, Human Space

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**10:30 am - 11:00 am**

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## Wellness Break

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.

# Empowering Every Journey

At YVR, we're committed to creating a seamless and inclusive travel experience for everyone. Through our award-winning accessibility program and innovative solutions, we're working to ensure all passengers feel empowered and supported throughout their journey.

YVR is proud to be a global leader in accessibility, making travel not just possible but enjoyable for everyone.

Discover how YVR is redefining accessibility and innovation at [yvr.ca/accessibility](http://yvr.ca/accessibility)



# Monday, March 30, 2026

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

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FOR PEOPLE LIVING  
WITH HIV AND OTHER  
EPISODIC DISABILITIES

## **Advancing Accessibility Innovation Through Partnership and Co-Design**

Room 205 & 206

Breakthrough accessibility solutions rarely succeed in isolation. This session examines how evidence-based partnerships and co-design approaches translate research into real-world impact. Drawing on examples from research, startups, and inclusive design practice, speakers will share practical strategies for adoption, scaling, and funding, as well as what it takes to create collaborations that sustain innovation.

### **Speakers:**

- **Anthony Palma**, Director, Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives, KITE Research Institute, University Health Network
- **Tracey McGillivray**, Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer, Axtion Independence Mobility Inc.
- **Varun Chandak**, Founder and Executive Director, Access to Success

**12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**

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**Scotiabank**

## **Networking Lunch**

East Registration

Network with delegates over a delicious lunch before our exciting afternoon sessions.

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**1:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

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WITH HIV AND OTHER  
EPISODIC DISABILITIES

## **From Standards to Impact: What's New at ASC** Room 205 & 206

Join leaders from Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) for an engaging, conversation-driven session exploring how collaboration across design, policy, research, and industry can accelerate meaningful accessibility progress. Learn about ASC's mandate, new and emerging standards, and the role of the Centre of Expertise. Speakers will highlight barriers, successes, and practical pathways for professionals to engage — whether through committees, research partnerships, or implementation efforts — to advance accessibility across Canada.

### **Speakers:**

- **Dino Zuppa**, Chief Executive Officer, Accessibility Standards Canada
- **Mojgan Yazdani-Seysan**, Director, Board of Directors, Accessibility Standards Canada
- **Paul Walsh**, Chair, Board of Directors, Accessibility Standards Canada

**2:00 pm - 2:30 pm**

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**EY Studio+**  
Shape the future with confidence

## **Wellness Break**

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**2:30 pm - 3:30 pm**

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## **Rethinking Spaces for Children and Youth with Disabilities**

Room 205 & 206

Children and youth with disabilities interact with many spaces that were not designed with them in mind. This panel brings together researchers, practitioners, and lived-experience experts to share evidence-based and practical strategies for creating environments that support dignity, autonomy, and belonging — from early planning through implementation.

### **Speakers:**

- **Alison Novak**, Senior Scientist, KITE Research Institute, University Health Network
- **Dolly Menna-Dack**, Senior Bioethicist, Manager, Youth Engagement Strategy, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- **Sarah Moore**, Director, Board of Directors, Accessibility Standards Canada
- **Pina Mallozzi**, Senior Vice President, Design, Waterfront Toronto

# Monday, March 30, 2026

**3:30 pm - 4:00 pm**

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## Wellness Break

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.



## Advance your access and inclusion journey today!

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) is proud to offer three courses designed to support individuals and organizations on their journey toward increased accessibility and inclusion. These courses build foundational knowledge that helps break down attitudinal barriers and create equitable environments.

- RHF Inclusion & Accessibility Training
- RHFAC Fundamentals Training
- RHFAC Professional Training

Learn more at [RickHansen.com/Courses](https://rickhansen.com/courses)



# Monday, March 30, 2026

**4:00 pm - 5:00 pm**

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## **Integrating Meaningful Access from the Ground Up: Strategies for Pre-construction**

Room 205 & 206

Research consistently shows that incorporating thoughtful accessibility considerations early in the design process adds minimal cost — yet many projects still treat accessibility as an afterthought, aiming only to meet minimum code requirements. Discover how to integrate meaningful access in new construction projects from the outset to create inclusive spaces, and explore practical strategies for aligning involved parties, navigating legislative requirements, and addressing site constraints and budget pressures without compromising inclusion.

### **Speakers:**

- **Azam Khan**, CEO, TRAX
- **Henry Chen**, Principal, Hygge Architecture Ltd
- **Joseph Moro**, Senior Project Director, Brisbin Brook Beynon Architects

**5:00 pm - 5:15 pm**

## **Closing Remarks**

Room 205 & 206

**5:15 pm - 6:30 pm**

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## **Networking Reception**

East Registration

Join us as we celebrate day one of APN2026 with colleagues over refreshments.

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**8:00 am - 4:00 pm**

## Registration Opens

East Registration

**8:00 am - 9:00 am**

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**Choice  
Properties**

## Welcome Coffee Social

East Registration

**9:00 am - 10:00 am**

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Fairview

## The Connected Journey: Accessibility Across the Airport Experience (Concurrent)

Room 205

Discover how accessibility can be seamlessly woven into every aspect of the airport experience — from arrival at the curb to the gate, and throughout airport workplace environments. This session connects the latest research, industry trends, and real-life practices to reveal what truly inclusive and scalable airport accessibility looks like in action.

### Speakers:

- **Ernesto Morales**, Full Professor, Université Laval
- **Josh Vander Vies**, Director, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Vancouver Airport Authority
- **Kathleen Henderson**, Senior Director, Operations, Environment and Regulatory Affairs, Canadian Airports Council
- **Molara Awosedo**, Director, Inclusion and Workplace Culture, Toronto Pearson Airport

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**9:00 am - 10:00 am**

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**WATERFRONT**Toronto

## **Designing for Neurodiversity: Inclusive Spaces in Practice (Concurrent)**

Room 206

Designing for neurodiversity requires moving beyond awareness to action. This session offers practical strategies for creating inclusive spaces that support neurodiverse people while benefiting everyone. Through focused talks and real-world examples, participants will learn sensory-aware design techniques and inclusive facilitation practices that can be applied immediately in design and planning practice.

### **Speakers:**

- **Lola Cuenta Fenton**, Emerging Architect, DFS Architecture & Design

- **Samantha Biglieri**, Associate Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Toronto Metropolitan University

- **Sarah Taslimi**, Senior Project Manager, Landscape Architect & Arborist Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design, WSP Canada

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**10:00 am - 10:30 am**

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## Wellness Break

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.

