

Final Report:

Research Study on Scoping a
Registry of Accessible and
Adaptable Homes in British
Columbia

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BC Housing
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Executive Summary

Two key focus questions guided this scoping study.

1. Would a registry of accessible and adaptable housing in BC would be useful in matching up the supply of this type of housing with people who need it?
2. If yes, what would be the key features/format/data of an ideal registry, what would the potential data sources, and who could be potential funders and partners?

This report summarizes the findings and informs future discussions.

Demand for adaptable and accessible housing is increasing in BC.

An increasing supply of adaptable housing (designed to be adapted economically at a later date to accommodate someone with a disability) and accessible housing (includes features that meet the needs of a person with a disability) meet the needs of a growing proportion of the Canadian population with disabilities, which is projected to expand particularly rapidly with the marked trend of an aging population. Many people with disabilities are challenged to find or modify units to meet their needs, and on top of that many require housing that is affordable due to lower incomes. These trends indicate that a better link between the supply and demand of adaptable and accessible housing is needed.

What would a registry accomplish?

A registry is an organized inventory of records to link those in search of adaptable and accessible housing with housing providers. Information is commonly shared by posting vacancies for housing seekers to view, and/or screening applicants' needs and referring them to housing providers. The objective of a registry is to use the existing supply of adaptable and accessible housing most effectively by filling housing vacancies with people who require accessibility features in their home. In response to the above focus question for this study: Yes, a registry of accessible and adaptable housing could indeed be useful in matching up housing supply and housing demand.

We need to work with existing resources to link adaptable and accessible housing with people who need it.

Accessible Housing BC, operated by Spinal Cord Injury BC, is a recently launched (2012) resource for those looking for adaptable and accessible housing in BC. It includes a housing board with postings of available properties including non-market and market units. In addition, the Housing Registry (BC Housing) and housing providers of rent-geared-to-income and cooperatives units gather information about applicants' accessibility needs and refer accessible units to people who need them. A key opportunity is to work collaboratively to build these existing resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Also, in BC there are some provincial regulations and programs to create more private market adaptable and accessible homes. If a

registry is established the homes resulting from these incentives could be listed in a registry, so people who need these units could more easily find them.

Key advice on components of a registry of adaptable and accessible housing:

Information and experience from a small number of the existing housing registries (North America and United Kingdom) and advice from key informants shaped some considerations and recommendations in this report about what would make an ideal registry of adaptable and accessible housing in BC. The following summary of recommendations and key advice are intended to fuel discussions between partners and stakeholders who are interested in building a registry of accessible and adaptable housing:

- A BC registry of accessible and adaptable housing is suggested to include both ‘social housing’ and ‘market housing’.
- Consider starting off with a pilot region to gain a practical understanding of resource requirements, partnerships, organization, etc. and then expanding to a provincial scale.
- An organization that can offer support services in addition to the registry of accessible and adaptable housing would be well suited to operate a registry. For example, a non-profit organization with a mandate that includes services related to housing and/or assisting people with disabilities.
- Funding for a registry could come from a combination of government funds, donations, and commercial revenue. An expected annual cost to operate is somewhere between \$35,000 and \$100,000 per year. Some registries function with approximately one full time person, and more may be required depending on scope and duties.
- It is important to maintain a critical mass of available properties listings, to make it a key ‘go-to’ resource. To accomplish this success, the registry would need to be organized so to meet market housing needs in addition to non-market (social housing) needs. Active collaboration and involvement of champions in real estate, building and development, rental managers in building the registry, in addition to non-market housing providers and agencies is strongly recommended.
- Internet listings are recommended as an effective way to collect information (from housing providers) and advertise available accessible and adaptable housing. Each available listing should include a list of accessibility and adaptability features and housing seekers should be able to filter the available housing listings that meet their specific accessibility and adaptability criteria.

What comes next?

This 2012 scoping study was a partnership between BC Housing and the Real Estate Institute of BC (REIBC), and funded by the Real Estate Foundation of BC. The next step is to convene discussions with key agencies and stakeholders about the findings of this study and their experience, and create a plan for how to proceed with the establishment of a registry of adaptable and accessible housing if there is interest to do so.

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Introduction

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a registry of accessible and adaptable housing in BC would be useful in matching up the supply of this type of housing with people who need it.

And if so, what would be the key features/format/data of an ideal registry, what would be the potential data sources, and who could be potential funders and partners?

This report summarizes the findings of the study. This report is intended to inform the next step: convening a group discussion about a BC registry of accessible and adaptable housing among key organizations and stakeholders.

Impetus and Context for This Study

Stakeholders have heard observations and concerns that it is very challenging for people to find accessible and adaptable housing units that meet their needs.

There are also several initiatives underway in BC to increase the supply of adaptable and accessible housing units, including:

1. A recent revision to the BC Building Code may result in additional supply of accessible and adaptable housing units, by enabling municipalities to voluntarily adopt uniform adaptable housing requirements for new multi-unit residential developments.¹
2. BC Housing's Homeowner Protection Office (HPO) is funding and working in partnership with the SAFERhome Standards Society and industry on the Universal Design Housing Research project (2012 to 2014). The project encourages (with monetary incentive) developers of low-rise, multi-storey housing units to adopt universal design standards and gathers data on the costs and benefits of incorporating universal design features into residential buildings.
3. BC Housing's HPO branch administers the Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program, which provides financial assistance to low-income seniors and people with disabilities for home modifications for accessible, safe and independent living.

The anticipated supply of housing (both new units and modified units) could be integrated into a registry, and this study starts to explore how.

An important opportunity in BC is that Spinal Cord Injury BC has recently launched 'Accessible Housing BC'. Accessible Housing BC was launched just as this study began. The intention of this resource is to link accessible and adaptable housing on the market (rental and ownership) with housing seekers. It consists of an online housing board to post available adaptable and accessible housing opportunities, and complementary support via telephone

¹ A link to additional information about the BC Building Code revisions is available in Appendix 2, item 5.

advice and support, information and resources. This study gathered some information about the Accessible Housing BC registry, and considered ideas and opportunities about how to potentially work together to further common objectives. A key opportunity is that a registry of adaptable and accessible housing in BC would not need to start from scratch since this resource already exists and could be built upon with partnerships and collaboration.

Project Organization and Process

- This study was a partnership between BC Housing and the Real Estate Institute of BC (REIBC). The project was funded by the Real Estate Foundation of BC.
- A Project Advisory Committee was formed to contribute a range of expertise and knowledge to the study. Committee members included staff from BC Housing Research and Corporate Planning and Customer Service, the HPO Home Adaptations For Independence program; Metro Vancouver; and REIBC.
- Heather Evans Consulting (Lead: Heather Evans, Community Planner (Registered Professional Planner and Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners)) was retained to undertake the project work and deliverables with direction from the project partners and project advisory committee.
- The project process included: scanning resources and key sources of information, gaining understanding of some working examples of housing registries in BC and other places, gathering more in-depth information gathering through interviews and discussions with nine key informants, and discussion and consultation with the advisory committee to formulate recommendations. The project took place between September 2012 and January 2013.
- This study considered properties that are subsidized (non-market) rental dwellings and cooperatives, market rental dwellings, and market ownership dwellings.²

Outline and Structure of This Report

Section 1 - Context

Section 1 of this report provides basic context information and sets the scene for the need and features of a BC registry of accessible and adaptable housing:

- Features and characteristics of adaptable and accessible housing
- A broad sketch of the need for adaptable and accessible housing in BC

² Subsidized housing is non-market housing owned by an organization - a government, non-profit, or co-operative - rather than an individual or private company. Rents and prices are not set by the market. Generally, to be eligible, an applicant's income must be below certain limits. Market housing is privately owned - with prices established by the market. Ninety-five percent (95%) of British Columbians live in market housing, either as homeowners or tenants in a rental property. Housing is generally considered affordable when the cost does not exceed 30% of household income. (Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Natural Gas - Office of Housing and Construction Standards, 2012)

- Existing relevant programs, organizations and regulations in BC that help to match the supply with the demand for accessible and adaptable homes.

Section 2 – Key Ingredients for a Registry

Section 2 outlines four key ingredients of a BC registry for accessible and adaptable housing that have resulted from this scoping study:

1. Resources: registry management, partners, and funding
2. Data: content, collection, input, management, and sharing
3. Scope: geographic scope and types of housing in the registry
4. Format and Function

Section 3 – Implications And Next Steps

Section 3 highlights key themes and considerations that have been gleaned from this scoping study, outlines opportunities and challenges that can be expected, and proposes next steps to pursue toward a BC registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

According to *Access Living* (Chicago USA organization):

“Whether or not a home is accessible can literally determine where a person lives, and whether a person is truly a part of his or her community. If a wheelchair user cannot visit friends and neighbors, participate in block club meetings or go to dinner parties because there are stairs, that person cannot participate in his or her community fully. But accessibility’s impact on community life doesn’t rest solely on the wheelchair user, it impacts the wheelchair users friends, neighbors and families who live in those inaccessible houses and cannot invite their disabled friends and relatives to their homes. Further, it is important to consider that as we all get older and can no longer function as we once did, we will likely prefer to remain in our homes. It is the design of the homes we live in that will determine whether we are displaced as we get older.”

(Access Living, 2008)

Section 1. Context

Definitions of Accessible and Adaptable Homes, and Making Sense of Them for The Purpose of a Registry

A range of terms and words are used to describe the characteristics and features that make a dwelling functional, safe and comfortable for people with different abilities and conditions to live and/or visit. Since there are many of these terms and they are not consistently defined internationally and even within Canada, it can become confusing to interpret. Outlined below are some key definitions and parameters for adaptable and accessible housing by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), BC regulations and programs, and housing standards/certifications.

★ *Recommendation regarding registry data*

A salient finding from this study is that a registry would be most useful if it itemizes specific adaptable/accessible features from a user's perspective, so that people using the registry would know which units may meet specific needs. A registry would be less useful if it relied only on general terms, because definitions may be interpreted differently by various individuals and audiences and do not provide specific enough information to housing seekers.

What might seem to be minor annoyances in daily life can, for people with disabilities, prevent them from fully and equitably participating in employment, education, job training, communications, housing, public and private transportation, health care and social services. No one would suggest that these barriers benefit society. Barriers come at an enormous cost – to persons with disabilities, to their families and friends, to their communities, to the public and to the overall economy.

<http://www.barrierfreemb.com/whatisabarrier>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Definitions

According to CMHC, Canada's national housing agency, accessible house design is: "design that will accommodate everyone, including people with disabilities. Accessible housing includes houses that are minimally accessible, houses that can easily be made accessible at a later date, and houses that are completely accessible with power door openers, large bathrooms and so on." CMHC defines some of the most commonly referenced 'umbrella terms' for adaptable and accessible house designs:

- **Visitable:** A visitable house includes basic accessibility features that allow most people to visit, even if they have limitations such as impaired mobility. Basic features of a

visitable house include a level entry, wider doors throughout the entrance level and a washroom on the main floor.

- **Adaptable:** An adaptable house is designed to be adapted economically at a later date to accommodate someone with a disability. Features include removable cupboards in a kitchen or bathroom to create knee space for a wheelchair user, or a knock-out floor panel in a closet to allow installation of an elevator.
- **Accessible:** An accessible house includes features that meet the needs of a person with a disability. Most accessible houses feature open turning spaces within rooms, wheel-in shower stalls and kitchen work surfaces with knee space below.
- **Universal:** Universal house design recognizes that everyone who uses a house is different and comes with different abilities that change over time. Features include lever door handles that everyone can use, enhanced lighting levels to make it as easy as possible to see, stairways that feature handrails that are easy to grasp, and easy-to-use appliances.

