

# 2011

## A Framework and Action Plan for the Development of Sustainable Inclusive Design (SID) Awards in Alberta



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For more information on the AB SCI Initiative, contact the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) at (780) 424-6312 or go to [www.cpa-ab.org](http://www.cpa-ab.org).



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## Introduction

A house becomes a home where our spirits reside.

*. . . . The places where we dwell are where we invite friends and family in for holidays; where we have family portraits taken; where our children are raised, having their Birthday celebrations and growing from their nursery rooms into their teenage dens and later converting their rooms for other purposes when “the kids move out” (if/and/or when they move out). Even the most humble domain can be a thing of beauty (as long as it is appropriate, affordable and accessible) with our family being close to us, and with our sometimes simple but most precious memorabilia surrounding us.*

*An ancient Taoist proverb expressed this concept the best: ‘Cut out doors and windows in a house; it is the empty space inside that creates the usefulness of the house.’ And I suggest the ‘empty space’ becomes meaningful with the people and sometimes pets that occupy and are actively living within that space.*

*These walls that envelop us, then, become part of our beings; and conversely our beings become part of the spirit that lies within our abode.*

(Personal communication, M. Iantkowiak July 30, 2009)

Where we choose to reside (or on occasion, find no choice but to reside) is much more than simply environments to give us shelter and a place to sleep or eat; they can become part of our beings. But without being able to live within a house where one can freely function or enjoy basic needs of life, one’s being can stagnate. People with spinal cord injury have lived in institutional settings; adapted housing for their individual living needs, and for some, have struggled with dwellings that they could not readily adapt but who make due with assistance from friends or family.

The following proposed “Sustainable and Inclusive Design (SID) Awards” research and development work is the beginning of transforming what has frequently been “housing” into places where people with spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities can call “home.”

## Project Acknowledgements

The following two Working Groups have dedicated many reflections and dialogue to produce the following proposed framework model and strategy, in conjunction with the upcoming evaluation. We extend our deepest gratitude for their time and hard work.

The Builders' Award Working Group:

- Shirley Challand, Caresce Inc.
- Mike Hambly, Alberta Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
- Deanna Kirk, Caresce Inc.
- Heather Lissel, Alberta Spinal Cord Injury Action Strategy
- Anand Mishra, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Larry Pempeit, Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta)
- Ron Wickman, Architect specializing in accessible design

The Alberta Livable and Inclusive Communities Working Group, under the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies:

- Cynthia Burger, Accessible and Affordable Housing Working Group and the Advisory Committee on Accessibility, City of Calgary
- Ralph Hubele, Housing and Health Initiatives, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
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- Luc Marmelic, ElderNET, Calgary
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- David Pinney, Barrier-Free Access and Design Consulting

and

Mark Iantkow, Caresce Inc and Alberta Livable and Inclusive Communities Working Group.

## Executive Summary

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The “Sustainable and Inclusive Design (SID) Awards” Framework Model and the corresponding Strategy and Action Plan is the result of the 2010/11 research and development project conducted under the auspices of Caresce Inc. The research entailed two major phases:

- 1) a scan of accessible housing best practices and associated or parallel movements; and
- 2) a synthesis of the basic results of the scan to create an awards framework model.

These activities were performed in consultation with a range of professionals in related disciplines, including those with personal experience, and those involved with the design and construction industries.

The overarching assumption that forms the basis of both the research and the synthesis is that accessible housing design, and future development hereof, is a design-driven process and not a market driven one. Furthermore, the research and related synthesis suggests that the design and construction industries have not yet fully acknowledged nor have they consistently applied principles of universal design. The encompassing SID Awards Framework and related Strategy will function as a stimulus for the initiation of that cultural shift to take place through a three-category awards program.

The SID Awards Framework Model is based on some primary overarching assumptions:

- 1) The process in both establishing and promoting such a “Builders’ Award Program” must be design driven. While the housing marketplace is integrally involved with how people want to construct homes and how designers and contractors build homes, when new forms of design are shown to be functional and attractive, the market will eventually embrace these new ideas and incorporate them into the marketplace.
- 2) For the design and construction industries to fully embrace, understand and promote such an awards program within their professional fields, a professional cultural shift in thinking and acting is required.
- 3) The progression toward the design and construction industries adopting a high-profile builders’ award program dedicated to accessible and affordable housing will be gradual. There are a number of opportunities where (perhaps smaller and less significant but just as important) accessible housing design and construction awards can be established. For example, schools or programs in design could incorporate awards for access design; or regulatory agencies could encourage and develop awards for recognizing the importance in complying with barrier-free policies and requirements.

Please refer to the section on premises as an elaboration and further explanation of the foregoing assumptions.

## **Vision**

The design, development and construction industries throughout Alberta will implement accessible housing with a full understanding of universal design concepts.

## **Purpose**

To create an awards concept that recognizes excellence in the design, development and marketing of accessible homes in Alberta.

## **Title “Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards”**

The title “Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards” retains a very specific purpose, and a very specific connotative consideration for the term “sustainable.”

The overall phrase “Sustainable and Inclusive Design” is intended to integrate a more holistic and organic type of planning and design. The intention is to illustrate the interconnectedness and interdisciplinary considerations of how a person with a disability can truly be included within both their dwelling/living situation and within their community in general. Furthermore, it stresses how one is not to be only accommodated, but truly included for their lifetime, and not only when it is convenient or amenable to those creating public policy or to those who are conceptualizing how a built environment is designed and constructed (hence the first primary descriptor “Sustainable”).

“Sustainable,” within the context of the title and the overall awards program, is referring to the ability to continue to live in one’s preferred and appropriately designed dwelling for as long as the individual wishes. Sustainable is not considering the design and construction of a dwelling using environmentally friendly products or maintaining environmentally friendly processes in and around the home, while it is fully acknowledged these are important aspects of sustainability in other contexts.

## **Why three categories?**

Fully considering the multi-disciplinary and multi-entry point influences of the marketplace with an accessible housing builders’ award program, there are three categories of the SID Awards being proposed. These three categories are intended to reach not only the builders or contractors, but the designers who highly influence how



housing is initially planned and the regulatory mechanisms based on standards of design and construction.

The three proposed categories are:

- SID Builders' Award
- SID Designers' Award
- SID Access Development Award

## **The SID Awards Framework Model**

The Framework Model outlines the structure of the proposed awards program. There are six components within the framework, which are listed as broad concepts since future sponsors may require some latitude to apply their own organizations nuances to the awards. For instance, it will be up to the sponsoring organization to determine whether the award will be in a plaque or trophy form and where and when the awards will be presented.