Long-Term Pain   Multiple Sclerosis   Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
 Cancer   Asthma   Migraines   Repetitive Strain Injury   Tuberculosis   Substance Use Disorder  
 Chronic Pain   Arthritis   Depression   Muscular Dystrophy   Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis  
 HIV/AIDS   Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP)   Meniere's Disease  
 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (including chronic bronchitis and emphysema)   Fibromyalgia   Lupus • ME/CFS   ALS   Schizophrenia  
 Anxiety   Bi-polar Disorder   Cystic Fibrosis   Guillain-Barre Syndrome   Diabetes  
 Epilepsy   Long-COVID   POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome)   Hepatitis B & C   Parkinson's Disease



# Are you managing episodic disabilities in your workplace?

**Realize** offers resources for HR professionals, business leaders and employees

Find out more at <https://www.realizecanada.org/resources/education/>

# realize

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WITH HIV AND OTHER  
EPISODIC DISABILITIES

## Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**10:30 am - 11:30 am**

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**human-space**

### **Inclusive Festivals & Events: From Research to Practice (Concurrent)**

Room 205

Discover how truly inclusive festivals and events come to life. Join a dynamic panel featuring voices from research, operations, and lived experience as we reveal what it takes to break down barriers for people with disabilities. Drawing from national research on festival accessibility, major event operations, and lived experience, this session will highlight barriers, promising practices, and opportunities for improvement across sectors.

#### **Speakers:**

- **Jean-marc Valmont**, Human Resources Director, Canadian National Exhibition Association
- **Mike Greer**, Accessibility Consultant, Blood Sweat and Wheels
- **Lisa Snider**, Project Coordinator, Festival Accessibility Research Project, Independent Living Canada

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**10:30 am - 11:30 am**

Brought to you by

**TOYOTA**

## **Creating Accessible Cultures from Education to Professional Practice (Concurrent)**

Room 206

Explore how Canada can build an accessible culture that extends beyond the built environment into education, public awareness, and cross-sector collaboration. This session will highlight real initiatives shaping accessibility in universities, K-12 schools, facility operations, and national research networks, while identifying systemic barriers, emerging practices, and actionable strategies for driving cultural change.

### **Speakers:**

- **Brian Sinclair**, Professor of Architecture + Environmental Design, University of Calgary
- **Carmela Cucuzzella**, Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Design and Planning, Université de Montréal
- **Marcia O'Connor**, President, Founder, AM FM Consulting Group Inc.
- **Henry Tsang**, Architect & Chair of the RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University

**11:30 am - 12:30 pm**

Brought to you by



## **Networking Lunch**

East Registration

Network with delegates over a delicious lunch before our exciting afternoon sessions.

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**12:30 pm - 1:30 pm**

Brought to you by



## **From Policy to Performance: A Fireside on Canada's Accessibility Future**

Room 205 & 206

How do we turn strong policy into everyday inclusion? This fireside chat brings together leaders from government, regulation, and industry for a candid discussion on moving beyond compliance toward measurable, meaningful impact. Panelists will explore what effective oversight looks like under federal accessibility frameworks, how large enterprises embed accessibility into strategy and procurement, and where public/private collaboration can remove barriers at scale.

### **Speakers:**

- **Hon. Carla Qualtrough**, Special Advisor, Rick Hansen Foundation, former Federal Cabinet Minister, Canada
- **Christopher Sutton**, Accessibility Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission
- **Mia de Freitas**, Director, Accessibility Enablement, RBC

## Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**1:30 pm - 2:00 pm**

Brought to you by



### **Wellness Break**

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.

## **Accessibility Professional Network**

- Connect with accessibility professionals
- Stay up-to-date with the latest in accessibility
- Gain exclusive access to educational tools and resources

**Join today: [RickHansen.com/APN](https://rickhansen.com/APN)**

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

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## **From Standards to Homes: Accelerating Accessible Housing Across Canada**

Room 205 & 206

Explore how Canada can transform accessibility standards into tangible improvements within the housing sector, accelerating the delivery of accessible and accessibility-ready homes nationwide. This session brings experts together to discuss common language for accessibility, introduce relevant standards and design catalogues, highlight practical design solutions, and identify key policy and industry shifts needed to advance accessible housing across Canada.

### **Speakers:**

- **Collinda Joseph**, Manager, Accessibility and Education, Accessibility Standards Canada
- **Elle Ziegler**, Advisor, Housing Programs, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- **Henry Tsang**, Architect & Chair of the RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University
- **Marie-Josée Houle**, Federal Housing Advocate, Canadian Human Rights Commission

**3:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

Brought to you by



## **Wellness Break**

East Registration

Use this time to recharge and connect with fellow delegates in person and online.

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**3:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

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## **Capital, Capacity, and Confidence: Financing Accessibility for Impact**

Room 205 & 206

Unlocking accessibility in Canadian buildings requires more than funding alone. This session introduces the 3C framework — Capital, Capacity, and Confidence — to show how smart policy, innovative financing, and cross-sector collaboration can transform accessibility from a compliance requirement into a driver of performance and value. Speakers will share practical financing strategies and scalable approaches for mainstreaming accessibility improvements.

### **Speakers:**

- **Chandra Ramadurai**, CEO & Co-Founder, Efficiency Capital
- **Meenu Sikand**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure & Special Projects, Government of Ontario
- **Matthew Shaw**, Head, Accessibility Practice & Innovation, Rick Hansen Foundation

# Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**4:30 pm - 4:45 pm**

## **Conference Closing Remarks**

Room 205 & 206

Closing remarks and recap after two days of engaging conversations.

● **Matthew Shaw**, Head, Accessibility Practice & Innovation, Rick Hansen Foundation

**4:45 pm - 6:00 pm**

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## **Networking Reception**

East Registration

Share what you learned and what inspired you over the last two days with your fellow delegates.

# Thank you to our Partners

## Presenting Partner

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## Gold Partner

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## Silver Partners

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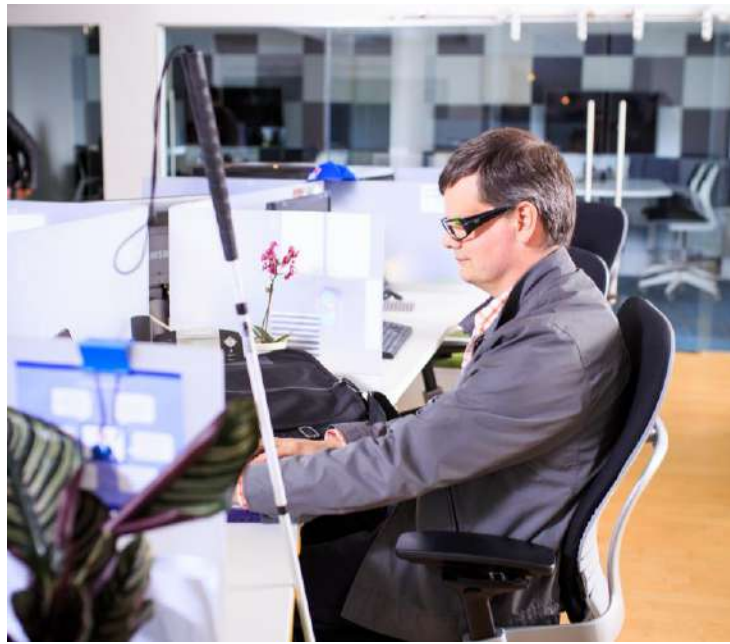


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# Integrating Meaningful Access from the Ground Up: Strategies for Preconstruction

February 2026





**1 in 4**

Canadians have a disability that limits their daily activities\*

\*Source: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022

A close-up photograph of a person's hands and arms as they use a silver metal walker. The person is wearing a blue and white checkered long-sleeved shirt, a dark watch on their left wrist, and a brown leather belt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green grass and a white fence.

