

Executive Summary

BC Building Code Accessibility Engagement

2021/2022



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Background

The B.C. Government is updating the BC Building Code so new buildings are more accessible for all people.

The public gave feedback on opportunities to increase accessibility in new buildings in two ways; a public survey from October 2021 to January 2022 had over 1,500 responses and people also took part in focus groups from June to October 2022.

Who we heard from

The survey was completed mostly by people living with disabilities, their families, and homeowners. Other respondents included care providers, students, and industry professionals.

Several groups, including local governments and industry organizations, attended the focus groups.

Building design

Many people noted there needs to be more planning for accessibility at the design stage of building. This will mean better design options and will help avoid costs later to update features when residents' needs change.

Survey respondents preferred consistent building code requirements throughout B.C., and they also noted that accessibility code requirements need to work with other provincial priorities like climate change (e.g., flood resistance), energy efficiency, and housing affordability and availability.



Respondents stated that mandatory code rules need to be enforced with fines to support compliance and increase accessibility.

Individuals People said that education is needed to let people know about the positive financial impacts of accessibility, for example, more revenue for businesses and industries.

Building types

People supported universal design principles to make new buildings more accessible. At the same time, we heard that a “one-size-fits-all” approach to accessibility may create barriers to meet individuals’ needs.

Building features

Participants said that the following items were most important to make buildings more accessible: automatic doors, stairways, ramps, lifts, elevators, signage, washrooms, and emergency exits.

Adaptable buildings

Sixty-one per cent of survey respondents stated that all homes should be designed and built to be more easily and cost-effectively changed as residents’ accessibility needs change.

We also heard that changing to adaptable building practices should not be done all at once. It should be done in steps to develop knowledge, awareness, and opportunities to learn.

For more detailed feedback, please review the Summary Report posted [online](#).



Next steps

Thank you to everyone who gave feedback. It is critical to developing new and better accessibility rules. Work will continue with industry experts to develop people-centred, evidence-informed code changes. Proposed code changes will be made available for public review in Spring 2023.

The B.C. Government understands that all accessibility needs are important and also recognizes that not all changes can be made at once.

Ongoing collaboration is critical to making new buildings even more accessible in the future.