The six Framework Model components are:

- Sponsors
- Promotion of awards program
- Eligibility
- Application process
- Adjudication process
- Presentation and follow up

## **The SID Awards Strategy and Action Plan**

The Strategy and Action Plan proposes how the SID Awards Framework Model can be implemented. This strategy is based on the assumption that a cultural shift in the planning, development, design and construction industries will be a gradual process. Following are recommendations to help facilitate that cultural shift:

a) To recognize and work with the various entry points where the design and construction industries will be most receptive toward shifts in more accessible housing.

b) To recognize and work with the design and construction process from the early stages of communities (or the beginning of a housing shift in a community) to the end point of final construction and overall community development.

c) To become part of a more holistic movement in housing design and construction (hence, the involvement with both sustainability and more physical and social inclusion of design and construction outcomes).

In keeping with these recommendations, several opportunities already exist where we as a society can encourage more involvement in accessible housing and the consequential development of an accessible housing awards strategy. The SID Award Framework Model, then also would be reinforced by a strategy where one could enter the marketplace and eventually grow toward more inclusive (universal) design concepts through “15 entry points/stepping stones.” These are as follows:

**Entry Points/Stepping Stones:**

1. Visitability
2. Supportive living
3. Sustainable and green building movement
4. Subdivision and community design
5. New construction
6. Renovations
7. Design and construction education
8. Certification
9. Legislative environment (Provincial Acts and Municipal By-laws)
10. Regulatory mechanisms (codes and standards)
11. Professional associations
12. Design and construction competitions
13. Real estate and transient populations
14. Journals, guidelines, buyers’ guides and professional resources
15. Centre of excellence

The SID Awards research also recognizes how the Framework and Strategy has great potential to complement or build upon other parallel movements such as:

- Aging in place
- Architecture for Humanity
- Barrier free design
- Co-housing movement
- Co-op housing movement
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home for Life™ Movement
- Human centered design
- Livable housing design
- New urbanism
- Smart communities
- Sustainable and accessible movement
- Sustainable/green building movement
- Transit oriented development
- Universal design

## **A Livable and Inclusive Communities Evaluation of the SID Awards Framework and Strategy**

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies out of Winnipeg is currently conducting research around the application of a very organic and holistic planning and evaluative tool entitled the “Livable and Inclusive Planning and Evaluation Tool Model.” This model has four major categories of planning and evaluative components which are currently being applied to the SID Awards Framework and Strategy (with the agreement and committed involvement from the Builders’ Award Working Group members). The four categories of these measurement components are:

- 1) Ensuring involvement of or linkages to community components;
- 2) Observing the various “overlays” of diverse populations and analyzing barriers that may inhibit progression toward the vision of the project;
- 3) Analyzing the core actions and reflections that would be consistent with a more holistic planning and evaluation approach; and
- 4) Observations with regard to alternative approaches or mechanisms that may not be evident within the aspects of the awards being analyzed.

### **Premises**

The synthesis of the research and various discussions, both within the Builders’ Award Working Group and the consultants working with various professionals, has determined the following premises to be vital for the future application of the SID Awards:

*Premise 1:* The Builders’ Award Framework Model is required to be appropriately conceived and framed prior to promotion of the overall awards concept to potential sponsors.

*Premise 2:* A cultural-paradigm shift (to one that reflects a more accessible, diverse and holistic thinking and general practice) is required by professionals who conduct the design and construction of housing in Alberta.

*Premise 3:* A shift in building design and construction professional culture depends upon many factors and influences.

*Premise 4:* Beyond a number of specific influences that contribute to an eventual cultural shift in thinking and building/design practice by professionals, the planning, design and construction processes within Alberta need to be considered in order to implement any effective Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards program.

*Premise 5:* By associating the awards with the “inclusive design” of housing for people aging in place or people with disabilities with “sustainable design”, the intention is to

illustrate how accessible dwellings can become homes that can be adapted for future living needs.

*Premise 6:* Any potential sponsor for the awards program is to be intricately linked or involved with vital aspects and functions of housing design and/or construction.

*Premise 7:* Accessible housing design and construction is a design driven process, and not market driven.

*Premise 8:* A more holistic design and construction paradigm of thinking and acting depends upon interdisciplinary or even cross-disciplinary work.

*Premise 9:* The movements entitled “Parallel” should all be recognized as having great potential to complement what the Builders’ Award Working Group is trying to accomplish with a Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards program; yet it should also be recognized how such parallel movements may have more impetus for design and construction paradigm shifts than does access design.

## **Recommendations**

The synthesis of the research and various discussions within the Builders’ Award Working Group and the consultants working with various professionals has determined the following recommendations to be vital for the creation of the SID Awards:

*Recommendation 1:* With affordable accessible housing stakeholders and the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) taking primary roles, a close liaison with both the Home for Life™ group in Edmonton and Accessible Housing Society in Calgary as loci for accessible housing design, construction and related awards program promotion is recommended.

*Recommendation 2:* Create three categories of the award – Builders’ Award; Designers’ Award; and Access Development Award; with a separate sponsor for each award category.

*Recommendation 3:* Allow the flexibility of the three categories to be either provincially based or locally based; and if locally based, the framework could expand to duplicating similar awards in various municipal jurisdictions within Alberta.

*Recommendation 4:* Approach and market the three awards with the following organizations: Canadian Home Builders’ Association (a Calgary region contact has been approached with an idea behind a Sustainable and Inclusive Design Builders’ Award in connection with renovations); Interior Designers of Alberta (to potentially sponsor a

Sustainable and Inclusive Design Designer’s Award); and the Safety Codes Council (to potentially sponsor the Sustainable and Inclusive Design Access Development Award).

*Recommendation 5:* Examine and choose to concentrate on all or a selection of the 15 entry points and stepping stones as listed in the Strategy.

*Recommendation 6:* Carefully define, in all SCI related materials, the type of “sustainability” with which the SID Awards program is based.

## The Next Step

Work of the Builders’ Award Working Group consisted of an international scan of best practices and the development of a framework and strategy to promote and implement an awards program. The next step is to market the three category program with the three most promising sponsors for the award categories. The three most promising sponsors are: The Canadian Home Builders’ Association, Calgary Region (for the SID Builders’ Awards); the Interior Designers of Alberta (for the SID Designers’ Award); and the Safety Codes Council (for the Access Development Award).