# Disability touches the lives of almost **50%** of Canadians.

Source: Angus Reid Enterprises, August 2018

# Why It Matters



Jean-Baptiste Benavent © Défi sportif AlterGo 2025



# Code Compliance Limitations

- **Minimum** legislated technical accessibility requirements for **buildings**.
- Does not consider **real life use and experience** of access.
- Slow to adapt and fail to reflect current best practices.
- Centers mostly on mobility disability, especially wheelchair users.
- **Does not require** existing buildings to retrofit to accessibility requirements.

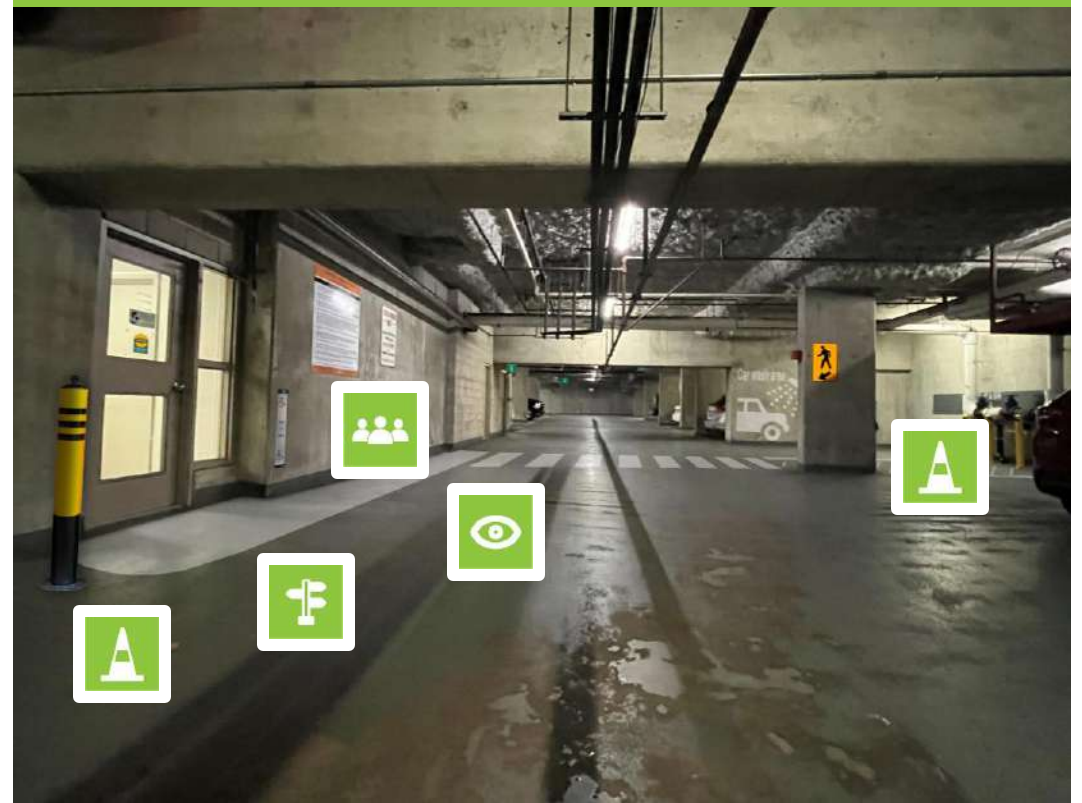


# Example 1: Safety and Independence in an Underground Parking

Industry or code norm

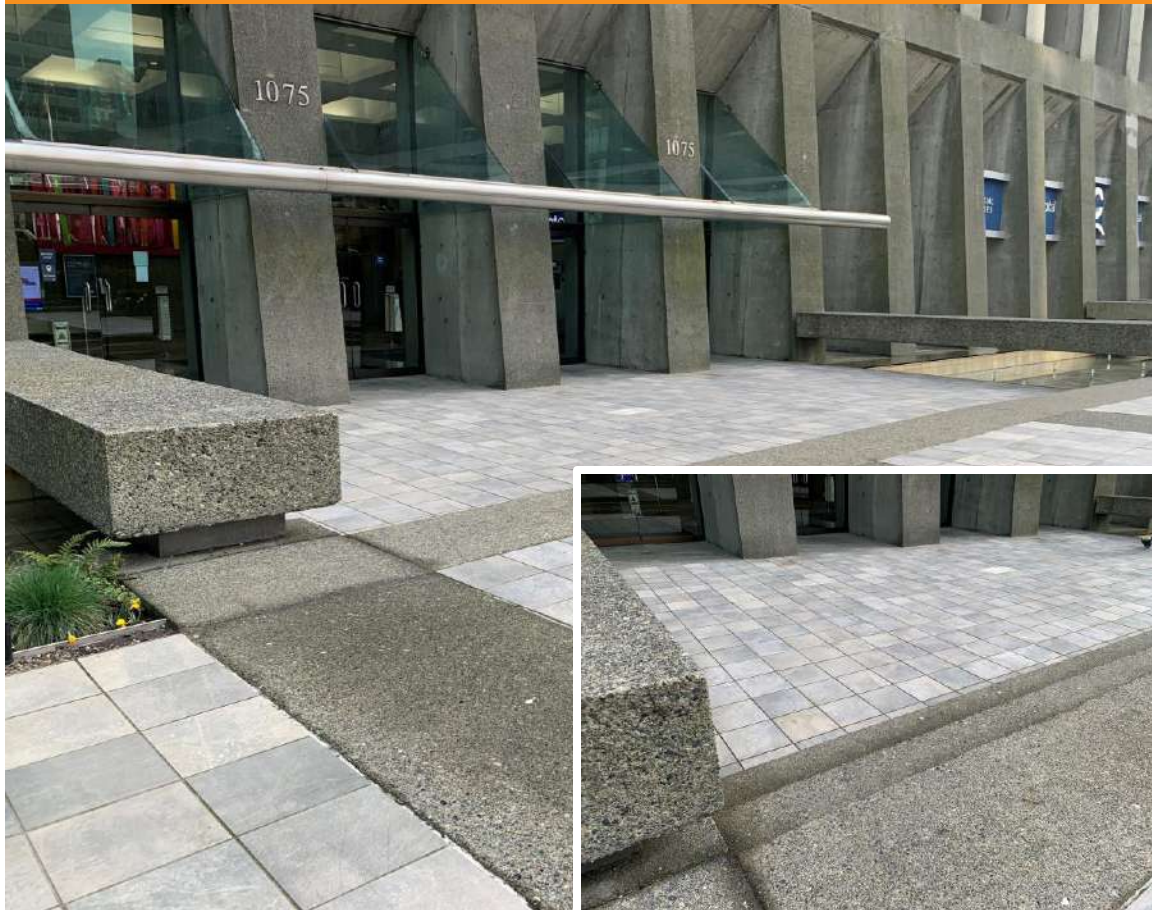


Beyond Code with RHFAC



# Example 2: Safety and Usability at Exterior Stairs

Industry or code norm

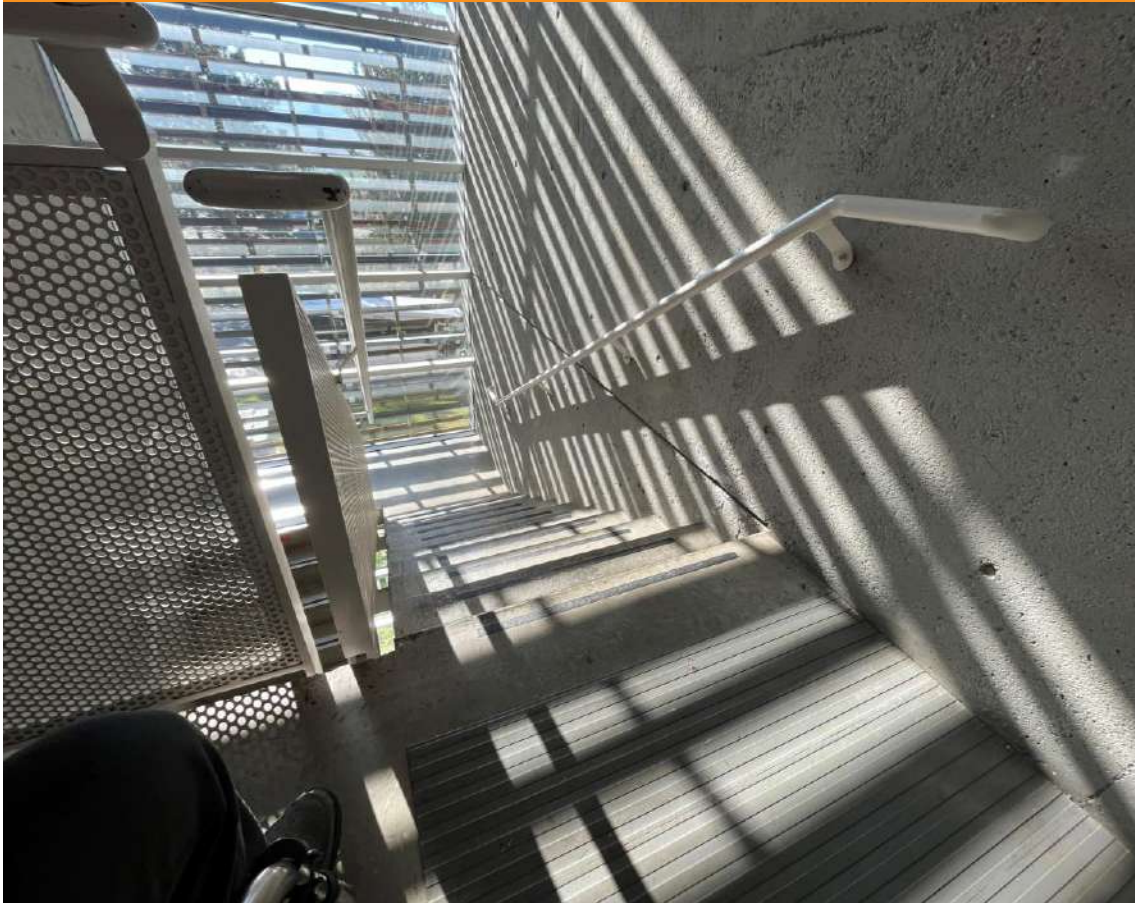


Beyond Code with RHFAC



# Example 3: Safety at Interior Stairs

Industry or code norm



Beyond Code with RHFAC

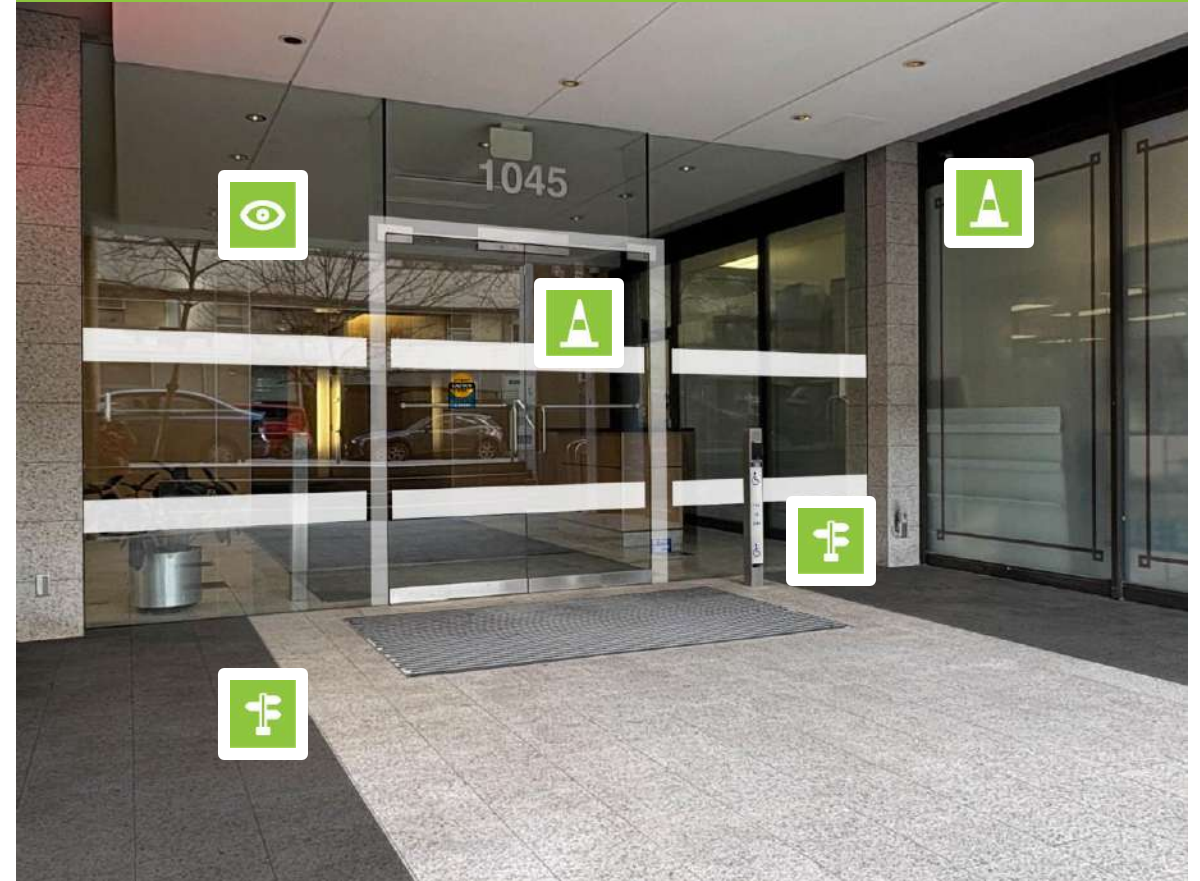