CMHC has also published some research studies and resources that focus more on defining accessibility from the perspective of people with sensory and cognitive disabilities. One example is *Adapting your Home to Living with Dementia* (CMHC 2009).

BC Requirements for Adaptable and Accessible Housing

Provincial building requirements for adaptable and accessible housing are evolving, and municipal policies and standards also differ between municipalities. Varying definitions and parameters for accessible housing results in units with varied features. In addition, specific modifications by tenants and owners to their units to meet their own accessibility needs also result in custom designed adaptable and accessible dwellings with various features.

- The BC Building Code (BCBC) contains requirements for new and renovated buildings in BC to meet measurable standards for accessibility. In BC, "access or accessible means that a person with disabilities is, without assistance, able to approach, enter, pass to and from, and make use of an area and its facilities, or either of them Persons with disabilities means a person who has a loss, or a reduction, of functional ability and activity and includes a person in a wheelchair and a person with a sensory disability." The BC Building Access Handbook shows the requirements with illustrations and commentary.

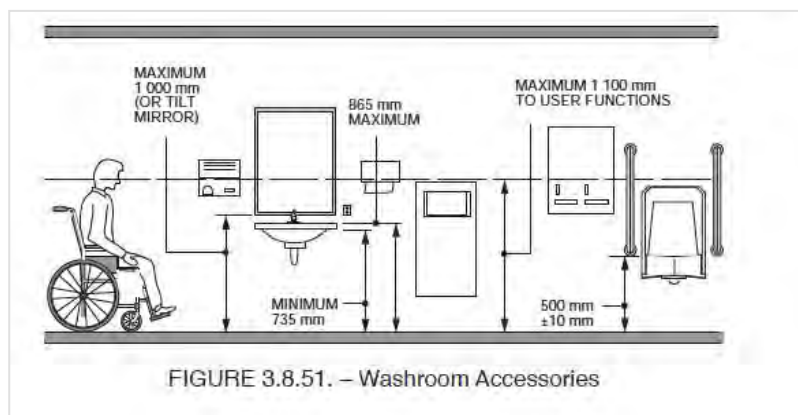


Figure 1 Washroom Accessories arrangement and dimensions. Source: BC Office of Construction Standards, 2007, Figure 3.8.5.1.

(BC Office of Construction Standards, 2007) Figure 1 illustrates an example of the concrete design requirements in this Handbook.

- In 2009 the Province of BC introduced additional adaptability standards³ that add to the existing BC Building code requirements for adaptability and accessibility. The additional standards apply to single-storey suites in new residential multi-unit buildings, whenever adaptable housing is either required by local government bylaw or built voluntarily. The new standards include additional accessibility requirements that will apply within the individual suites as well as to building entrances, corridors and common areas. This purpose of the 2009 standards is to provide consistency in how adaptable housing is designed and built, and to give local governments the flexibility to decide whether they want to require the new 2009 standards. Some BC municipalities (but certainly not the majority of BC municipalities) have adopted the additional adaptability requirements; a couple of examples are New Westminster and Pitt Meadows.
- Prior to the introduction of BCBC revision for adaptable units in 2009 several BC municipalities (e.g. City of North Vancouver, Burnaby and Coquitlam) already had created community specific definitions and standards for adaptable residential dwellings, many of them incentive based (e.g. density bonus) programs and policies to encourage developers to meet voluntary standards that exceed the basic building code requirements.

To mention some additional resources and standards that may be relevant, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has published “Access Standards for the Built Environment”⁴ that defines accessible residential design and construction standards. These CSA standards may be considered to be more comprehensive than the BCBC, but it is the requirements in the BC Building Code that must be met. The CSA standards do not have the force of law unless mandated by legislation or called up in the regulations of an authority having jurisdiction. An additional resource to consider is CMHC’s compendium of “Canadian Accessible Housing Codes and Standards”. (CMHC 2010)

Certifications for Universal Design

Several voluntary programs have been developed by non-profits and housing industry organizations, which define a list of key adaptability and accessibility features to be included when a home is constructed. The completion of these features is linked with certification and marketing of the homes. Two examples of these certification programs:

- **SAFERhome Standards Society**^j created a 19-point checklist for universal home design (see above CMHC definition) and certification system that promotes the benefits of this type of design to homeowners, developers, and municipalities. “Features include wider doorways and hallways so that people and things of all sizes

³ A summary of the 2009 BC adaptability standards is linked in Appendix 2 (item 5) of this report. In addition, The Canadian Homebuilders’ Association also provides a summary and comments on the standards in a 2011 report that can be accessed on the Internet: <http://www.chba.ca/>

⁴ CSA Access Standards for the Built Environment can be accessed on the Internet at: <https://sci-bc.ca/>

can easily come through, wider stairways with less pronounced nosing on the front edge to prevent tripping and falling hazards, and aligned closets that can easily and inexpensively be changed into a personal elevator and back again. SAFERHome certification is contingent upon the fulfillment of all 19 basic standards.” (SAFER 2012) SAFER is currently working in collaboration with BC Housing on a Universal Design Housing Research project as described earlier in this report.

- **Lifetime Homes** (UK company) developed a “standard set of 16 criteria for designing new homes, so that they are convenient for most occupants, including some (but not all) wheelchair users and disabled visitors, without the necessity for substantial alterations....Lifetime Homes are not, however, a substitute for purpose-designed wheelchair standard housing”. (Lifetime Homes, 2012) The criteria are based on 5 principles: inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability, sustainability, and good value.

What is a Registry, and What Can it Accomplish for Adaptable and Accessible Housing?

From the Canadian and American experience a housing registry generally consists of an organized effort to link those in search of a specific type of housing (e.g. affordable housing, student housing, accessible housing, seniors housing) with housing available for rent or to buy. This can be done through such approaches as compiling and posting vacancies, developing customized housing lists for individual housing applicants, and/or screening applicants and referring them to landlords. These types of housing registries tend to work independent of one another. (Jacobucci, 2005, p. 20)

A registry of adaptable and accessible housing could accomplish the following objectives:

- **Increase in efficiency:** There is an international trend in accessibility toward increasing interest in using accessible housing more efficiently. (Scotts, Saville-Smith and James, 2007) One of the concerns consistently raised by disability advocates is that the limited supply of modified dwellings is ‘lost’ to the disabled market through rental or sale to non-disabled consumers.
- **Increase awareness and communication:** Real estate agents, buyers, and renters seeking accessible housing often have limited knowledge or information about the available stock of adaptable and accessible housing. The use of registries of accessible dwellings is one method of improving the efficient use of stock, expanding the information base about accessible housing and matching stock with consumers. (Scotts, Saville-Smith and James, 2007)
- **Organized records and information:** A registry is simply an index or inventory where records and documents are kept (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000; Merriam-Webster, 1996). Over time, a registry can provide trend information about the existing housing stock, supply and demand. Many housing registries began as a simple posting of housing

vacancies, and develop over the years to become a registry. (Jacobucci, 2005, p. 85) This study scanned and explored a limited number of housing registries (most of them specializing in adaptable and accessible housing) and existing research (e.g. Christa Jacobucci's Master's Thesis, 2005) to get an idea of the key ingredients and key lessons learned as we contemplate a registry for adaptable and accessible housing in BC. A matrix summary of these registries is provided in Appendix 1, and the key ingredients, applicable lessons, and features are drawn out in the body of this report.

BC Accessible and Adaptable Housing Snapshot: Demand, Supply, and Forecasts

While this study did not specifically focus on analyzing disability statistics and trends, the purpose of the basic information below is to create a context to understand the scope of demand for accessible and adaptable housing, and some information about the needs in BC.

Demand for Accessible and Adaptable Housing – Current and Future

In British Columbia (and in Canada as a whole) the aging population is and will continue to be a very significant factor in an increasing rate of disability. The median age of the population will increase from 40.8 years in 2011, to 45.4 years in 2036. To illustrate the magnitude of the aging population, consider the implications of this: by 2021 the age group of 65 to 74 year olds in Canada will increase 58% from 2011 levels.

The aging of the Canadian population is a popular topic for discussion and analysis among policy experts, academics, the media, and others. Disability is often portrayed as a condition to be avoided or as a future and growing burden on the country's health care system. However, the reality is that many people among us have disabilities, and the rate is already increasing. With our aging population, there are an increasing number of people who are aging into disability. And at the same time, there are an increasing number of people with long-term disabilities who are aging due to better health and community supports. (Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, 2008)

A disability can happen to anyone at any time. In fact as the population ages, most of us will eventually face some kind of disability, even though we might not use that term to describe it. . . . Despite the fact that there are so many people with disabilities, they tend to be among the most marginalized and disadvantaged citizens.
Barrier Free MB
www.barrierfreemb.com/

The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) is a Canadian national survey aligned with the national census.⁵ In the PALS survey ‘disability’ means that everyday activities are limited because of a condition or health problem. BC’s self reported disability rate is slightly higher than the nation as a whole, for all population age groups as shown in Table 1. In BC, 16% of the population (638,640 people) reports living with a disability, which is higher than the Canadian rate of 14.3%. Some provinces with overall older populations (e.g. Maritimes) have higher rates than BC. (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2011)

Table 1. Disability Rates (%) by Age, BC and Canada, 2006.

	<i>All Ages</i>	<i>0 to 14</i>	<i>15 and over</i>	<i>15 to 64</i>	<i>65 and over</i>
Canada	14.3	3.7	16.6	11.5	43.4
British Columbia	16.0	4.0	18.4	12.8	45.7

Source: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2011. *Disability in Canada a 2006 Profile* (Table 8.1, page 45) with data from 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey.

In the PALS survey, the reported rate of disability was higher in 2006 (13.3%) than in 2001 (12.4%). To control for the impact of population aging on disability rates, comparisons over time are made using an "age-standardized disability rate". Between 2001 and 2006 about 40% of the disability rate increase is explained by the aging of the Canadian population. (The remaining 60% of the increase in disability rate is thought to be due to a change in disability profiles and/or reporting practices.) (Statistics Canada, 2007)

Types of Disabilities

A link to statistical disability information that is specific to BC and comparable to Canada as a whole (from the 2006 PALS survey in a report by HRDC Canada) is included in Appendix 2 (item 6).

The most prevalent types of self-reported disabilities vary by age group, and tend to increase overall with age. This trend is shown in Figure 2. A few key points, which point to an anticipated increase in disabilities with a significantly aging population in BC and Canada:

- “Among school-aged children, learning disabilities and chronic health conditions were the two most frequently reported disabilities.” (Statistics Canada, 2007)
- “Problems related to pain, mobility and agility affect the largest number of adults 15 years of age or older. Close to 3 million Canadian adults (approximately 11% of the total population aged 15 and over) reported one of these limitations. Not only are these the most prevalent disabilities, many of these Canadians experience more than one of these problems. Problems related to mobility, such as walking, climbing stairs, or carrying an object a short distance, are often associated with agility problems or with pain. Approximately 70% of Canadians who reported one of these three disabilities were also affected by the other two.” (Statistics Canada, 2007)

⁵ The most recent Canadian Survey on Disability gathered survey data in 2012 and plans data release in 2013.