# Foundations

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## Background

### **Current Focus on the Market and “the End Product”**

For a number of years, the planning, design and building industries have focused on “market-driven processes” where it is contended that the home building and construction industries respond to what the market demands. Naturally, the housing markets are integrally involved from our perspectives of accessible and affordable housing and we must consider the market trends and how we can “fit in” with such trends. Yet it is those with ingenuity, creative thinking and planning who will benefit from leading the market with more universal design concepts as our populations shift and age. In actuality, it is often the market that responds to new innovations in design, rather than the other way around.

Over the past decade or so the accessible and affordable housing movement has adopted a similar overall philosophical perspective as the planning, design and construction industries in that we have assumed that the end product is where we should focus, and that such an end product is primarily dependent upon the market or demands for such housing accommodation needs. Hence, we continue to try to “showcase the market” by stressing demographics and demands for home adaptations and the associations between seniors and people with disabilities.

### **A Progression Toward the End Product**

It is not only the end product and demographics or market demand where we have the most potential gains for future Accessible Builders’ Awards. The reality is, the end product of accessible/affordable and sustainable housing will result out of some complex and often dynamic processes that continue to occur within both our society and the housing construction industries. The following Framework Model weaves in these complex and dynamic processes, through the introduction of three categories of awards.

### **Home Building Design and Construction Processes**

It is important to recognize that there are many dynamic influential entities and processes that home building (and eventual construction of any built environment for that matter) adopts to determine how our living environments are constructed. The following is a point form schematic of these processes (not doing justice to the complexity involved):

- schools of design and educational programs; trades education (formal and informal); planning professional education programs
- provincial legislation (Municipal Government Act, the Safety Codes Act, the Alberta Building Code)
- municipal master plans and local legislation
- municipal planning and building
- subdivision planning and design (and related regulation)
- housing availability, housing trends, housing options
- housing sustainability and responding to individual or group need

What is just as vital as the end product of a fully functional home that can be adapted for a resident with any type or level of disability is the process(es) in reaching such an end product. We often attempt to sell the idea of a universal design concept to a builder or designer, without taking those necessary baby steps of promoting a design and construction process along the way (hence the importance of design school; program education, regulatory mechanisms and social policy leading up to and including the final construction of a dwelling in the end).

## Awards Program Foundational Concepts

### **Title: “Sustainable and Inclusive Design (SID) Awards”**

The title “Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards” retains a very specific purpose, and a very specific connotative consideration for the term “sustainable.”

The overall phrase “Sustainable and Inclusive Design” is intended to integrate a more holistic and organic type of planning and design. The intention is to illustrate the interconnectedness and interdisciplinary considerations of how a person with a disability can truly be included within both their dwelling/living situation and within their community in general. Furthermore, it stresses how one is not to be only accommodated, but truly included for their lifetime, and not only when it is convenient or amenable to those creating public policy or to those who are conceptualizing how a built environment is designed and constructed (hence the first primary descriptor “Sustainable”).

“Sustainable,” within the context of the title and the overall awards program, is referring to the ability to continue to live in one’s preferred and appropriately designed

dwelling for as long as the individual wishes. Sustainable is not considering the design and construction of a dwelling using environmentally-friendly products or maintaining environmentally-friendly processes in and around the home, while it is fully acknowledged these are important aspects of sustainability in other contexts.

**Vision**

The design, development and construction industries throughout Alberta will implement accessible housing with a full understanding of universal-design concepts.

**Purpose**

To create an awards concept that recognizes excellence in the design, development and marketing of accessible homes in Alberta.



# Framework Model

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## Award Categories

### **SID Builders' Award**

An awards program oriented specifically to both the livable/sustainable *construction* working in unison with safe, equitable and functional access for seniors and people with disabilities.

This category would concentrate on the contractors and builders of housing. This award category would recognize the quality of construction and how the builder may have incorporated features to help maintain the longevity of the home, while also concentrating on genuine accessibility.

### **SID Designers' Award**

An awards program oriented to livable/sustainable *design* concepts for safe, equitable and functional access to housing for seniors and people with disabilities. This award category would aim at inciting creative competition from designers and garner a “contagious interest and dedication” toward a more holistic approach to planning and design.

This second category of the award would focus on how the home was designed. This award would recognize unique layout of fixture considerations and whether it exceeded standard expectations of accessible design.

### **SID Access Development Award**

An awards program oriented to livable/sustainable design concepts for safe, equitable and functional *access to structures in community* for seniors and people with disabilities.

This third category of the award would be more general, encompassing barrier-free access to buildings available to the general public. The award would recognize those structures that have not only complied with the Alberta Building Code and the complementary document the *Barrier Free Design Guide*, but have made strides in considering creative means of barrier-free access which go beyond the code.

## Award Sponsors

### **SID Builders' Award**

Recommended sponsor: Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) (concentrating on renovations)

Rationale: there have been initial communications with the CHBA-Calgary. Some interest was expressed in the potential sponsorship of a renovations related award that focuses on access design. CHBA-Calgary has emphasized how any award that would have the same profile as the national Sales and Marketing Award would be unrealistic for access design at this time (such a high-profile award is extremely expensive and involves a wide range of disciplines and complex adjudication at a national level), but there may be potential for a local award that could centre on access design modifications for housing.

Other potential sponsors:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

### **SID Designers' Award**

Recommended sponsor: Interior Designers of Alberta

Rationale: many of the design considerations for effective, safe and functional access to living environments rely upon how interiors are both configured and finished. It is fully recognized how architects are educated well within this realm; however, with the many higher-profile competitions and design recognitions with which architects concentrate, we may have greater success with approaching the Interior Designers of Alberta for a more imminently sponsored award. Again, this award category would be centred on the *design* of a truly accessible/livable dwelling.

Other potential sponsors:

Alberta Association of Architects

### **SID Access Development Award**

Recommended sponsor: Safety Codes Council (SCC)

Rationale: the SCC has a history of supporting barrier-free design in relation to the Alberta Building Code ever since the inception of the organization during the early 1990s. They have illustrated their support with the creation of the Barrier Free Council (one of ten standing councils, with equal rights and privileges of all other councils under SCC) and with the first recognized liaison position between two standing councils – the Barrier Free Council and the Building Technical Council. The latter council being key in

the final approvals of code changes for each Building Code cycle; and the compilation of a formal education program on Barrier Free Building Code requirements for Safety Codes Officers throughout Alberta. SCC is very receptive to the idea of an award that they will sponsor and present at each of their annual summits held in late May/early June of each year. However, the award must concentrate on the Alberta Building Code and would apply to structures that allow access to the general public (including multi-family housing).