# Example 4: Identifying Building Entrance

Industry or code norm



Beyond Code with RHFAC



# What is Meaningful Access?

- ✔ The ability to **independently and safely access** and navigate the **built environment** based on **planned inclusion**
- ✔ Recognizes the **level of access** for the facility as a whole, not just the sum of its parts
- ✔ **Considers** location, occupancy, site conditions, and community as **contributing factors in any given facility**



# Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™



# RHFAC Methodology – Follow User Journey I



## 1. Vehicular Access

- Main access points that serve people when they arrive at a site: parking, transit, drop-off/pick-up areas.



## 2. Exterior Approach & Entrance

- Main building entrances and all external pathways and pedestrian routes that connect them with the site arrival points.



## 3. Interior Circulation

- Elements that allow people to move both horizontally and vertically throughout a building and access its key facilities.



## 4. Interior Services & Environment

- Key facilities that people use within a building.



## 5. Sanitary Facilities

- Accessible washrooms and shower facilities.



## 6. Wayfinding & Signage

- Architectural and information cues that allow people to find their way at a site.

# RHFAC Methodology – Follow User Journey II



## 7. Emergency Systems

- Systems and equipment that are used to notify and evacuate people in the event of an emergency.



## 9. Residential Units

- Multi-Unit residential buildings, such as condos, apartments and townhouses.



## 11. Mind-Friendly Environments

- Overall impact of built environment on neurological experience of users in three dimensions: (1) Space (2) Sensory experience (3) Restoration



## 8. Additional Use of Space

- Includes additional areas that are unique to a site.



## 10. Trails and Pathways

- Front country trails, such as greenway trails, short distance walking trails and interpretive trails.



## 12. Technology and Innovation

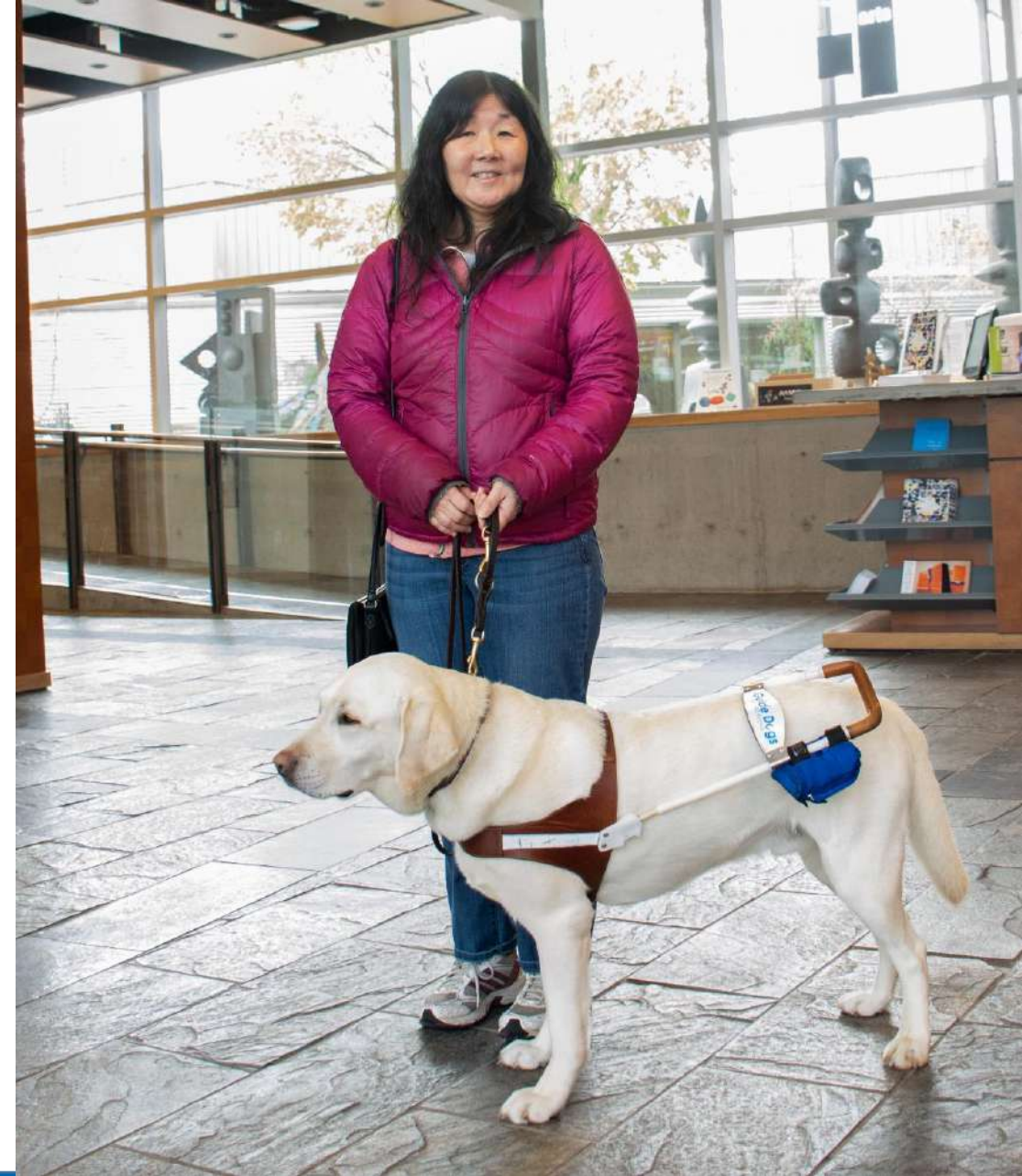
- Deployment of technology and innovation to increase meaningful access.