<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3251&lang=en&db=imdb&adm=8&dis=2 - a1>

- One in three Canadians aged 65 and over experience mobility limitations (Statistics Canada, 2007)

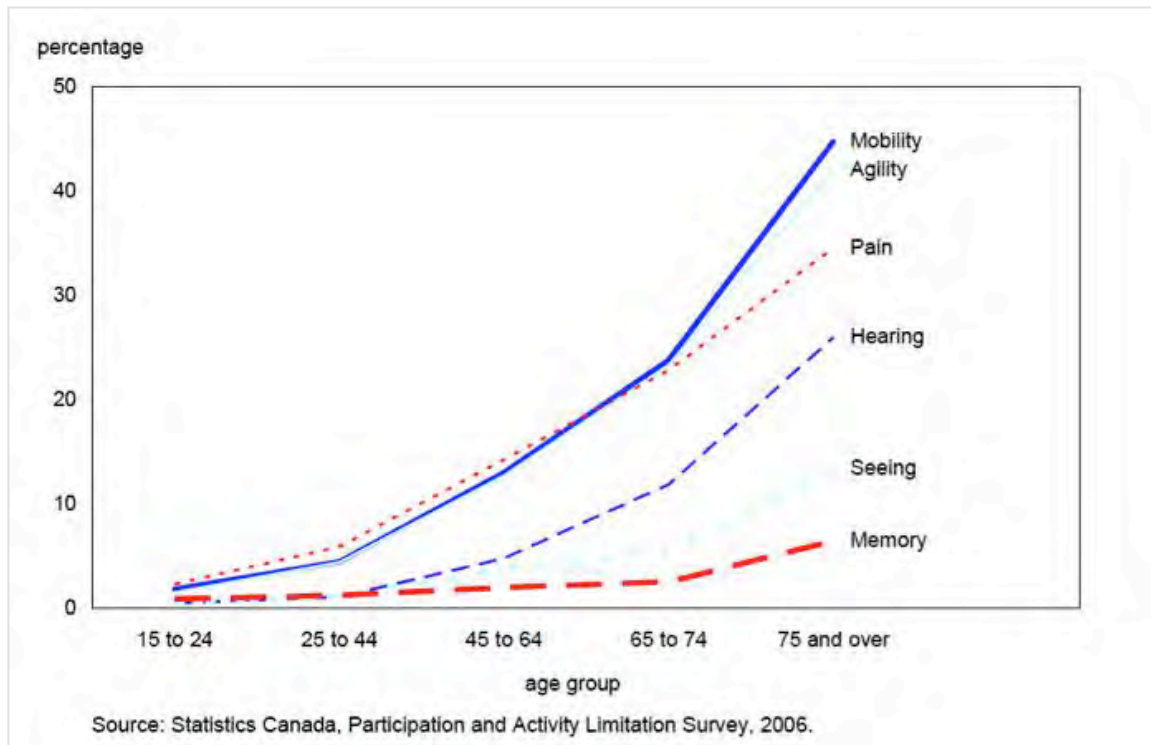


Figure 2 Increasing disability rates with age in Canada. Source: PALS 2006

Housing Affordability and Arrangements - People with Disabilities

- In BC 22% of people living with a mobility/agility disability part of a household in core housing need⁶ compared to 11% of the provincial population without disability. BC has the highest proportion of households with a disability in core housing need in Canada. (Canadian Council on Disabilities, 2008)
- “Poverty is associated with living arrangements. For instance, amongst people who live alone, 31% with disabilities live in poverty compared with 21.3% of their counterparts without disabilities. More than half of people with disabilities (53.7%) who live with others but not family members (e.g., in shared living arrangements or rooming/boarded houses) have incomes below the poverty line as compared with 36.3% of their non-disabled counterparts. 21.3% of lone parents with disabilities have incomes below the poverty line

⁶ CMHC defines Core housing need: “households which are unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability, and affordability norms. The norms have been adjusted over time to reflect the housing expectations of Canadians. Affordability, one of the elements used to determine core housing need, is recognized as a maximum of 30 per cent of the household income spent on shelter.”

compared with 18.4% of lone parents without disabilities.” (Canadian Council on Disabilities, 2008)

- Poverty rates are considerably higher for persons with disabilities up to the typical age of retirement (65 years) then drop to about the same levels as for retirement-aged persons without disabilities. (Canadian Council on Disabilities, 2008)

Supply of Adaptable and Accessible Housing – Current and Forecast

This study was not able to gather a benchmark or a snapshot of how many adaptable and accessible housing units currently exist in BC. Key informants advised that there is no known centralized system for recording and maintaining the information (i.e. a registry), and the inventory is changing as new accessible units are built and existing units are modified.

To supplement the statistical information above, see Appendix 2 (item 1) for articles describing the experiences of two people with disabilities in finding suitable housing that meets their needs.

Linking a Possible Registry of Adaptable and Accessible housing with Current/Existing BC Resources

BC already has some resources to connect people who need adaptable and accessible housing with homes that accommodate their needs: BC Housing’s “The Housing Registry”, Spinal Cord Injury BC’s “Accessible Housing BC”, the real estate Multiple Listing Services, and a range of professionals and advocates. For some of these organizations and professionals, facilitating a match-up of people with adaptability/accessible housing is just one part of their broader mandate and work. Here is an outline of the a few key existing resources that were identified in this study, to which a future registry of accessible and adaptable housing would ideally need to link its efforts and build relationships.

“Accessible Housing BC” Housing Board and Information line (Spinal Cord Injury BC (SCI BC))

- SCI BC manages Accessible Housing BC, which was launched in August 2012. It facilitates a link between housing providers with accessible properties and housing seekers with disabilities looking for accessible accommodations within British Columbia. A Housing Board facilitates self-posted listings of available accessible homes, including rent geared to income units that are managed by non-profit housing providers and coops, and market units that are for sale or for rent. (SCI BC, 2012, personal communication)
- The Housing Board evolved from SCI BC’s existing Housing List of Vacancies, which existed prior to the development of the Housing Board for several years. The Housing List of Vacancies (HLOV) provided list of housing vacancies for Housing Seekers (clients

seeking housing, and health care workers assisting clients) and a medium by which Housing Providers could broadcast their current vacancies via a list serve. Housing Providers would inform SCI BC of their current vacancies and SCI BC would send a notice out to housing seekers. Housing Seekers may include persons with disabilities, Social Workers, Health Care Professionals or any other person assisting the housing seeker to find the appropriate housing. (SCI BC, 2012, personal communication)

- Housing Board Property managers and owners are able to sign in to Accessible Housing BC and post their currently available units with accessibility features that are available. For listed units that are owned by non-profit housing providers and co-ops and/or provide rent subsidies, Accessible Housing BC provides a link to the housing application information. For listed units that are privately owned and available for rent or purchase at market rates, the asking price or rent is provided and contact information is provided for the real estate agent, owner, or building manager.
- On January 1, 2013, Accessible Housing BC's Housing Board listed 16 properties for rent and 12 properties listed for sale. Most of the listings are in the Lower Mainland and a few listings are in the other regions of BC. An example of a listing is shown in Figure 3.
- SCI BC is looking to build partnerships with housing providers, development and real estate industry throughout the province to build up the listings and awareness of this resource. (SCI BC, 2012, personal communication)
- Listings on Accessible Housing BC are publicly searchable online. A housing seeker is able to filter listings by rent (can choose subsidized, non-subsidized, co-op) or purchase, location in BC (by region), and their desired accessibility features. Google Analytics reports that there have been 1,650 visits between August and December 2012. (SCI BC, 2012, personal communication)



Figure 3 Sample listing (property for rent) from Accessible Housing BC.
 Source: SCI BC, January 3, 2013.

- In addition to the online service, accessible housing postings are also available by mail and email via Accessible Housing BC, with an associated telephone assistance service, with support information and assistance. Calls for assistance with finding housing makes up at least 25% of the call volume received by SCI BC's Infoline, with approximately 100 to 120 calls per month. (SCI BC, 2012, personal communication)

★Key considerations based on SCI BC's Accessible Housing BC:

- Accessible Housing BC launched its online Housing Board service in August 2012. Since it is a new online resource, SCI BC would like to grow this resource throughout the province with more outreach, partnership development and awareness. An opportunity is for the registry is to contribute to Accessible Housing BC's momentum.
- SCI BC would like to work with additional partners including BC Housing and more housing providers to include listings for affordable housing units. SCI BC would also like to work with real estate organizations and developers to list market units, and to create greater industry awareness about the market and the features for accessible housing.

The Housing Registry (BC Housing)

- The Housing Registry is maintained and administered by BC Housing (link to a brochure with more information in Appendix 2, item 4). The Housing Registry has been operating since 1999. The Housing Registry manages a centralized database of applicants for rent geared to income housing. If an applicant needs accessible housing, general information about the applicant's needs is collected during the application process. (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)
- The Housing Registry's partners are housing providers, including non-profit and cooperative providers of rent-geared-to-income housing who have voluntarily joined the Registry. These partners are able to access the database of applicants when their housing units become available for rent, in order to select tenants according to their own policies and procedures. When an accessible unit is available for rent, the housing provider would select a tenant with accessible housing needs from the database. It is currently the responsibility of the housing provider to identify which units are accessible according to the provider's assessment and criteria. (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)
- The role of The Housing Registry is to interact with applicants on behalf of the partners housing providers to manage the applications. Also individuals searching for subsidized housing can submit one application form to be considered for any available housing units in developments managed by The Housing Registry members. (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)
- Non-profit and cooperative providers of rent-geared-to-income housing can voluntarily choose to become members of the Housing Registry at no cost. Some non-profit housing providers in BC choose to independently manage their own applicant lists and records. An

applicant needs to apply separately to these Housing Providers and Coops that are not registry partners. In addition, for new housing developments that BC Housing is involved in creating (e.g. funding, etc.), BC Housing generally makes an agreement with the housing providers they become members of The Housing Registry with respect to the new newly created housing. (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)

- The membership of the Housing Registry includes approximately 100 housing providers, who provide a total of 22,000 housing units, in 95 communities across BC. (There are about 300-400 housing providers in BC that operate independent social housing.) (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)
- The Housing Registry is part of broader and more comprehensive services that BC Housing Offers to BC residents that need subsidized housing. (BC Housing, 2012, personal communication)

★Key considerations drawn from BC Housing’s experience with The Housing Registry:

- One of the goals for a registry of accessible and adaptable homes should be to make the process as straightforward as possible.
- The Housing Registry has built and continues to maintain relationships with over 100 partners. Outreach and clarity with these partners about a new registry related to adaptable and accessible housing would be essential.
- A registry of adaptable and accessible housing may be able to facilitate the collection and sharing of more detailed information about (a) applicants’ accessibility needs, and (b) accessibility features in the existing inventory of rent-g geared-to-income and coop housing units.

Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

MLS lists most properties for sale in BC. The MLS system provides real estate agents with an option to tick a ‘handicap’ check box as they create a detailed property profile for their MLS sale listings. The ‘handicap’ filter in MLS is not searchable by consumers on the MLS site, but the information may be of some assistance to the real estate agents who have access to the detailed property profiles.

★Key Considerations based on the experience of MLS in providing listings of accessible and adaptable homes for purchase:

- It would be essential to include real estate professionals in the development of a registry of adaptable and accessible homes, to explore how accessible and adaptable home seekers’ needs could be better addressed either through the MLS services and/or in connection with a separate registry of accessible and adaptable housing.

Additional Resources to Match People who Need Adaptable and Accessible Housing with Available Homes:

In addition to the above, the following professional resources are instrumental in connecting people with adaptable and accessible housing that meets their needs (list is not exhaustive):

- Occupational therapists assist clients and the general public with look for accessible housing. They also consult with building industry professionals including contractors, architects and designers regarding home modifications that meet mobility needs.
- Various housing rental boards may list accessibility features of homes, disability organizations may maintain housing lists, and advocacy and assistance professional staff provide referrals and information to people in need of adaptable and accessible housing.
- British Columbia's 211 telephone information and services referral would refer inquiries for social housing and housing for people with disabilities.