Other potential sponsors:

- Alberta Professional Planners Institute
- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
- Canadian Institute of Planners
- Community Planners Association of Alberta
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Urban Development Institute

## Promotion of Award Program

The various awards competitors who would be targeted would vary according to the category. While the “Builders” category would be promoted to contractors and trades, the “Designers” category would be promoted to the various design disciplines through their respective associations. The “Access Development” category would have a broader range of interested applicants, and could be promoted through various municipal governments, along with provincial associations such as the Safety Codes Council.

What makes this categorization exciting is that the awards could not only be beneficial and highlighted within specific disciplines, but within the community as well – bringing the notoriety of such awards to a higher level and much more prominent to our overall Alberta public.

A variety of promotional mechanisms:

- Professional associations
- Municipal and provincial government planning and regulatory branches or departments
- Non-profit agencies and “governmental-arms-length” NGOs
- Private planning, design and construction companies
- Post-secondary education institutions
- Building-product manufacturers
- Adaptive-equipment manufacturers

Since the entire premise behind this three category award is how the progression toward more inclusive and livable housing for diverse populations is based on a design-driven process, then it will be imperative to showcase examples of what we mean by a “livable/sustainable and inclusive dwelling design.” When marketing the idea of these awards to the three recommended sponsors, there will be a need to showcase some current examples of what we view to be desired design and construction.

## Eligibility

The general criteria for eligibility for the three categories are:

- a) The application must involve a design or construction project that has been completed within the last 5 years.
- b) The application must relate to the specific practice of professionals involved in each category (e.g. the Builders’ Award must relate to contractors or sub trades; the Designers’ Award must relate to architects or interior designers, etc.).
- c) The application must give evidence of community involvement for the nomination (e.g. a non-profit organization or a group of individuals with lived experience related to the benefits of the design or construction project).
- d) The application must meet at least three of the criteria listed within the adjudication section, with at least one of the criteria being a combination of both accessibility and sustainability.

## Application Process

While the application forms for the three categories of the award could be available through all the various promotional mechanisms listed above, the specific sponsor for each award category would receive and process the applications for that specific award. Furthermore, the sponsoring organization’s logo and identity would be integral with each specific award application form (and any accompanying outline or application manual).

Application processes could vary from award to award as the sponsoring entity would have the ultimate say as to how the organization would receive applicants.

Applications would be considered on an annual basis. Unsuccessful applicants from previous years would be resubmitted up to a five year period.

## Adjudication

### Criteria

A potential applicant must meet at least three of the following criteria, with at least one of the three criteria concentrating on accessibility and sustainability.

The complementary web-based Residential Accessibility Assessment Tool will be utilized for the adjudication process. This tool is a composite of best practice access assessment criteria for housing people with varied disabilities and seniors.

Criteria include:

- accessibility and sustainability
- creativity
- innovation
- flexibility and adaptability
- dignity for the resident(s)
- integrated design and construction
- functionality and aesthetics
- part of community

### Panel

The adjudication panel would be comprised of one professional in the related practice realm for each award category (e.g. an AAA member specializing in sustainability and/or accessibility); a member from the sponsoring organization; and a member from a non-profit organization dedicated to universal design or barrier-free design (NB: each adjudicator must clearly illustrate no conflict of interest with regard to specific entries of the competition).

### Process

Following the application deadline, three adjudicators will be chosen from a pool of adjudicating volunteers. These volunteers will:

- have a particular understanding of awards processes;
- be knowledgeable in their respective practices;
- come from the non-profit, governmental or private sectors.

The successful award winning applicant will be informed, in writing, of the decision that the adjudicating panel has made and when the award will be presented. The rationale behind the decision will be included within the notification.

The adjudication process may involve site visits to the facility with which the application applies. The Alberta Spinal Cord Injury Action Strategy's Residential Accessibility Assessment Tool will be the basis behind evaluating the basics of access design for the facility.

## Presentation and Follow Up

### **Presentation**

Most organizations that deliver awards programs present their awards at a gala event, which can be an Annual General Meeting or a major annual summit or symposium. The respective "SID Awards" would be no exception and would stand alongside other awards presented at such events with the related sponsoring organization. However, the point remains that these awards would be part of the design and construction industry or related regulatory event.

### **Follow up and Latent Benefits**

To make these awards more coveted than the average award, an agreement could be entered into by a number of journal publications and a number of "partnering agencies" where the award winner for a specific year would be continually highlighted in their respective media. The award recipients would then receive year-round advertisement rather than recognition at a one-time event. This would require partnerships from a number of governmental, non-profit and private industries. These partnerships would grow as the prominence of the awards program develops.

# Strategy and Action Plan

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## Foundational Premises

As the Builders' Award program research progressed, the following premises emerged from various forms of feedback, discussions and materials acquired.

1. The Builders' Award Framework Model is required to be appropriately conceived and framed prior to the promotion of the overall awards concept to potential sponsors.

*Rationale:* A framework and related strategy is a prerequisite to promoting the overall concept of an accessible housing builders' award program in Alberta.

2. A cultural paradigm shift (to one that reflects a more accessible, diverse and holistic thinking and general-practice) is required by professionals who conduct both design and construction of housing in Alberta.

*Rationale:* While there has been good progress toward design and construction of accessible and affordable housing in Alberta, and some good examples of such housing with some significant knowledge and interest being demonstrated by a selection of related professionals, the design and construction industries have not yet entrenched these concepts within their professional culture.

3. A shift in building design and construction professional culture depends upon not one, but many factors and influences.

*Rationale:* It is important to acknowledge there is no one factor or building design and construction influence that would stimulate a shift in practice thinking and acting, which would tend toward more of a universal design construction for housing in general. The "entry point and stepping stones" listed within the encompassing strategy form the basis and description of such influential factors.

4. Beyond a number of specific influences that may contribute to a cultural shift in thinking and building/design practice by professionals, the planning, design and construction *processes* within Alberta need to be considered in order to implement an effective Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards program.

*Rationale:* The *way* in which our society conceives of housing, designs housing and constructs housing is as important as the conceptions, designs and constructions themselves. How the various industries and levels of government work with the concepts of accessible and sustainable design is vital. If a designer conceives of an

effective way to address an access concern in a plan for a dwelling, it is important any related contractor, sub-trades or even the initial approving authority for the plans understand the concept as well. The sometimes subtle nuances of access design can be heavily reliant upon how the entire planning and design process is implemented by all professionals along the line.