# An Architect's Perspective



# Why Prioritize it?

- ✔ **Meaningful access = meeting real needs of all users, not just code minimums**
- ✔ **Early planning = lower cost, fewer retrofits**
- ✔ **Accessibility is a strategic investment, futureproofs buildings, reduces risk, and expands market reach**
- ✔ **Focus on user experience, not just compliance**



# Where do we need help?

**Removing unnecessary "dams" by harmonizing legislation.**



# Building Height

- Unnecessary Customization due to Zoning By-Law Legislation
- Example: Definition of "Building Height", see also, "Grade"



# Building Height

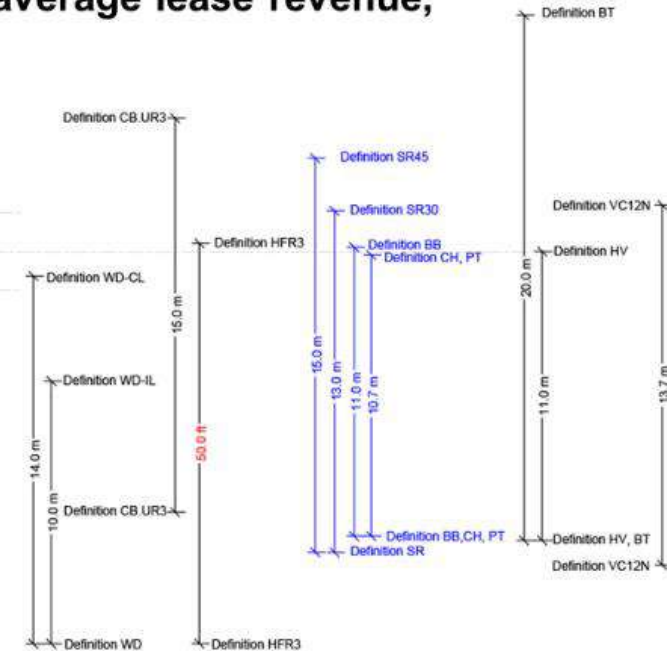
- Project's *cap rate* feasibility target required a 3rd storey
- Theorycrafting: Assume all the same except for "*building height*" in Zoning By-laws

- the same medium density mid-rise apartment building, same lot, same sloping site, same urban density, same property value \$ per sq.m, same average lease revenue, but different in 10 municipalities in NS, ON, & BC ...

- 9 different definitions out of 10 for "height"



- 6 different definitions out of 10 for "grade"



# Building Height

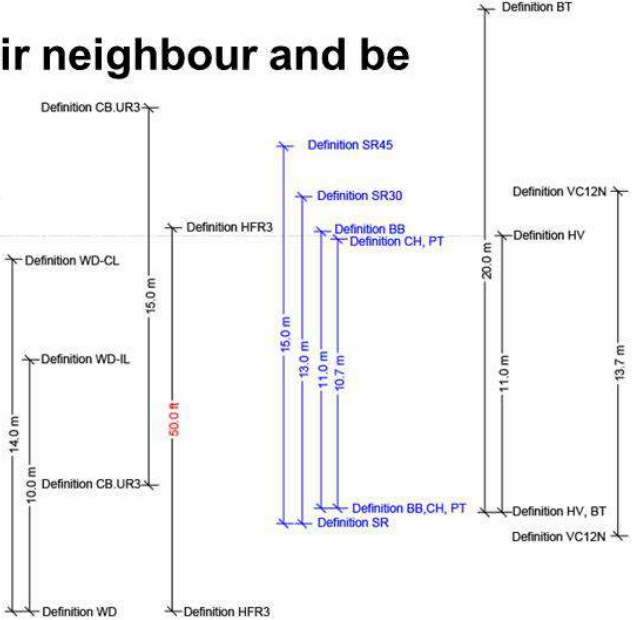

- Project's *cap rate* feasibility target required a 3rd storey
- In 3 of 10 municipalities, it's a No-Go. In 4 of 10, it's a 4th storey (or more) of dwelling units.



# Building Height

- What's the problem? Disagreement about a distance between 2 points?
- No, the purpose of "*building height*" is not necessarily measuring building height.

- Written text describing this geometry problem:
- How to limit an Owner's ability to reduce sunlight on their neighbour and be respectful of neighbourhood's scenic views.



- Why are we describing 3D laws in written text?  
Why not describe in a legislated 3D environment?

# Accessible Parking Ratio

Required number of  
Accessible Spaces per 100  
Required Parking Spaces in  
10 Municipalities in NS, ON,  
and BC?

5                      3  
1                      2                      4



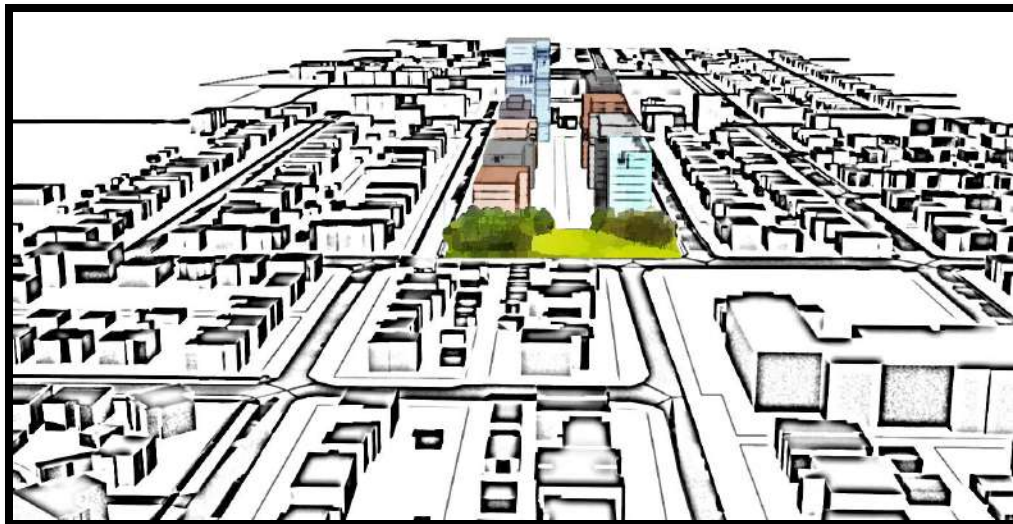
# Theorycraft Challenge:

1. How to harmonize legislation in only two places (all 3 levels of gov't):
  - a) # of Accessible Parking Spaces per 100 required Parking Spaces
  - b) Building height for a mid-rise multi-unit residential building?
2. How can we implement *3D models as legislation*?