Section 2. Key Ingredients for a Registry of Accessible and Adaptable Housing

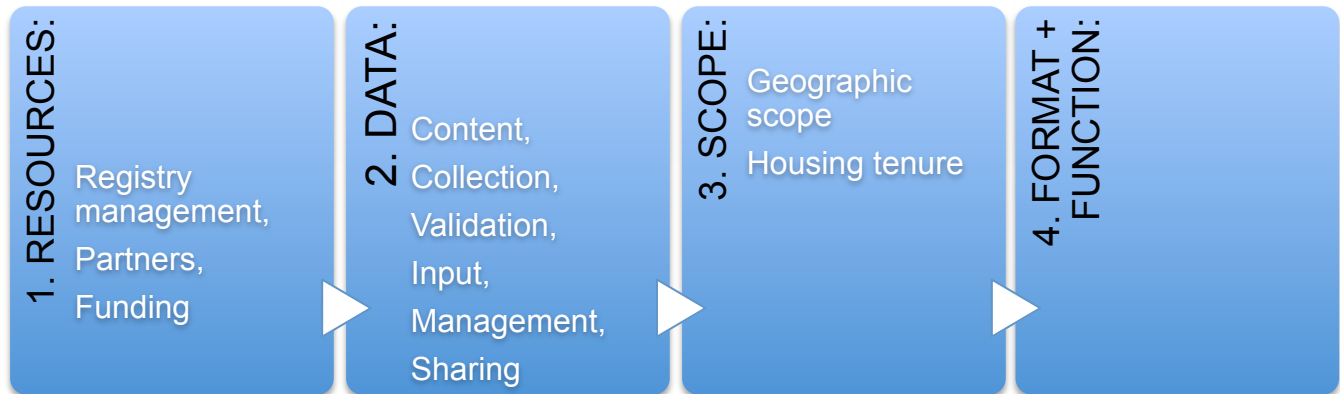


Figure 4 Four ingredients for a registry of adaptable and accessible housing: resources, data, scope, form and function.

Ingredient #1. Resources: registry management, partners, funding

Management Organization for the Registry

- A Canadian research study by Jacobucci (2005) scanned several housing registries' practices in North America and Europe, and found various types of groups and organizations as managers / operators of registries: private housing providers, community agencies, non-profit groups, social housing and provincial housing entities, and advocacy/service organizations. (Jacobucci, 2005, p.48) Research informing this report found a range of managing organizations for housing registries that was quite similar to Jacobucci's broader study:
 - Non-profit groups: Citizens' Housing and Planning Organization manages MassAccess, Spinal Cord Injury BC manages Accessible Housing BC, and Accessible Housing Society BC manages Calgary's registry of accessible housing
 - Private individuals in association with a disability organization manage the United Kingdom's Accessible Properties Register (market properties)

- A registered Social Landlord, Ability Housing Association, manages AccessAHome (social housing) in the United Kingdom

(More information about various registries' management and organization is available in Appendix 1.)

- Some key informant interviewees in this study suggested that a non-profit organization (either an organization specializing in housing, or an organization for disability advocacy and services) could be well suited to manage a BC registry of adaptable and accessible housing. A non-profit organization may be able to act and adapt more quickly than government, they are usually well connected to the people in need and are knowledgeable about their needs, and they may be able to provide the service with low overhead costs. Recognizing resource constraints of most non-profits, it was suggested that a non-profit may be able to seek a combination of government and private funds to operate.
- Both Jacobucci's (2005) research and this study found that many housing registries are managed as a program or service with the support of a larger organization (as opposed to being a stand-alone organization formed specifically to manage the registry).
- Some interviewees with a market housing perspective said it would be important that the management of the registry involve market housing advice and consultation to ensure that it works for market needs. The same could be said for the involvement and representation of the not for profit housing sector to ensure the registry meets non-market affordable housing needs. This speaks to the importance of partnership.
- A couple of interviews with existing registry staff suggested that it is helpful when the managing organization for the registry already works proactively on accessibility and adaptability issues, has organizational capacity to build partnerships with other non-profits and government agencies, and could offer programs that support the registry function.
- Whether the registry has a provincial or local/regional scope may also be a factor in determining the type of organization that would be most appropriate to manage. For a provincial registry, an organization with provincial profile, scope and capacity for multiple partnerships throughout the province would be most appropriate.
- Jacobucci's research and this study found that the timeline for establishing, developing, and implementing a housing registry can range from one to seven years, and that registries are usually in a state of constant development and revision.

Funding for the Registry

- Some interviews and research on existing registries indicated that it is challenging to pinpoint how much annual funding is required for a registry because it is part of a more comprehensive service area or budget line item. For registries that were able to supply budget information, \$35,000 to \$100,000 was the annual budget range. The expenditures were mostly for a staff program manager (usually one FTE), information technology, and training. Registry staff mentioned that they are able to get the job done but resource constraints prohibit additional responsibilities and do not allow them to act on good ideas that would make the registry even more effective.
- Sources of funding for registries can vary:

- Government (provincial level) sources (e.g. Accessible Housing Society in Calgary receives provincial funding, MassAccess is funded by a state agency)
- Mix of government funded and private donations (e.g. Spinal Cord Injury BC's Accessible Housing BC)
- Advocates / volunteers when there is no funding source (e.g. Accessible Housing Society in Calgary started out with volunteer horsepower. The Housing Registry function of the Accessible Housing Society is now funded by the Province of Alberta (Alberta Seniors and Community Supports) and operated by the non-profit society.
- Advertising revenue: A United Kingdom registry of adaptable and accessible market housing is aiming to bring in revenue by charging commercial real estate agents and developers to post their listings, but offer non-profit providers free listings. This same registry offers an annual membership to commercial interests. Accessible Housing BC has indicated that they would like to explore paid listings for commercial interests in the future.

Registry Partners

- A consistent message came through in the research and key informant interviews: establishment of a accessible housing registry in BC should include collaboration (going further than just consultation) and ongoing involvement among government, non-profit, and real estate industry organizations – especially if the registry is to include both non-market housing and market housing in the scope.
- A cumulative list of partners who have been suggested as key collaborators to establish a BC registry includes: BC Housing, municipalities, non-profit housing providers, housing cooperatives, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Disability service and advocacy organizations including BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities and BC Centre for Ability (and Foundation), S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC, Vancouver Cross Cultural Seniors Network, BC Seniors Living Association, Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver (and other regional boards), Canadian Home Builders' Association (various chapters in BC), Real Estate Boards (suggestion to include the Boards of Directors) Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association, Urban Development Institute, real estate specialists with seniors' designation (Certified Aging in Place Specialist, Seniors Real Estate Specialist), Health Authorities, and Rental Owners and Managers' Association of BC.
- The Housing Registry and Accessible Housing BC already work closely with several partners, and a centralized registry could be strategic about strengthening those partnerships, and building new ones as well. For example, SCI BC advised that they would like to build closer partnerships with development industry organizations, as well as with BC Housing and non-profit housing providers
- Possible roles for partners, to be considered further:
 - Municipalities – supplying information about existing and new market units that are accessible and adaptable, promoting the registry with developers in their community

- Non-profit agencies with disability and/or housing focus – possibly managing the registry (i.e. Spinal Cord Injury BC currently manages Accessible Housing BC) and using the registry to assist clients seeking assistance with finding suitable housing
- Real estate organizations, developers, non-profit housing providers – posting listings on the registry, ongoing marketing and promotion to constituents in the industry to post property listings, and communicating ongoing feedback from constituents and industry members
- BC Housing – collaborating with non-profit organizations and housing providers to include the inventory of non-market housing in the registry

Table 2. Summary of Resource Considerations in Three Registries

Name of Adaptable / Accessible Housing Registry	Management organization for the registry	Funding	Staff resources to operate the registry
Accessible Housing Society (Calgary AB) Scale: City of Calgary	Accessible Housing Society: non-profit organization and registered charity with a mandate to create opportunities for safe, affordable, barrier-free housing for persons with mobility issues	Alberta provincial government grant to operate the registry - \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year	Registry Program Manager (0.8 FTE; i.e. 20% of time allocated to duties in addition to the registry)
MassAccess (Massachusetts USA) Scale: State of MA	Citizens' Housing and Planning Association: a non-profit umbrella organization for affordable housing and community development activities in Massachusetts.	Annual grant from state level organization - \$75,000 to \$100,000 per year	Program Manager Information Technology
Accessible Housing BC (British Columbia) Scale: Province of BC	Spinal Cord Injury BC (SCI BC) helps people with spinal cord injury (and those with related physical disabilities) and their families adjust, adapt and thrive post injury.	From provincial government and donors - amount unknown because budget is included in a larger program line item.	InfoLine Manager and Regional Staff, who also dedicate time to other duties

★ Key Findings and Pieces of Advice about Resources: registry management, partners, funding

Based on the findings of this scoping study, the following are recommended with respect to resources for a registry of adaptable and accessible housing:

1. A non-profit organization with knowledge and direct experience and current work in both accessibility and housing could be an ideal registry management organization.
2. Strong partnerships, participation and buy-in from disability organizations, housing agencies, non-profit housing providers, real estate professionals, developers are essential for establishing and partnering in a housing registry. For a registry to truly be a useful one-stop-shop that effectively matches supply with demand for accessible housing, all of these organizations are key players.
3. Based on the experience of other registries, a diversity of funding possibilities exists. Stable government funding to operate the registry is one option (ballpark figure of \$35,000 to \$100,000 per year) in addition to funding from advertising revenue, donors, etc.
4. Relationship building and promotion of the registry with professionals, owners and managers that will post available listings is key. A suggestion has been made to work with some key champions in the industry to get their buy-in, then gain momentum and success stories that inspire others to use the registry. Industry conferences and communication bulletins are a further venue for getting the word out about the registry.

Ingredient #2. Data: Content, Collection, Validation, Input, Management, and Sharing

Data (i.e. information) is an absolutely critical piece of a future registry. Advice and experience from existing registries was collected in this study, to answer the following questions:

- What type of data needs to be collected from housing seekers (the demand side) and from housing providers (the supply side), so that the registry can effectively link them up?
- How should registry data be collected, validated, managed and shared? Some key issues and considerations are: respecting individuals' privacy, ensuring currency and accuracy of information that is shared, and efficiently managing data.

Data Content, i.e. What Data to Collect for a Registry

In this study, a scan of various registries was undertaken to survey the type of accessibility and adaptability characteristics / criteria about housing units that is being included in housing registries.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the labels “adaptability” and “accessibility” and associated words have different interpretations. A focus on particular accessibility features rather than

labels is thought to be much more meaningful and clear than reliance on ‘umbrella’ words and terms. The following two examples illustrate this point:

- According to Minneapolis-St. Paul’s Housing Link⁷ service: “One of the more important things learned in this project was the importance of focusing on the need for accessibility features rather than whether people define themselves as having a disability. We heard from service providers that when they would ask their renter clients if they had a disability, the response was “no”. Yet, if they asked the same client if they needed grab bars or other accessibility features, they would say “yes”. People in need of accessibility features may not define themselves as having a disability. Providing information on accessibility features allows people to make decisions on their housing based on individual needs rather than collective definitions.”
- In a recent report to Council from municipal staff in Port Coquitlam BC (April 2012), staff described that builders and developers have heard that purchasers appear uncomfortable with the ‘adaptable label’ for housing perhaps due to the stigma of future aging and disability.