5. By associating the “inclusive design” of housing for people aging in place or persons with disabilities with “sustainable design”, the intention is to illustrate how accessible dwellings can become homes that can be adapted for future living needs.

*Rationale:* It is stressed that housing can be adapted for future usage and still be attractive and functional for current stages in life or for residents who may not acquire a disability.

The “sustainability” with which we are concentrating then, is not necessarily linked or involved with being environmentally friendly; although if one remains in their home for their lifetime or if one can easily adapt a home for future diverse usages, such housing has less stress on our environment.

6. Any potential sponsor for the awards program is to be intricately linked or involved with vital aspects and functions of housing design and construction.

*Rationale:* It is important to have industries that are intricately involved with the design and construction of housing participate in the awards program. While it is recognized that the SID Awards program will concentrate on accessible home design and construction, the professionals who conduct such design and construction is the focal point here, and not the future range of residents themselves.

7. Accessible housing design and construction is a design-driven process, and not market driven.

*Rationale:* Certainly, the housing market is intricately involved with design and construction of dwellings, but innovative designs, and appealing advertisements, has led to shifts in housing design that have had obvious functionality and overall utility. With some high-profile showcasing of innovative accessible housing design, the Alberta housing market is ready for a new way of thinking about housing design which includes accessibility and sustainability.

8. A more holistic design and construction paradigm of thinking and acting depends upon interdisciplinary or even cross-disciplinary work.

*Rationale:* To properly conceive and institute a more holistic design and construction paradigm, it is important we note how various disciplines must communicate on an increased and creative/reflective scale and basis. Groups of specialists who continue to



focus on disability or serving diverse populations, for example, are encouraged to also become more knowledgeable about planning and design. Simultaneously, those disciplines traditionally involved with planning, design and construction are encouraged to become more knowledgeable about diverse populations' housing needs. It is also just as important to clearly illustrate the benefits the design and building industries will derive from universally designed homes as it is to illustrate such benefits to future home owners. These processes began over the past three decades, but it is in dyer need of expansion.

9. The movements we have entitled "parallel" should all be recognized as having great potential to complement what the SCI Action Strategy is trying to accomplish with a Sustainable and Inclusive Design Awards program; yet it should also be recognized how such parallel movements may have more impetus for design and construction paradigm shifts than does access design.

*Rationale:* Some parallel movements (such as the sustainability movement as partially entrenched within our awards title) can complement what our awards program wishes to accomplish. However, some movements may have developed more of a following and have greater influences upon design and construction. We cannot assume that great synergy will develop in partnering with such movements; but it is important to recognize the complex interactions and multiple influences of such movements.

## General Strategy

Creating and promoting an awards program for builders to consider more accessible and affordable housing designs is an excellent avenue toward fulfilling the housing needs of people with disabilities and seniors, but this is only *one avenue* of many. It is also important to recognize the "Builders' Award" is the final product of a long process of systemic change and operational mechanisms that must be put into place.

Currently there are many slowly evolving movements in our society in relation to housing, where we could build an excellent relationship for a more holistic building design paradigm. It is recommended we do our best to either fully complement such movements or actually become part of a more holistic building design paradigm.

With the foregoing premises in mind, an overall strategy to enter the design and construction industries from a number of disciplines and a number of processes "along the home-building highway" would be the most effective means to stimulate both transitional/incremental and transformational change. The general strategy for a "SID Awards Program," therefore, should:

a) Recognize and work with the various entry points where the design and construction industries will be most receptive toward shifts in more accessible housing.

b) Recognize and work with the entire design and construction processes from the beginnings of communities (or the beginnings of housing shifts in communities) to the end point of final construction and overall community development.

c) Become part of a more holistic movement in housing design and construction (hence, the involvement with both sustainability and more physical and social inclusion of design and construction outcomes).

## Entry Points and Stepping Stones

To “enter the housing market” at one point (traditionally the end point of construction and sales or renters’ market) is insufficient and would not likely bring an encouraging response from home builders and developers. But, to enter the market from various standpoints, various disciplinary perspectives and from a holistic-movement stimulus, could promote more interest and genuine involvement from the homebuilding industries. The following itemizes some salient “entry points” where an award that involves these entries into the homebuilding system could be very advantageous. These are true “entry points” where an accessible and affordable housing building award could be first established at a foundational level. Fifteen entry points are identified:

1. Visitability
2. Supportive living
3. Sustainable and green building movement
4. Subdivision and community design
5. New construction
6. Renovations
7. Design and construction education
8. Certification
9. Legislative environment (provincial acts and municipal by-laws)
10. Regulatory mechanisms (codes and standards)
11. Professional associations
12. Design and construction competitions
13. Real estate and transient populations
14. Journals, guidelines, buyers’ guides and professional resources
15. Centre of excellence

Simultaneously, these “entry points” could lay the foundation for further creation and blossoming of an awards program for more universally designed housing. The entire range of housing options, such as; multi-family, mixed housing, condominiums, rental properties, supportive living environments, or group homes could be impacted here. We, therefore, use the term “stepping stones” to emphasize how a venture or approach

to accessible and affordable housing may have “entered the market” but it could also lead to the next step in a more holistic/universal design housing paradigm. One example listed below is “Visitability.” Visitability is the idea of creating a certain percentage of housing with a level entry and adequate space for doorways to allow wheelchair entry with an associated accessible lavatory on the same entry level. Such a concept will not only “enter the housing marketplace” but will eventually lead to more general universally designed housing options (hence, the “stepping stone” aspect of the visitability approach).

## Significant Planning and Design Paradigm Influences

**1. Visitability:** The concept of “visitability” originated in Europe by a woman with a physical disability. Eleanor Smith has been promoting the concept throughout North America since the mid 1990s. Visitability encompasses three general criteria for people using wheelchairs to “visit” a home: 1) incorporating a level entry into one of the home’s entrances; 2) retaining doorways with adequate width for wheelchair access; and 3) an accessible washroom located within the same level entry area of the home.

This concept was developed to provide people with adaptive mobility devices the ability to visit their friends, relatives and neighbours. However, this concept could inadvertently educate homeowners to fully embrace universal design for their respective homes. **Link:** SID Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Working in unison with the currently tabled Alberta Legislature Private Member’s Bill 505 on Visitability, affordable accessible housing stakeholders could nurture and expand housing in new neighbourhoods to ensure a basic level of entry and functionality for visitors using adaptive mobility devices. Actions would include communicating with, and building a network of supporters around, MLA Cal Dallas from Red Deer. Affordable accessible housing stakeholders could also ensure on-going communication with the University of Calgary study dedicated to the concept of visitable design (Professor John Brown and his research group).