Like a dye, for an MRI.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a 3D model (in metric) is worth a million.



# **Embedding Accessibility from the Start**

# Prioritize Meaningful Access Decision-Making from the Start

- **Start Early:** Integrate accessibility goals from Day 1 – embed them in feasibility studies, site selection, and initial design
- **Decision Hierarchy:** Prioritize inflexible criteria (laws, site constraints, budget) first, then flexible ones (finishes, furnishings).
- **Cost Efficiency:** Most accessibility features are low-cost if planned early; late-stage changes are expensive.

**Early decisions shape project success and cost!**

# Use Proven Strategies

- Use RHFAC prerequisites as a guiding framework
- Embed meaningful access into project goals
- Navigate legislative requirements and site constraints
- Balance accessibility with budget pressures
- Prioritize all decisions (inflexible to flexible)
- Reconfirm assumptions
- Identify and resolve conflicts early
- Seek multi-benefit solutions

# **Assembling the Right Team**

# Bring Accessibility Expertise Early

- **Team Composition:** Include architects, engineers, cost consultants, accessibility specialists (RHFAC Professionals), and key collaborators from the start.
- **Best Practice:** The lead designer should have both architectural and RHFAC expertise or engage an RHFAC Professional early for milestone reviews.
- **Team Structure:** RHFAC Professional/ Accessibility consultant closely tied to the architect.



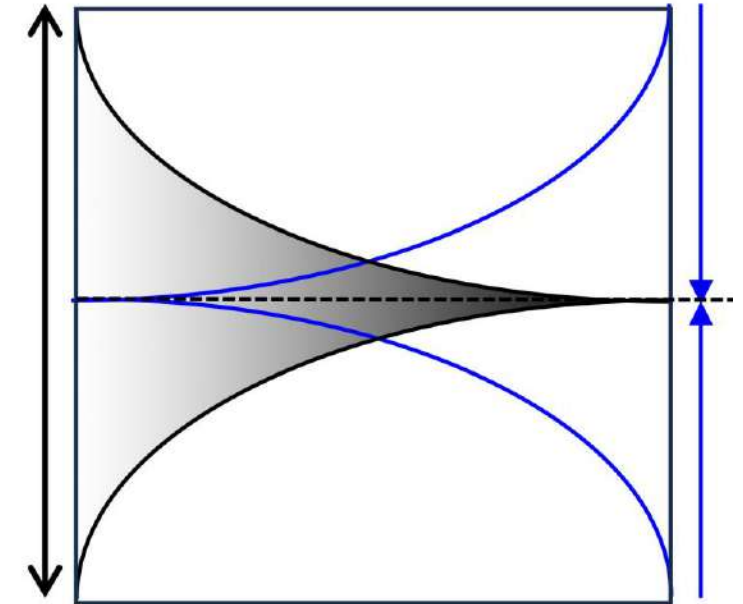
# The Right Team Structure

Structure Type	RHFAC Professional/ Accessibility Consultant Role	Efficiency/Effectiveness
<b>Dual-role Architect</b>	Architect is also RHFAC Professional	Highest (best practice)
<b>Early RHFAC Involvement</b>	RHFAC Professional as sub-consultant to Architect	High (if involved from Day 1)
<b>Late/Periodic Reviews</b>	RHFAC Professional under Owner, milestone reviews	Low (to be avoided)

# **Engaging at the Right Stages**

# Project Stages

- **Phase 1: Feasibility** – Confirm site, budget, schedule, access targets.
- **Phase 2: Logistics** – Finalize structure, core, main circulation .
- **Phase 3: Functionality** – Freeze wall locations, confirm room functions.
- **Phase 4: Description** – Finalize specs, drawings, RHFAC submission.



- **Continuous feedback and coordination**

- ***Budget accuracy = accuracy % in 4D x communication efficiency %***

# Why this is important?



- Accessibility and RHFAC targets must be integrated from the very beginning (Phase 1) and tracked through every phase.
- Major design decisions (site, structure, circulation, accessibility) should be finalized early to avoid costly changes later.
- Each phase builds on the previous one
  - Errors or omissions early on become much harder (and more expensive) to fix later.



# Key Takeaways

1. Start with access: early integration saves time and money
2. Build the right team: engage all key players early and keep them involved
3. Plan for success: use proven strategies to reduce friction and deliver accessible, inclusive buildings

**Let's build better, together—prioritizing meaningful access from the very beginning.**

# Don't Reinvent the Wheel

- **Use RHFAC Methodology:** The RHF has developed a rating survey, in collaboration with people with disabilities, to measure meaningful access using common language and methodology.
- **Measure & Improve:** What gets measured, gets done! RHFAC allows you to benchmark your site current level of access and monitor progress.
- **Lead by Example:** Create a policy that all new public infrastructure and community buildings must be RHFAC Gold.