As shown in Appendix 1, registries have taken several different approaches with how to most effectively list a unit’s adaptability and accessibility features in a registry posting, and these also correspond with the housing seekers’ criteria for housing needs. A few examples of the format of property listings:

- a) Differentiating units by levels or gradients of accessibility; i.e. Level one meets basic requirements, Level Two has more accessibility features, and so on. (e.g. AHS Calgary, Accessible Property Register UK)
- b) A list of features (i.e. up to 20) that can be checked off if they are present in the unit being listed. Some include a list of features that meet a ‘base level’, and additional features (e.g. AccessibleProperties.net, MassAccess, Accessible Housing BC)
- c) A list of features categorized by each room of the home (e.g. entrance, kitchen, bathroom, etc.)

For all of the registries scanned in this study, the list of adaptability and accessibility features about dwellings that the registry collects and shares is created by accessibility related service agencies and individuals that have direct experience with accessibility. In BC, Accessible Housing BC’s list of features has been developed by SCI BC (expertise in the needs of people who with spinal cord injury and other mobility issues). Accessible Housing BC’s checklist of features for each property is shown in Figure 5.

⁷ The Minneapolis-St. Paul Housing Link service can be found at <http://www.housinglink.org/Files/Accessibility.pdf>

- Subsidized
- Not Subsidized
- Co-op

- Adapted kitchen
- Adapted bathroom (level entry shower stall)
- Adapted bathroom (wheel in shower)
- Adapted bathroom (tub and grab bar)
- Automatic door opener
- Caregivers room
- Ceiling track lift
- Environmental controls (automated system for controlling electrical applications)
- Hard surface flooring (laminated or tile or linoleum)
- Laundry room (raised washer/dryer with front mounted controls)
- Level or ramped access
- Lever handled fixtures (door and faucet fixtures)
- No step entrance
- Parking (accessible off street parking)
- Parking (accessible unrestricted on street parking)
- Porch lift access
- Residential elevator access
- Secondary accessible exit
- Switches and controls (mounted 400-1200mm above the floor)
- Unmodified
- Wider doorways (minimum 860mm width)

Figure 5 List of adaptability and accessibility features, plus level of affordability - in Accessible Housing BC's Housing Board listings of available properties. Source: SCI BC, 2012

Data Collection

As outlined earlier in the report, a registry function is to match the supply side and the demand side of adaptable and accessible housing. Here is a description of possible data sources to inform both the supply side and demand side of a registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

Gathering and Sharing Supply Side Information about Available Units

Data about available units for a registry of adaptable and accessible housing was reported to come from a couple of key sources:

- Data on existing housing lists: When MassAccess was starting their online registry, they built a base of information in the registry for accessible housing by inputting information they already had on file on an existing housing list of rent-assisted housing in the state of Massachusetts. Then they gradually built partnerships with the housing providers and managers, and engaged them to augment the basic information about accessible units with more specific information and criteria. Accessible Housing BC has started the housing board with a similar approach to Mass Access: entering initial postings based on existing housing list of vacancies and by inviting postings from existing relationships with partners. (Accessible Housing BC, 2012, personal communication)
- Postings from housing providers, building managers, and property owners: Registries enable housing providers to sign on to the website so that they can enter profile information about available housing units. They are guided by accessibility criteria and characteristics (check boxes) and space for text as well. Most registries require that people listing a unit(s) create an identity logon and sign in to the site. This enables the registry staff to check that the listing is legitimate. Informant interviewees found that it is not in a lister's interest to post units on the registry if they are not accessible, so the registries have not experienced many difficulties with misinformation and misleading postings. However, several of registry web sites include legal and liability disclaimers and advise that they do not verify the accuracy of posted information. To provide additional information to housing providers, some registries offer supplementary information or a guide to explain accessibility features to a non-expert and to ensure consistency in interpretation. MassAccess also advised that they often receive phone inquiries from property managers who are listing properties because they have questions about the procedure and criteria for posting units. (MassAccess, 2012, personal communication)

This study raised some ideas about possible sources of supply side information that could be included in a registry of adaptable and accessible housing in BC. These ideas could be further explored for feasibility with respect to privacy information and other considerations.

- The Home Adaptations for Independence program (HAFI, BC Housing has provided funding the form of grants and forgivable loans to more than 550 (January 2012 to December 2012) low income seniors and people with disabilities, to complete accessibility modifications to existing dwellings. Homeowners and tenants are eligible for the HAFI assistance. When these modified units come available as rental properties or ownership opportunities in the future, suitable future occupants could be matched with the units through an adaptable and accessible housing registry. Perhaps there would be an opportunity for HAFI to promote the registry to owners seeking funding and those who have received funds in the past, and ask that applicants voluntarily list their unit with the registry if they move out of the unit in the future. Further discussion would be required.
- In BC municipalities, market adaptable and accessible units are constructed when developers construct them to meet market demand for adaptable and accessible housing and/or to meet municipal requirements to include adaptable and accessible housing in

developments as a condition of development approval. Some municipalities (e.g. Burnaby, City of North Vancouver) have maintained a list of adaptable and accessible dwellings that have accumulated in their cities over many years. Perhaps the process of establishing an accessible housing registry could engage with these municipalities to find opportunities to most effectively include the units in a registry. It is likely that some of the adaptable accessible dwellings in existing multi-unit condominium residential buildings have stratified ownership (and the developer is no longer involved). In this situation, perhaps the registry managers could contact the associated strata corporations, and pass along an invitation to owners or renters of accessible units to post the units on the registry when they are vacant. A further idea would be to cultivate awareness among real estate agents working in these municipalities to make them aware of the developments that contain these units and the opportunity to list them in the registry. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of the accessible and adaptable unit owners and occupants is protected.

- Some BC municipalities have adopted the 2009 Building Code standard for single-storey adaptable and dwellings in multi-unit buildings. Since there is no legislation or requirement in BC to specifically advertise these accessible units on the market⁸, there has been some concern voiced by stakeholders that purchasers and renters may not be aware of the adaptability features, particularly the features that enable future modification and may not be readily visible (e.g. reinforced walls for future installation of grab bars would not look different than standard walls). While there may not be legal or legislative means to 'require' that units to be posted in a registry, the registry manager/operator could certainly raise awareness about the benefits of the registry to promote the rental / ownership of the units to a specific target market that wants adaptable / accessible housing. Further brainstorming may be required!
- The Homeowner Protection Office (HPO), a branch of BC Housing, has recently embarked a two-year research project for BC residential developers, which supports the building of universal design residential housing. Developers can apply for a \$600 grant to design a new home to the SAFERhome Standards Society's 19-point standard. (SAFERhomes Standards Society was mentioned earlier in Section 1: Context). With a similar approach to homes modified to be adaptable and accessible through HAFI assistance (mentioned above), perhaps the adaptable and accessible home registry could work with the participating developers and builders to list and feature the completed units in the registry. The positive momentum may then encourage these industry professionals and others to again use the registry to list other new adaptable and accessible units that they develop in other communities and buildings on the registry. Buy in and participation from these champions would then set an example for other developers to use the registry too.
- Informant interviewees involved in market housing suggested that real estate agents with professional certifications in seniors housing could be targeted as possible leaders in listing their clients' adaptable and accessible properties for resale. Two examples of such designations are the certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (upcoming training is being hosted by Greater Vancouver Homebuilders' Association) and the certified Seniors' Real Estate Specialist (a designation certified by the US National Association of realtors). Links to

⁸ In Massachusetts there is a law that requires landlords to advertise available units for 15 days through the Mass Access registry.

some additional information about these certifications is in Appendix 2 (item 7).

Gathering Demand Side Information about Housing Seekers

- To preserve housing seekers' privacy many registries do not require housing seekers to sign in and provide personal information, allowing housing seekers to remain anonymous. Seekers select housing criteria that match their housing needs and preferences (list of accessibility features, market / non-market, tenure, location) and yield custom searches of available units that meet their needs. Some online registries allow housing seekers to sign on to the site (confidentiality protected) to access advanced features like saving searches and preferences, and signing up for email alerts for new postings that meet their needs.
- An alternative to web interaction is to gather housing seekers' information by telephone / email. For example, the Accessible Housing Society (AHS) (Calgary)'s Program Manager collects information about the housing seekers' household's accessibility needs, preferences, and budget. For clients that can afford market housing, the Program Manager refers clients to appropriate market listings. AHS also has a particular real estate agent they recommend, who has specialized expertise in accessible housing (a registered Occupational Therapist). For clients with lower incomes who require non-market units, AHS acts as a conduit between the client and the housing provider (Calgary Housing). AHS is 'built in' to Calgary Housing's application process. The Calgary Housing application requires applicants to get in touch with AHS to provide more information in their application about accessibility needs. Calgary Housing uses this information to manage the housing waiting list and then offer available accessible units that match the needs and priority of applicants.

Maintaining Registry Data

Keeping Up to Date

Maintaining and sharing current information can be a challenge for registries. Here are some examples of issues with maintaining the current information:

- In an informant interview, MassAccess identified 'stale listings' as an issue for them. Their online postings are scheduled to expire after a period of time (e.g. 90 days) unless renewed. If the unit is rented before the expiry, building managers are seldom motivated to remove listing. This frustrates housing seekers when they think a unit is available but it has already been rented. MassAccess does not have enough staff resources to heavily enforce the removal of stale listings.
- In an informant interview, AHS Calgary representatives said that they do not have enough resources to keep up to date on current available market rental and ownership listings in their registry. Since their focus is on affordable units (working with Calgary Housing) and they have limited resources, they do not find out about most of the adaptable and accessible market rental units that are available in the city. Market rental and ownership listings are not often proactively provided to AHS because the rental market and real estate market in Calgary is 'hot', and vacant units are quickly filled by word of mouth.

Keeping Track of Outcomes

Registries recommended that a system to collect and maintaining information about the outcomes and effectiveness of their services is a great idea. MassAccess has a programmed data maintenance system, and they are able to use this system to tabulate monthly totals for the number of visitors, postings added and removed, etc. for tracking and reporting to the funder of the registry. Both SCI BC and Mass Access noted that they have conducted periodic and anonymous surveys with housing seekers and housing providers, to find out how effective the registry is and areas for suggested improvements.

★Key Findings and Pieces of Advice about Data: Content, Collection, Validation, Input, Management, and Sharing

Based on the findings of this scoping study, the following are recommended with respect to data:

- Internet housing listings appear to be an efficient and user-friendly way to gather and share data about available (for purchase and rent) homes and properties that are accessible and adaptable.
- Each available listing should include a searchable list of accessibility and adaptability features. The list of features needs to be understandable to housing providers who may have less knowledge about accessibility features and needs. And from the housing seeker's perspective, the ability to search for specific accessibility features improves efficiency of the housing search. In BC, Accessible Housing BC's list of accessibility features and complementary information and resources are an excellent example of a searchable list. Depending on how the existing Housing Board's list of features is working for the users, ideas for modification in each listing could come from the users themselves and from other registry examples and experience.
- Building on the Accessible Housing BC's Housing Board, additional resources could help to boost the quantity and geographical distribution of the listings in BC (most are in Lower Mainland area) by building partnerships and awareness. It would be beneficial to promote the Housing Board with the organizations (e.g. HAFI, SAFERHome BC Universal Design Project, municipalities with requirements/incentives for adaptable and accessible housing) and participants (homeowners and renters who complete home modifications with HAFI assistance, builders and developers of adaptable and accessible units) in existing programs to increase supply of adaptable and accessible housing, to build participation in the Housing Board.
- Discussion and brainstorming is suggested with the Housing Registry and Housing Providers of rent-geared-to-income housing, to determine how a registry of adaptable and accessible housing can best 'complement their efforts and existing systems. For example, could a registry also facilitate collection and sharing of more detailed information about accessibility features in existing inventory of geared-to-income rental housing units? This information could inform applicants' decisions about which buildings would best match for their needs, located in the areas they want to live.