**2. Supportive living:** Designated Assisted Living (DAL) housing is slowly becoming common place within Alberta, and the supportive living movement literally accommodates the needs of those people who may require more supports than what might be generally available in one’s own home setting. Creative designs for DAL facilities is continuing to provide more of a “group living” alternative for people who need some form of consistent daily-living supports, while still wanting a certain level of privacy and independence in their living environment. Since this is quickly becoming a practical option for people who are aging or living with a disability, such assisted living environments are becoming “stepping stones” to being situated in a congregated

setting, but within community rather than within a massive institution. **Link:** SID Builders' Award

*Strategy and Action:* Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, which is highly engaged in the supportive living movement, is involved with a strategy for the on-going promotion and evaluation of housing such as DAL environments in our province. The affordable accessible housing stakeholders could work in conjunction with and promote such a movement, with on-going communications with designers and builders to promote applications for the first few Builders' Awards that relate to safe, affordable, and functionally accessible housing in Alberta.

**3. Sustainability movement:** The sustainable and green building movement has been growing over the past couple of decades. It is important to recognize that sustainable design does not only consider environmentally sensitive building practices, but also involves the durability and life-span of housing. In other words, while it is important to recognize and use building practices and materials that are environmentally friendly and extend the applications of such planning materials to be as efficient as possible, it is also important that one can reside in their home for as long as possible (implying some flexible designing in addressing one's overall evolving living environment necessities).

There are many parallels between accessible and affordable housing and sustainable designs; and the associations between these types of design will become more evident as our population ages, with more demand for holistic design concepts within housing generally. **Link:** SID Builders' Award and SID Designers' Award

*Strategy and Action:* There are a number of parallels and complementary goals behind sustainability and accessibility. Two examples are the future adaptability of a home that will ultimately save constant new construction costs and the recycling of building products that could be effectively used for barrier-free or universal design purposes. Affordable accessible housing stakeholders could tap into these connections and create a symbiosis with the sustainable and green building movements that are currently taking hold as a strong design and construction paradigm. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) – Neighborhood Development, just as one more example, retains two certification criteria clearly associated with our design awards concept – these criteria are “visitability” and “universal design.”

## Significant Design and Construction Process Stage Influences

**4. Subdivision and community design:** The way a specific house or multi-family housing unit is designed for more inclusive living is important, but the community in which the specific housing is situated is just as vital. Subdivision and community planning can enhance – or even be essential to – the way a resident can be involved

with their surrounding environment. What good would a fully accessible house be if it were situated at the summit of a steep slope, or in a community that simply was not navigable for a person owning or renting the living unit?

Over the past few decades there has been more attention given to pedestrian oriented communities, highlighting the physical and social involvement of residents with a myriad of diverse living requirements (ironically, often returning us to the very old/traditional village square concept where people could gather and feel part of community). **Link:** SID Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Just as the visitability movement may influence the initial access to single and multi-family dwellings for visitation to neighbours by people using adaptive mobility devices, so would the subdivision and community design affect access to various services and structures where the public depends upon community involvement and support. With close liaison with organizations such as the Safety Codes Council, access to these structures open to the public would be reinforced.

**5. New construction:** New construction trends continue to cater to the young and upwardly mobile single people who view physical adaptations with certain stigma (e.g. a lifting device in a home may appear to be for those seniors who need assistance from one level of a home to another). Developers and builders also continue to order massive quantities of construction materials at the lowest cost and with minimal overhead for “custom designs.” We have not evolved to the point where a more universally designed home could dictate the massive ordering of wider standard doorway widths (just as one example) at this point. However, as the new unique designs for accommodating the living needs of seniors and more diverse populations grows, so will the universality of building products. The massive orders of standard home building products and plans will gradually gravitate toward accommodating a wider range of home owners and renters. **Link:** SID Builders’, Designers’, and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Generally, promotion of access design within new construction will be a challenge, until our overall society embraces the concept of universal design that will fit with sustainability and functionality. The initial steps toward realizing these goals, it is suggested, would be to circumvent this difficult category with an overall “culture” of awards promoting accessibility – if the general community environment is literally filled with access features, it is suggested that all new construction will follow the leader.

**6. Renovations:** Home renovations are becoming more prevalent as people require various adaptations to their living environments as the family life cycle unfolds. One may need additional rooms for their children as the family expands, and then in later life as “the kids move out” the extra bedrooms become dens, exercise rooms or hobby rooms. Then, years later, one may want to downsize and adapt an older house to function as a small “retirement nest” for a senior couple, or even for a single senior who may have lost their spouse.

The point remains, there is a growing demand for renovations, and such a building industry niche is where a more holistic universal design can flourish. **Link:** SID Builders' and Designers' Award

*Strategy and Action:* The promotion of renovations with an initial Builders' Award concentrating on this vital realm of construction is most hopeful for success. Affordable accessible housing stakeholders could promote such an award as a pilot test in conjunction with CHBA.

## Education Influences

**7. Design and construction education:** Schools of design and their programs are slowly incorporating aspects of universal design into their courses. Such courses, however, are often provided as electives and are not part of the overall required curricula. However, there are exceptions where an entire course is dedicated to universal design concepts. As more equitable designs evolve in the community, and as more inclusive designs clearly illustrate an overall market response, the curricula for more inclusive design instruction will follow. **Link:** SID Builders', Designers', and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Both formal and informal modes of education in relation to overall community development, housing design and housing construction are absolutely vital. It is suggested the promotion of any awards programs for accessible housing be well fostered and nurtured through post-secondary educational institutes and through various professional organizations that are involved with certification (see the next section herein).

**8. Certification:** An example of how the overall social consciousness and design/construction paradigm toward serving more of a diverse home-owners' marketplace is the "Certified Aging in Place Specialist" program under the umbrella of the National Association of Home Builders in the US. Certification ensures a level of formal recognition for building processes or techniques. With the recognition that some disciplines have become over specialized in a deluge of certificates for every imaginable task for the respective discipline, some formal certificate programs are necessary and provide a good foundation for the subject at hand. **Link:** SID Builders', Designers', and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Certification functions hand in hand with awards programs, and it is strongly recommended that affordable accessible housing stakeholders link a certification program with the encompassing awards strategy. While a framework for some form of certification is beyond the scope of the current contractual work, there is great potential for the Residential Accessibility Assessment Tool that is currently under development to form a basis for a future certification program. The three award

categories would reinforce the “access certification” and any related awards as our movement grows.