# Momentum is Building



**2,500+**

Sites rated to date



**3800+**

Individuals trained



**650+**

RHFAC Professionals

# Leaders Embracing RHFAC

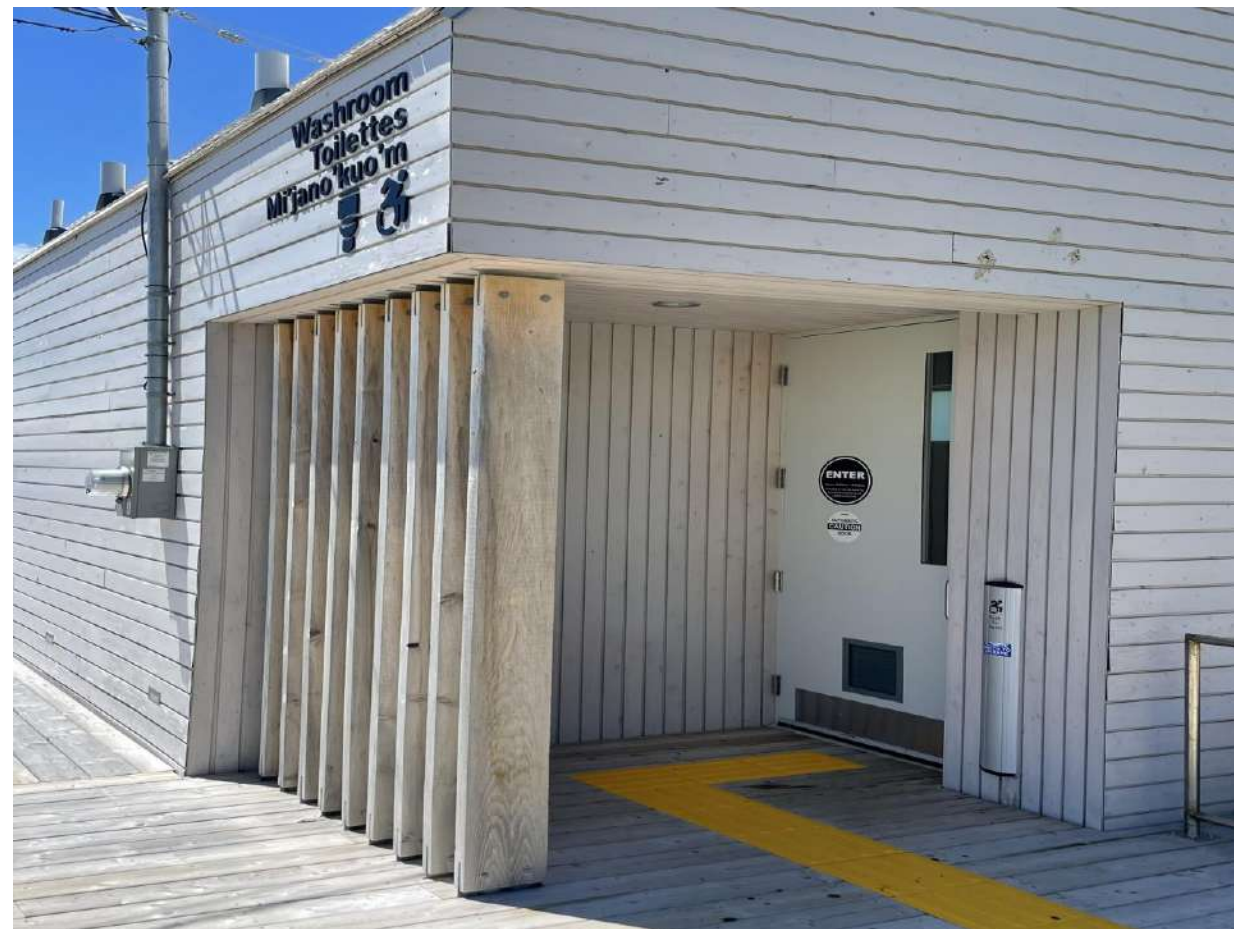
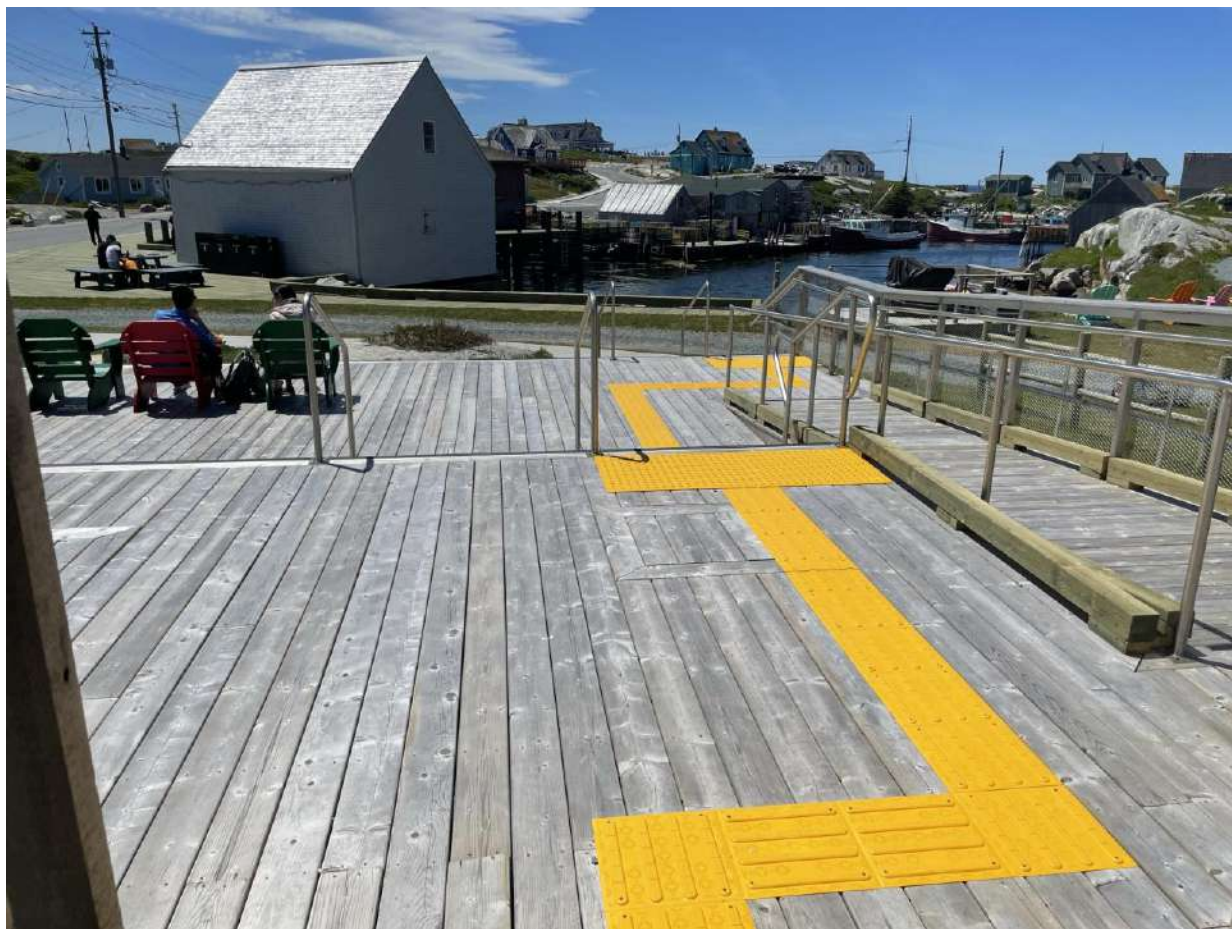


# Peggy's Cove Case Study



Since 2022





# What Can I Do?

- ✓ Review accessibility legislation and make **RHFAC** part of policy.
- ✓ Train your team to bring accessibility expertise on your projects through **RHFAC Training**.
- ✓ Connect with an **RHFAC Professional** and rate existing sites and ensure new construction is built with meaningful access in mind.



# **The Art of Better Buildings: A Pre-Construction Guidance Book Strategies towards RHFAC**

Available for download soon.

# Stay in Touch



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# Questions?

# Thank You

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