- During the process of establishing a registry, other registries' experience suggest that it is useful to set up systems that track the registry's outcomes and performance indicators including number of listings, searchers, available properties rented, etc.

Ingredient #3. Scope of the Registry: Geographic scope and Types of Housing in the Registry

Considerations regarding BC scope or Regional/City Scope

- In BC, existing registries that match adaptable/accessible units with consumers (The Housing Registry and Accessible Housing BC) cover a province-wide scope. It could make sense to cover a province-wide to mirrors the existing resources and momentum. However, depending on the financial and staff resources available, a registry at a provincial scale may be too large to manage and fund at the outset. Considerable resources would be required to build connections and outreach with locally and regionally based partners throughout the province; as well as operate, manage, and promote the registry during its infancy.
- An option to consider is a pilot phase for the registry at a regional scale. During the regional pilot phase, some valuable lessons could be learned about who are the key partners and best approaches to building partnerships, data gathering, required resources etc. Examples of regional/city scale registries that were studied include Access-A-Home in United Kingdom, Accessible Housing Society in Calgary. Following the regional pilot experience, a province-wide scale could then be established.
- The housing market may vary across BC. The ebb and flow of the market can affect the success of a registry. For example, when vacancy rates for market rental homes is low, property managers and owners would be less inclined to post accessible property listings on a voluntary registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

★Recommendations and Pieces of Advice regarding BC Scope or Regional/City Scope

- Existing key resources in BC, the Housing Registry and Accessible Housing BC, both have a provincial focus. Depending on the approach and direction that is taken and the resources available, it may be prudent to begin a registry of adaptable and accessible housing with a regional pilot area, and then scale it up to a provincial scope.

Considerations Regarding Types of Housing in the Registry

The defined scope for this research study is to explore a registry for both non-market housing and market housing. In this study we found some examples of registries that focused only on market housing, others that included both non-market and market housing, and others that included only social housing. Some pros and cons are listed about including various types of housing, based on the findings of this study and our situation in BC.

Non-market (Rent-Geared-to-Income and Cooperative) Housing

Accessible Housing Society (AHS) in Calgary is an example of an existing adaptable and accessible housing registry that focuses mostly on non-market housing. AHS finds that most people who contact them for support and assistance require housing that is *both* affordable and accessible. However, the society also reports that people looking for market housing tend to have access to more of their own resources to find or modify a unit that suits their needs. AHS is able to help people with accessibility needs through the application process for social housing units (Calgary Housing), since AHS has established systems and partnership with Calgary Housing and other providers. When AHS receives inquiries from people with accessibility needs who are seeking market rate rentals and properties to purchase, AHS refers them to real estate agents who specialize in adaptable and accessible housing and any known current opportunities (though a registry of market properties is not regularly and proactively updated). (Accessible Housing Society, 2012, personal communication)

In BC, a registry would need to be developed in close coordination with The Housing Registry and housing providers to avoid creating confusion about the housing application process, unit availability, etc. and perhaps provide clarity and information to housing seekers. A registry should also be developed in close coordination with Accessible Housing BC, and the existing partnerships with nonprofit providers and coops, particularly those who are already posting their available units on the Accessible Housing BC housing board.

Market-Rental and Market-Owned Housing

Accessible Housing BC launched its housing board in late 2012, and provides a forum for market owners and property managers to post market rental and ownership opportunities on the Housing Board.

We can anticipate that an aging population forecast in BC will correlate with an increasing rate of disability in the population; therefore, an increasing number of residents that require accessible and adaptable homes to meet their needs. An interviewee noted that developers are often not often respond 'early' to impending changes to the market and demographics. While an aging population is already happening, the impact and needs of an aging population for adaptable and accessible can be expected to intensify in the future. Public knowledge and market response about adaptable and accessible housing will come with time. A registry would be a valuable resource to link growing demand for accessible housing with a limited supply.

A central question to be explored is how to contribute to and coordinate with the existing efforts of Accessible Housing BC. Accessible Housing BC staff said they would like to augment listings and uptake throughout the province, so perhaps a focus could be to build partnerships and awareness. Further exploration and discussion is required.

Table 3. Some Examples of Accessible Housing Registries – Geographic Scope, and Types of Housing Included in the Registry

Registry	Geographical scope / Focus	Housing types included
Access-A-Home United Kingdom	United Kingdom - Regional / borough pilot project (in Reading England), and now being applied in other regions of England.	Non-market rental housing Only accessible housing
Accessible Property Register United Kingdom	United Kingdom - Country-wide	Market housing – rent, own Only accessible housing
AccessibleProperties.net	World Wide, but mostly USA listings	Market housing – rent, own Only accessible housing
The Housing Registry	British Columbia – Province Wide	Non-market rental housing and coop housing Includes both accessible and non-accessible housing
Accessible Housing BC (Spinal Cord Injury BC)	British Columbia – Province Wide	Non-market rental, market rental, market owned Only accessible housing
HousingLink	Minneapolis-St.Paul – City Region	Subsidized rentals, and market rentals under a certain rent threshold (based on # bedrooms), though some units with higher than threshold rents are included if accessible.
Mass Access	Massachusetts USA - State	Non-market rental, market rental, market owned
Housingconnections.org	Portland and region - Regional	Non-market rental, market rental, market owned
Accessible Housing Society	Calgary - City	Non-market rental and market rental

★Recommendation regarding Inclusion of Market and Non Market Housing in a Registry of Adaptable and Accessible Housing

Include non-market and market housing opportunities in the registry. Demand for accessible and adaptable housing will continue to rise with an aging population, and it makes sense to provide resources such as a registry that encourages the most efficient use of the supply of adaptable and accessible housing for people with a range of incomes.

Ingredient #4. Format and function of the registry

The following advice was provided by various interviewees, who shared their experiences and lessons:

- A registry manager may find that the most efficient format / interface to share current information is on the Internet. However, many seekers of adaptable and accessible housing may not have access and comfort with Internet searching. Others may be experienced with the Internet, but they need additional support and assistance that can only be offered through personal contact. A consistent suggestion from registry managers is to ensure that housing availability information is available in a format that can be shared by email and even by mail. Also, ensuring that a telephone service is available and that the Program Manager has time to devote to telephone assistance is really important.
- Websites and materials produced by the registry need to be clear and accessible to people who have visual and hearing impairments, as well as other barriers. It is suggested that users with different disabilities review the tools and resources to ensure they are accessible to users.
- In addition to offering a registry of adaptable and accessible housing, many of the managing non-profit organizations offer other resources to housing seekers, including: links to health and social services, housing related products for people with accessibility issues, housing search strategies and advice.
- Registries need to ensure that the listing process is free of barriers and confusion for people listing units. One of the registry managers shared information that the majority of their phone calls are actually from building managers that are unfamiliar with how list available properties. Registries include information about 'what are accessibility features', explaining the accessibility criteria with good visual material, etc. The website needs to address a broad audience, and 'sell' the benefits of the registry.
- A few informant interviewees mentioned that it is useful to encourage inclusion of pictures of the property and additional information to supplement the standard list of accessibility features. The format of the registry should encourage this type of information. While finding a place that works and meets accessibility needs is obviously a top priority for housing seekers, so are other features that affect quality of life: the neighbourhood character, nearby grocery and personal services, transportation options, proximity to medical services, etc.

★Recommendations and Pieces of Advice Regarding Form and Function

- Internet postings about available units can be a popular way to share current and detailed information with housing seekers, in a transparent and efficient manner. Experience and examples from existing registries can be helpful in setting it up to ensure a user friendly format and system.

- A user-friendly system for housing providers to enter listings of available properties is essential. Since listings are voluntary, people will only list available units if it is easy to do so.
- In addition to Internet services, telephone support services are essential. Some people will not want to access Internet listings, and many will require additional information and assistance.
- The registry will need to track usage, visits, etc. to facilitate tracking, reporting (e.g. funders), and marketing.

Section 3. Implications and Next Steps

This section outlines the key themes and considerations that have been gleaned from this scoping study, the main opportunities and challenges that can be expected, and next steps to pursue toward a BC registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

Key Themes and Messages

1. An adaptable and accessible housing registry has recently been launched - Accessible Housing BC by the Spinal Cord Injury of BC. Work together, learn from experience and pool resources to avoid inefficient duplication of effort.
2. We have heard that there is not yet a widespread awareness (in the general population, among private developers, among real estate professionals) about the needs and corresponding features of adaptable and accessible housing; education and awareness about accessibility needs and home features should at the same time as establishing a registry.
3. Since participation in the registry by housing providers, landlords, etc. would not be mandatory, we need to cultivate champions who create momentum in the private sector to list available properties in the registry, e.g. developer/builder participants in the HPO pilot project for universal design, real estate agents with seniors' market designations, etc.
4. A registry needs to exist and be available in several forms: computer, phone assistance. The registry also works well when it is connected with support programs and services.

Summary Recommendations and Pieces of Advice on the Four Key Ingredients for a Registry of Adaptable and Accessible Housing

Based on the information in this study and report about the key ingredients for a registry of accessible and adaptable homes in BC, the following (in Table 4) are recommended as key registry components suitable to a BC context:

Table 4. Recommendations and Pieces of Advice for a Registry of Adaptable and Accessible Housing

Component	Brief Recommendations and Key Pieces of Advice
<p>Resources: registry management, partners, funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organization that can offer support services in addition to the registry of accessible and adaptable housing would be well suited to operate a registry. For example, a non-profit organization with a mandate that includes services related to housing and/or assisting people with disabilities. • Funding for a registry could come from a combination of government funds, donations, and commercial revenue. An expected annual cost to operate is somewhere between \$35,000 and \$100,000 per year. Some registries function with approximately one full time person, and more may be required depending on scope and duties. • Active collaboration and involvement of champions in real estate, building and development, rental managers in building the registry, in addition to non-market housing providers and agencies is strongly recommended.
<p>Data: content, collection, validation, input, management, and sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to maintain a critical mass of available properties listings, to make it a key 'go-to' resource. To accomplish this success, the registry would need to be organized so to meet market housing needs and coordinated with the Housing Registry to address non-market (social housing) needs. • Internet listings are recommended as an effective way to collect information (from housing providers) and post advertise available accessible and adaptable housing are recommended. Each available listing should include a list of accessibility and adaptability features that and housing seekers should be able to filter the available housing listings that meet their specific accessibility and adaptability criteria.
<p>Scope: Geographic scope, and types of housing included in the Registry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registry of accessible and adaptable housing in BC could link both 'social housing' and 'market housing' (i.e. rent-geared-to-income, cooperative, private market rentals, and market properties for sale. • Consider starting off with a pilot region to gain a practical understanding of resource requirements, partnerships, organization, etc. before moving to a provincial scale.
<p>Format and Function</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A user-friendly system for housing providers to share information about available properties is essential. Since listings are voluntary, people will only list available units if it is easy to do so. • In addition to Internet services, alternatives (e.g. telephone) and support services are essential. Some housing seekers will not want to access Internet listings, and many will require additional information and assistance.