## Legislative Influences

**9. Legislative environment (Provincial Acts and Municipal By-laws):** Key pieces of legislation in Alberta have a strong influence on planning, design and construction in communities and for structures generally. Two primary pieces of such legislation are the Safety Codes Act and the Municipal Government Act. There is occasional confusion as to which piece of legislation regulates specific built environment outcomes, but the point remains the two referenced pieces of provincial legislation form the basis for codes, standards and regulation for the design and construction of communities and buildings. Other forms of legislation may affect housing design and construction of course, and specific by-laws are constantly being updated to respond to growing demands within each specific municipality. **Link:** SID Builders’, Designers’, and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* A legislative base for planning, implementation and on-going regulation of access to housing is essential. Legislation may not necessarily be the first step toward industry adopting accessible housing design and construction, but a well-founded and coordinated legislative base is imperative for such housing needs.

**10. Regulatory mechanisms (codes and standards):** Perhaps the most significant code which influences housing in Alberta is the Alberta Building Code (specifically Part 9 of the code, dealing with smaller structures). What most of our Alberta public is not aware of is that there is virtually nothing in Part 9 that addresses barrier-free or accessible forms of design for residents with disabilities. The planning and design of single-family dwellings for any potential resident with a disability is very open to what the designer is able to research and incorporate into the related plans.

Other sections of the Alberta Building Code, particularly section 3.8, do influence designs for structures having public access, and the Barrier Free Design Guide complimenting each updated Alberta Building Code retains a section on recommendations for residential access. **Link:** SID Builders’, Designers’, and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Bill 505 is the beginning of such provincial legislation, and there could even be some form of an Accessible Housing Building Code developed to supplement Part 9 of our Alberta Building Code (Part 9 addresses objective-based building code requirements for smaller buildings under 600 square meters in area, which includes single family dwellings).

## Professional Culture Influences

**11. Professional associations:** Professional associations, unions, guilds and other forms of communities of practice all have a special influence upon how members of specific disciplines operate, and what the members pay attention to. If sustainable and inclusive housing design and construction concepts were entrenched as an overall practice within such organizational entities, much of our vision for more universally designed housing would naturally fall into place. **Link:** SID Builders', Designers', and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* How various professional organizations adopt (or in some cases do not adopt) design and building practices or related paradigms often provides some form of “triangulation” as to how well related disciplines are working with a particular building and design construct. That is, if we note a particular professional association conducting research or doing workshops on accessible and affordable housing, we will then have confirmation of a disciplinary cultural shift.

This is not to say professional organizations cannot stimulate cultural shifts in and of themselves – certainly, these “communities of practice” have great initial influences upon how designers and builders operate (for example, there are often forms of certification being promoted through professional organizations). Affordable accessible housing stakeholders could tap into these vital entry points/stepping stones that are salient professional organizations.

**12. Design and construction competitions:** High-profile competitions within disciplines (or even between disciplines and occasionally within an interdisciplinary context) promote new approaches to design and construction. One example over the past decade or so is the “Solar Decathlon” – an international competition which involves students from various programs of design to experiment with solar energy and related energy-efficient housing. Interestingly, the entry criteria for this competition also involves forms of universal design (e.g. level entry into the prototype design structure). **Link:** SID Builders', Designers', and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Design and construction competitions are organized, primarily, through three disciplinary organizational entities, and these are: professional associations, post-secondary educational institutions (comprising schools of design for instance), and regulatory agencies or bodies. A broad strategy of linking with such agencies or organizations that currently maintain and promote competitions would be the first step for affordable accessible housing stakeholders. The next step would be to analyze which of these competitions relate (even indirectly) with universal or access design goals (as with the Solar Decathlon referenced herein). A secondary and perhaps more ambitious strategy would be to encourage one of these organizational entities to create a competition related to a sustainable and inclusive design goal. Competitions



require just as much time and investment (often more so) than award programs, and such an activity would be a major project in and of itself.

**13. Real estate and transient populations:** One professional realm that requires specific attention is the realtors or the real estate business. How might our theory in relation to promoting “sustainable and inclusive designs” in a residence stand up when one’s living and house buying habits have revolved around “disposable housing” over the years? That is, there is a significant population that purchases their home with temporary ownership in mind. They believe in living in a house and choosing a design that might fit their needs while the children grow, then move to “a retirement community” in later years. There is no need to adapt their home or deal with expensive renovations as time elapses. They may even embrace the idea of being a “snow bird” – spending their winters in the southern US, and their summers in Alberta.

What may be of benefit here is how a more sustainable and inclusive design could accommodate that market of individuals moving from the more urban developed centres of Canada and North America to our municipalities in Alberta. There are those who move “closer to the mountains” (just as one example) to retire. While Kelowna and Victoria are popular retirement centres now, various parts of Alberta may become retirement centres with the aging population across our country. This is where some degree of marketing does “kick in” and the market will begin to respond to more sustainable and accessible designs for those migrating to our western provinces generally. **Link:** SID Builders’, Designers’, and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* The realty industry is of utmost importance with both awards and certification. It is suggested, however, that rather than approaching individual realtors or such umbrella organizations such as the Calgary Real Estate Board, that another sort of partnership could be promoted through the realtor’s certification process by encouraging an element of access design and related marketing within the realtor’s certification training and testing.

**14. Journals, guidelines, buyers’ guides and professional resources:** Journals and guides consistently influence how the design and construction industries conceive of and administer their various disciplines. Communities of practice have mutual influence upon what journals exist and even what articles are published. One must not underestimate the significance of journal articles and guidelines (the latter frequently evolving into standards or at least forming a framework for future standard practices). The various journals involving environmental design are too numerous to list here, but suffice to state the inclusion of articles dealing with access design in peer-reviewed journals can affect future housing design. **Link:** SID Builders’, Designers’, and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* Journals and professional publications of various sorts are not always easy to influence, therefore there is no guarantees for advertisement or article placements in these publications. If a high-profile demonstration project is under way or if a particular educational program or certification process is being developed in the area of access design, journals may well follow. Here again, there are complex and iterative relationships between professional publications and the related practice work environment. There is never any harm in promoting an advertisement or an article related to the future SID Builders' Award program in such professional publications.

**15. Centre of excellence:** The idea for some form of a "Centre of Excellence" has been considered in Alberta, in relation to accessible housing, for a few years. Centres of Excellence are traditionally linked to post-secondary educational institutions. They generally involve research and development in the field of endeavour with where they concentrate. **Link:** SID Builders', Designers', and Access Development Award

*Strategy and Action:* A Centre of Excellence could, indeed, build in a high-profile awards program. There are some advantages here, since the centre could be broader than one discipline and could encourage access design for entire communities and not simply restrict their focus to simply structures.

The catch is that Centres of Excellence take time, energy, human and logistical resources and a large amount of funding to gradually create such entities. Then they take even more time to build a reputation with the practices and disciplines with which they try to focus.

## Parallel Movements

The foregoing section of this strategy has referenced some specific and significant parallel movements such as "aging in place" and "sustainable building", but it is important to note how there are a great number of burgeoning new movements within environmental design. The following are a small sampling of such movements, without elaborating on their detailed visions and criteria:

- Aging in place
- Architecture for Humanity
- Barrier free design
- Co-housing movement
- Co-op housing movement
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home for Life™ Movement
- Human centered design
- Livable housing design
- New urbanism

- Smart communities
- Sustainable and accessible movement
- Sustainable/green building movement
- Transit oriented development
- Universal design

Such “parallel movements” can fully complement one another and lend to building a synergy never before experienced in the history of structures built for our common populations around the world. Simultaneously, however, some movements are highly promoted and hence more prominent than others (for example, access or inclusive design considerations can be left behind frequently).

## Evaluation by Livable and Inclusive Communities Canadian Centre on Disability Studies Model

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies out of Winnipeg is currently conducting research around the application of a very organic and holistic planning and evaluative tool entitled the “Livable and Inclusive Planning and Evaluation Tool Model.” This model has four major categories of planning and evaluative components which are currently being applied to the SID Awards Framework and Strategy (with the agreement and commitment from the Builders’ Award Working Group members). The four categories of these measurement components are:

- 1) ensuring involvement of or linkages to community components;
- 2) observing the various “overlays” of divers populations and analyzing barriers that may inhibit progression toward the vision of the project;
- 3) analyzing the core actions and reflections that would be consistent with a more holistic planning and evaluation approach; and
- 4) observations with regard to alternative approaches or mechanisms that may not be evident within the aspects of the awards being analyzed.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** With affordable accessible housing stakeholders and the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) continuing primary roles, a close liaison with both the Home for Life™ group in Edmonton and the Accessible Housing Society in Calgary as loci for accessible housing design, construction and related awards program promotion is recommended.

*Rationale:* It is imperative that the planning, design and construction industries receive a coordinated and well-strategized approach from organizations promoting more

universally oriented housing designs in our province. The disability movement is very broad and has been fractured to some extent due to varied populations and organizational mandated commitments. Without a consistent message from the diverse population sector on housing needs, we could witness one accessible housing incentives program not functioning in perfect unison with another. It is strongly suggested for the Home for Life™ group in Edmonton and the Accessible Housing Society in Calgary to be key “clearing houses” when it comes to accessible, affordable and appropriately functional housing for people with disabilities and seniors. If Affordable Accessible Housing Stakeholders work in unison with these two salient organizations, many relevant stakeholders within accessible housing will naturally follow suit.

**Recommendation 2:** Create three categories of the award – Builders’ Award; Designers’ Award; and Access Development Award; with a separate sponsor for each award category.

*Rationale:* The three categories as listed under this strategy and the SID Awards Framework Model would ensure:

- a) recognition at a basic level within the three realms of housing, construction, design and related regulation;
- b) adherence to the mandates of and attract three most promising sponsors for the SID Awards Framework (Canadian Home Builders’ Association regarding renovations; the Interior Designers of Alberta and the Safety Codes Council); and
- c) an incremental/foundational approach to implementing a much more holistic and complex design and building program in Alberta (essentially, taking those “baby steps” toward a higher-profile model in the future).

**Recommendation 3:** Allow the flexibility of the three categories to be either provincially based or locally based; and if locally based, the framework could expand to duplicate similar awards in various municipal jurisdictions within Alberta.

*Rationale:* Dependent upon the focus of the award and what specific sponsor will adopt the three categories of awards, there may be a local based award in one category and a provincially based award in another category. We may even witness a national award in accessible housing as time progresses, but it is important to note we must gradually work our way into the marketplace with the three referenced awards categories – building toward that ultimate goal of a higher-profile award as time progresses.

**Recommendation 4:** Approach and “market” the three category awards with the following organizations – Canadian Home Builders’ Association (a Calgary Region contact has been approached with an idea behind a Sustainable and Inclusive Design Builders’ Award in connection with renovations); Interior Designers of Alberta (to potentially sponsor a Sustainable and Inclusive Design Designers’ Award); and the Safety Codes Council (to potentially sponsor the Sustainable and Inclusive Design Access Development Award).

*Rationale:* Through exploring various alternative organizations and disciplines to potentially sponsor the three referenced categories, the three listed organizations hold the most promise for the initiation and continued maintenance of these awards offered.

**Recommendation 5:** Examine and choose to concentrate on all or a selection of the 15 entry points and stepping stones as listed within the Strategy.

*Rationale:* The five listed categories of entry points and stepping stones toward a designers' and builders' culture more oriented to universal design concepts is listed as follows:

- 1) Significant planning and design paradigm influences;
- 2) Significant design and construction process stage influences;
- 3) Education influences;
- 4) Legislative influences; and
- 5) Professional culture influences.

It is strongly suggested that whether affordable accessible housing stakeholders work directly or indirectly with these various entry points/stepping stones, the various categories of influences will continue to exist and will continue to have an impact on where, when and how accessible housing is or is not designed and constructed in our province. While affordable accessible housing stakeholders may not be able to realistically be fully involved in all 15 entry points/stepping stones, there could be a means of working in conjunction with various organizational entities that could work (or are working) on these five categories of influences. One example would be to work closely with the Barrier-Free Council or the Safety Codes Council for the future involvement and promotion of legislation around housing, and to help promote the SID Access Development Award once the latter is in place.

**Recommendation 6:** Carefully define, in all related housing materials, the type of "sustainability" with which the SID Awards program is based.

*Rationale:* It is imperative to ensure a full understanding of the SID Awards in that they are concentrating on the longer-term flexible designs that can support future adaptations and designs of homes for people with diverse needs, and not the green building or environmentally friendly sustainability per se.

## Next Step – Marketing to Sponsors

The encompassing framework and strategy form the basis for the proposed SID Awards program. The next phase of development for the program will be to:

- 1) Create marketing packages for each category;
- 2) Promote and refine each of the specific marketing packages to recommended sponsors; and
- 3) Initiate relationships with potential sponsors of the three categories in 2012.

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