Reflections

This study involved preliminary research and scoping for a registry. The next steps will be to start discussions with various organizations and partners to see where the opportunities and synergies are, and determine what is a desirable and practical steps to build a registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

The study scope included nine interview / discussions. As discussions about a possible registry move forward, note that particular focus should be on seeking the perspectives and advice of a couple of particular groups that were not emphasized in this study.

1. Disability Support Service Organizations. Involvement of additional disability support service organizations⁹ would be very helpful to get a greater understanding of the needs and challenges from the 'demand side' of accessible and adaptable housing, and to understand the opportunities for partnership.
2. Real Estate. The study included discussions with professionals from the real estate industry including a Development Manager and Real Estate Agent with special qualifications and experience in accessible and adaptable housing. In the next steps that involve sharing the findings of this study and discussing next steps, involvement and outreach with real estate organizations and boards is recommended, as they were identified in this study as a key group for buy-in and partnership for a registry of adaptable and accessible housing.

Next Steps

The following steps are suggested as a general framework to move ahead with a possible registry of adaptable and accessible housing in BC:

1. Determine which agencies would be interested in carrying forward the discussion to determine if it is feasible and beneficial (assess organizational capacity and mandate to do so.)
2. Arrange a discussion regarding possible opportunities with key partners that are already operating housing registries in BC:
 - a) Spinal Cord Injury BC with Accessible Housing BC (Pat Harris, Manager of Information Services)
 - b) BC Housing

⁹ SCI BC provides a list of disability organizations: <http://sci-bc.ca>

3. Share findings of this study with the people who contributed to it (e.g. informant interviewees), and possibly to a distribution list of additional interested parties. (Many of the BC based informant interviewees for the study are interested in learning about the findings and next steps.)
4. Host a facilitated meeting with key parties to brief them on work to date and discuss whether the initiative moves forward, with the following key matters on the agenda:
 - Geographical scope
 - Market scope and participation – market rental, market ownership, non-market rental
 - Host agency and ‘ownership’
 - Funding strategy and communication strategy
 - Integrating with existing resources and organizations working on adaptable housing.
5. Following the facilitated session, consider creating a structured implementation plan and milestones to move forward. A sample implementation plan below (Figure 6) was proposed by Jacobucci (2005) for a Winnipeg Manitoba context, and depending on the path forward it may be useful in BC.

Table 11: Steps of the Housing Registry Implementation Process	
Implementation Steps	Details
Conduct research	survey, focus group, needs assessment
Gather information	housing information, rental market information, construction data
Network/establish partnerships	establish a reputation, consultations, meetings, outreach
Establish a committee/council	chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, directors
Find initial funding	look to a wide variety of sources
Establish a plan	develop a work and/or business plan
Find a model	housing registry model – B.C. Housing Registry and Mass Access have been used as models
Develop/select computerized system	select an IT platform, select software, hire a consulting company
Develop application form	review housing providers' application forms, develop a form for the registry
Develop member agreement form	develop an agreement for providers to sign when they become a member
Advertise and attract landlords	contacted landlords, develop communication material, mail out information, educate the public
Search for longer term funding	sustainable funding, larger budget needed at this time
Hire staff	specifically for housing registry
Establish the database	enter information into the database
Implementation process completed	registry opens

Figure 6 Steps to implementing a housing registry, recommended by Jacobucci for Winnipeg context. Source: Jacobucci, 2005.

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Information Interviews and Discussions, referred to as “Personal Communications” in this report.

Information interviews and discussions were conducted by telephone and based on discussion questions in Appendix 3.

- BC Housing Applicant Services (includes the Housing Registry) staff. November 20, 2012.
 - BC Housing Staff Housing Adaptations for Independence staff. November 13, 2012.
 - MetroVancouver Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Housing Subcommittee. October 25, 2012.
 - Spinal Cord Injury BC Information Services staff. November 22, 2012.
 - MassAccess Housing Registry staff. November 30, 2012.
 - Accessible Housing Society staff. November 26, 2012.
 - Occupational Therapist and Real Estate Agent. November 29, 2012.
 - MetroVancouver Developer, Development Manager. November 28, 2012.
 - Municipal Accessibility Coordinator. November 25, 2012.
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Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

The Accessible Property Register United Kingdom http://accessible-property.org.uk/start.htm					
Name and Description of Housing Registry (Year started, Geographical scope, which parts of the housing continuum, partners, funding and budget info)	Logistics, Registry Features, Functions	Data collected and searched in the registry about adaptable and accessible housing	Notable features, challenges and successes identified	Lessons and Practices that seem particularly applicable in BC	Sources of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Started in 2003; first in the United Kingdom to specialize in promoting accessible and adapted property for sale and rent. - This register does not include social housing ("affordable sector" in UK) which is accessed through local authority housing registers. AccessAHome is a separate online register to match disabled people with social housing; it is being piloted in several parts of the UK - Started and operated by 3 individuals, 2 of them wheelchair users - Includes listings for market rental (though limited), market owned, and vacation properties to rent - The register is envisioned as a break even enterprise: after nearly ten years they have just got to the point where costs of running the site are more or less balanced by income. - Start-up was motivated by personal circumstances while searching for accessible accommodation. 	<p>Private vendors and landlords post property advertisements directly onto the site at no charge, and it immediately becomes live.</p> <p>Commercial businesses and organisations are charged to advertise by per-listing rates, annual rates, preferred partner rates. All can be done online.</p> <p>The registry contains a set of legal disclaimers. Site makes no claim to the validity or reliability of the information regarding accessibility and other aspects posted by third parties.</p> <p>The site also includes a disability market place where accessibility specialized services can pay to advertise.</p> <p>Registry includes wheelchair accessible student accommodation pages (began in 2010 still being developed).</p> <p>The Registry has a list of "approved partners real estate agents" that promote access features and adaptations positively, offers a range of services, and a member of relevant professional association. The designation administered through an annual paid membership and offers the partners use of the registry's criteria and logos, vendor referrals, and more.</p> <p>Site can search by location, price, rent/own, accessible accommodation</p>	<p>Advertises accessible and adapted property at two levels:</p> <p><u>Level 1</u> - minimum access criteria: #1 to 5 on list below. Flats in multi-storey blocks qualify if there is suitable lift access.</p> <p><u>Level 2</u> - Accessible Property Plus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Property is advertised with a special symbol. - Meets Level 1 criteria plus one or more of the criteria listed #6 to 19. - Property designated Accessible Property Plus may be particularly suitable for a wheelchair user, and some of these properties have been specifically designed or adapted for wheelchair use. <p><u>Access Features and Adaptations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Step-free approach 2. Parking (off-street or unrestricted on-street) 3. Level or ramped access 4. Entrance level WC 5. Level access to main entrance-level rooms 6. Wide doorways - external 800mm, internal 750mm 7. Adapted kitchen 8. Adapted bathroom 9. Level entry (roll-in) shower/wet-room 10. Wheelchair accessible lift 11. Ceiling hoist 12. Retirement accommodation 13. Level/ramped access to garden/grounds 14. Entrance-level shower/bath-room 15. Entrance-level bedroom(s) 16. Self-contained annexe 17. Stairlift 18. Intercom/entryphone 19. Warden or other assistance available <p>Listings also contain additional real estate information about dwelling form (apartment, townhouse, etc.), location etc., a couple paragraphs of text to describe the selling features of the home, and a link to the real estate agent's listing of the property or owner information.</p>	<p><u>Success:</u> Able to identify virtually every accessible property advertised for sale or rent anywhere in the UK and get it posted on the website within a couple of days. Also advertise wheelchair accessible holiday accommodation.</p> <p><u>Challenges:</u> Many properties that would be suitable for wheelchair users remain invisible because they are not identified as such, due to lack of awareness and reluctance to publicise access (some think this will put people off!) – a particularly big problem for rental properties.</p> <p>We do have a few agents who work with us, notably in Leeds and Sheffield, but mostly we have been pretty unsuccessful in persuading agents that there are commercial as well as social benefits to be gained in promoting access positively. For example, where we have links with agents we can recommend them to our vendors.</p> <p>Need more income from paid advertising, and sponsorship. Social housing providers have not wanted to work with the registry to date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rating system (column 3) seems user friendly with the 3 levels - Needing to develop awareness and willingness in the market to promote accessibility - Needing to develop partnerships with real estate agent - One of the only registries that this study came across that pulls in some revenue from commercial listings and marketplace ... - No claim to the validity or reliability of the information regarding accessibility and other aspects posted by third parties. This seems practical. 	<p>Article on Disability Horizons website (accessed November 10, 2012) dated June 18, 2012</p> <hr/> <p>Correspondence with registry representative</p>

Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

Accessible Housing Society's Housing Registry Calgary, Alberta http://www.ahscalgary.ca/services/housing-registry					
Name and Description of Housing Registry (Year started, Geographical scope, which parts of the housing continuum, partners, funding and budget info)	Logistics, Registry Features, Functions	Data collected and searched in the registry about adaptable and accessible housing	Notable features, challenges and successes identified	Lessons and Practices that seem particularly applicable in BC	Sources of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assists clients to identify housing needs and helps them obtain safe, affordable, barrier free housing in the community. - Their biggest focus is to help people who need accessible and adaptable housing to go through the application process for Calgary Housing and to be their advocates / support system. Many of the clients need extra help beyond just filling out the application and sending it in. - 95% of people who contact them need social housing / affordable housing. - Funded by Alberta provincial government - \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year. Funds one almost FTE. They don't have enough resources to pursue an inventory of available market units so they have just been focusing on the non-market assistance that meets the majority of clients' needs. 	<p>Registry maintains a master list of accessible and adaptable dwellings.</p> <p>People call or email the registry, and then registry staff match people to units to meet their access needs, and to link with community resources.</p> <p>Landlords can have units rated according to level of accessibility.</p> <p>The Society's Occupational Therapist and Technical Advisor can help to determine feasibility of adapting a specific unit.</p>	<p>Registry maintains a master database of known accessible dwellings. Units are rated to their level of accessibility.</p> <p>The rating system is:</p> <p>Level 1. There are no stairs, but once you enter the dwelling it is not adapted or designed for wheelchairs. There are no wide doorways and no accessible design in the bathroom. This type of unit would generally be suitable for someone who can do transfers from a wheelchair in the bathroom and is quite mobile. This level of unit is often workable for someone who an agile wheelchair user, or with limited mobility such as use of a cane, walker etc. who has trouble with stairs.</p> <p>Level 2. These units are for someone who is reasonably mobile but does require wider doorways for a wheelchair, and no stairs. Bathroom may or may not have some accommodation.</p> <p>Level 3. These units have no stairs, wider doorways, wheel-in shower, and likely also have lower counters in kitchen and bathroom.</p>	<p>AHS relationship with Calgary Housing and some of the other housing providers is the best thing AHS says they have going for them.</p> <p>AHS are being invited to discuss and consider a province wide registry in collaboration with the paraplegic association but they are concerned that the scope is too big to be effective.</p> <p>It is a lot about the people behind the registry, and being able to react and help people in unique and often quite vulnerable situations, giving people suggestions and hope. People want AHS to walk them through the process for a couple weeks or months.</p>	<p>If an adaptable and accessible housing registry has to pick between market focus and non-market focus perhaps it makes most sense to pick non-market since so many people with accessibility needs are also low income?</p> <p>The message from this and other registries that it is about more than the listing – it is the human assistance and support that people also need.</p> <p>This registry has a single city focus – does it allow them to be more meaningfully connected to the needs. Is the city-scale more effective in BC – to consider?</p>	<p>Accessible Housing Society Website: http://www.ahscalgary.ca/services/housing-registry</p> <p>Informant interview with registry representative.</p>

Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

MassAccess Massachusetts, USA http://www.massaccesshousingregistry.org					
Name and Description of Housing Registry (Year started, Geographical scope, which parts of the housing continuum, partners, funding and budget info)	Logistics, Registry Features, Functions	Data collected and searched in the registry about adaptable and accessible housing	Notable features, challenges and successes identified	Lessons and Practices that seem particularly applicable in BC	Sources of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps people to find housing in the state of Massachusetts, highlighting accessible or barrier free housing. - Registry includes units that are subsidized, income-assist, and market units for rent, and units for sale. - It took 10 years to get the registry going. - Registry is owned by the state dept (MRC) and it is run by CHAPA, a non-profit. - Budget from state department - \$75,000-\$100,000 per year. - According to a 1989 MA Housing Bill of Rights for People with Disabilities, owners and managers of accessible housing (which includes housing authorities) are required to do affirmative marketing to rent their accessible apartments to people with disabilities that need the features. If there are no eligible applicants on the waiting list for an accessible unit, owners and managers of accessible housing must wait 15 days before renting the apartment to someone who does not need the accessible features. The bill requires the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to maintain a central registry of accessible housing. Owners and managers must report their vacancies to MRC. The Massachusetts Accessible Housing Registry (Mass Access) is managed by Citizens' Housing and Planning Association through a contract with MRC to fulfill that obligation. If there are no applicants within that 15 day period, the owner or manager may rent the apartment to an applicant on their regular waiting list that does not need the accessible features. 	<p>Owners and property managers can manage and publish listings – they last for 90 days.</p> <p>Housing seekers can save their criteria, receive alerts for new listings and availability that meet their criteria etc.</p> <p>The Program Manager does training sessions via independent living organizations in the state.</p>	<p>Search criteria include selection tick-boxes, text fill-in boxes, and drop-down menus for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - area (town) - availability status (within 30 days, 60 days, etc.) - waitlist or non-waitlist - accessibility status (accessible adaptable, elevator/ground floor, has barriers / stairs) - additional 7 accessibility features (e.g.communication devises, access features for blind or visually impaired) - affordability level (low/income—based, moderate (means some subsidy), market rate - maximum rent/price - tick-box for subsidized units only <p>Definitions / categories of accessible units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barrier-Free Units: Units that are barrier-free are accessible to people with disabilities that use wheelchairs, but they can also be used by people with different types of disabilities. For example, a person of very short stature, a person with a brain injury or stroke, severe cardiac or respiratory problems, or a person with limited standing, walking, or reaching ability, may use the design features of a wheelchair accessible unit. The design features must accommodate the needs of the tenant or a member of his or her family. Medical documentation must substantiate the need. - Other Accessible Units: There are other types of accessible units for people who do not necessarily need a barrier-free unit. Other kinds of accessible units are units that are equipped with communication devices for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or units that are equipped with devices for people with visual impairments. People with disabilities are eligible for these types of units if they need the particular design features of the unit. 	<p>MassAccess does confidential surveys with the property owners, consumers, and advocacy organizations most connected to consumers to find out their level of satisfaction with the site and services. This is done annually in connection with filing their annual report with MRC.</p> <p>Usage stats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors (logged in and not logged in): 7400 unique visitors per month - Consumers (have a login): 8000 per month - Property managers (have a login): 1,000 includes non-market and market 	<p>The MassAccess experience is certainly that one registry is better than having a registry for affordable/social housing and a market housing site. It better serves the consumer because it is a one-stop shop, and it would be very difficult and unfeasible to manage the 2 sites.</p> <p>Getting ownership from the development community Start with what you already have and then build it up Perhaps get some success stories of how it has helped people, feature developers or property managers, to build some buy-in.</p>	<p>MassAccess Website www.massaccesshousingregistry.org</p> <p>Informant interview with registry representative</p>

Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

Spinal Cord Injury BC (SCI BC) – Accessible Housing BC British Columbia http://www.accessiblehousingbc.com					
Name and Description of Housing Registry (Year started, Geographical scope, which parts of the housing continuum, partners, funding and budget info)	Logistics, Registry Features, Functions	Data collected and searched in the registry about adaptable and accessible housing	Notable features, challenges and successes identified	Lessons and Practices that seem particularly applicable in BC	Sources of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officially the Housing Board was launched in 2012, though it is an online version of online services that were already provided through SCI BC's Housing List of Vacancies that has been going for 2 years (and this is based on a housing list that began 10 years ago). - SCI BC still maintains a monthly email distribution list of vacancies, as well as few hardcopy mail-outs for people who request it. - Claims to be the first online resource in BC dedicated to connecting accessible housing seekers with accessible housing providers who wish to rent or sell properties. - No cost to all users- consumers and listers - Not for profit and market listings are accepted and encouraged, and both types are free of charge. - The site was developed after a 2009 survey 2009, asking housing seekers and providers if their existing service was really helping – the Housing List of Vacancies. They found out it was hugely helpful so they started the Accessible Housing BC. 	<p>The online Housing Board is supported by telephone Information Service Agents that can help people across regions the province. They receive lots of phone calls because many of the consumers do not have online access. Approximately 80% of their calls are regarding housing needs.</p> <p>Photos are included with the listing, if posted.</p> <p>After 3 months a notification is sent, and if no response indicating that the property is available the posting is automatically removed.</p>	<p>Basic accessibility features can be selected and included in property listings. Additional info can be added by text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No step entrance, - Parking (accessible off street parking), Level or ramped access, - Laundry room (raised washer/dryer with front mounted controls), - Hard surface flooring (laminated or tile or linoleum), - Adapted bathroom (wheel in shower), Adapted kitchen, - Wider doorways (minimum 860mm width), - Switches and controls (mounted 400-1200mm above the floor), - Residential elevator access <p>Listings are categorized by area of the province, rent/own. Info on the listing also includes whether it is subsidized rent, the date of the listing, etc.</p>	<p>Many consumers require low income housing, and availability for this type of housing is limited because of low supply and low vacancy rate. Occupants of accessible units tend to move less often once they have found something that sufficiently works for them even if it is not perfect.</p> <p>SCI BC is just getting the word out regarding the Housing Board, and listing are starting to gain momentum.</p> <p>A potential for growth would be if BC Housing could advise its partners who manage social housing that they can post for free on the Housing Board.</p> <p>There are difficulties in knowing how to best communicate with MLS, real estate organizations and the real estate agents to let them know about the value of the service.</p> <p>A limited amount of accessible units are available, so it is difficult to gain momentum.</p> <p>A big area for growth and awareness is to make the general population aware of visitable housing, universal design, and the needs of aging population. Once people are more aware of the demand there will be more units and listings.</p> <p>Google Analytics report 1650 visits to the site since August 2012.</p> <p>They have no way to track the success of placements.</p> <p>Requests for accessible/affordable Housing were a big proportion of the InfoLine call volume 3 years ago.</p> <p>Now the info line gets 100 to 200 calls a month and at least 25% of calls are about finding affordable and accessible housing.</p>	<p>SCI BC is aware of 185 to 200 people across BC (or on their behalf by an advocate, i.e. a social worker) seeking accessible housing</p> <p>Future plans are to provide enriched content for a small fee, and to have realtors advertise for a small fee so that there is some revenue for this service.</p> <p>SCI BC would like to create educational YouTube videos (vignettes) to educate various audiences, especially real estate agents, about what is accessible, visitable, etc.</p> <p>Although we have set the site up for use provincially, we have had little uptake from the regional areas of the province to date. Mind you the site has only been active since August 2012 and we will actively promote its use by housing providers in other parts of the province. Most of the inquires for housing originate in the Lower Mainland.</p>	<p>Accessible Housing BC website (Spinal Cord Injury of BC): www.accessiblehousingbc.com</p> <p>Informant interview with representative.</p>

Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

BC Housing - The Housing Registry British Columbia http://www.bchousing.org/Partners/Housing_Registry					
Name and Description of Housing Registry (Year started, Geographical scope, which parts of the housing continuum, partners, funding and budget info)	Logistics, Registry Features, Functions	Data collected and searched in the registry about adaptable and accessible housing	Notable features, challenges and successes identified	Lessons and Practices that seem particularly applicable in BC	Sources of information
<p>It is voluntary and free for non-profit and cooperative housing providers of rent geared to income housing to become members of The Housing Registry. Housing Registry members use the applicant database to select new tenants / member (co-op) to select tenants when units become available.</p> <p>The Housing Registry collects information about applicants for affordable rental housing in a centralized database, and receives applicants' applications to be considered for all of the units that come available via registry members. The Registry also acts as a contact point with applicants to update their application.</p> <p>The Housing Registry is maintained and administered by BC Housing. Managed by the Housing Registry Council (members include housing providers, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Coop Housing Federation of BC, community associations, BC Housing).</p>	<p>Not for profit housing providers become members of the housing registry; membership give permission to access applicant list to select from.</p> <p>Rent Geared to Income Housing applicants' information is stored on the Housing Registry, and is provided to housing provider members so that they can contact the suitable applicant according to their own selection criteria, when a unit is available.</p>	<p>Database of applicants contains file information about applicants, and one of the questions is about mobility status: "do you use mobility equipment inside your home, or to come and go?"</p> <p>Database of units includes information about whether the unit is "wheelchair accessible".</p>	<p>In the future BC Housing would like to be able to share with applicants more specific information about the housing units with respect to accessibility and adaptability features.</p> <p>Currently some accessibility information is collected, particularly for the units that BC Housing has been involved in building and funding. Need to find a way to standardize the collection and records for this information.</p> <p>The Housing Registry does not capture all of the not for profit units in the province because not all providers are members. So, the registry does not provide the complete picture of availability for applicants nor for stats collection.</p> <p>Sometimes BC Housing is not able to provide an applicant needing accessible unit, when an accessible unit comes available.</p>	<p>BC Housing would like to be able to share with applicants more specific information about the housing units with respect to accessibility and adaptability features – perhaps the registry could do this.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.bchousing.org/partner-services/program-provider-information/housing-registry-for-housing-providers</p> <p>Informant interview with representative.</p>

Appendix 1. Summary Information: Existing Housing Registries That Were Scanned in this Study

Other Registries – see websites for more information about features etc.

AccessibleProperties.net

Worldwide listings – market purchase and apartment rentals.

Scope is worldwide but most of listings are in USA.

Sign up and pay to add a listing: base cost is \$60 per listing, and annual memberships for multiple listings available. 20 access features, checklist, upload photos of accessibility features.

The 'sell' to listers is: Gain the advantage over your competition by having your name in front of the largest visible minority consumer group in North America niche market that spends over \$770 billion per year.”

HousingLink

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota USA

<http://www.housinglink.org/Home.aspx>

A listing for subsidized rentals, and market rentals under a certain rent threshold (based on # bedrooms), though some units with higher than threshold rents are included if accessible.

Appendix 2. Additional Resources

Please refer to the following links for additional resources.

1. Two news articles about individuals seeking accessible housing:
<http://thelastsource.com/en/2012/11/19/paralegic-faces-double-discrimination-in-housing-market/>
<http://www.yourhome.ca/homes/articlePrint/1065406>
2. Home Adaptations for Independence program - list of eligible adaptations:
<https://www.bchousing.org/>
3. SAFERHome BC program– 19 Point SAFERhome Society standards:
<http://www.saferhomesociety.com/>
4. BC Housing – The Housing Registry:
<https://www.bchousing.org/partner-services/program-provider-information/housing-registry-for-housing-providers>
5. Summary – New (2009) adaptable housing standards in the BC Building Code:
<http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/reg/accessible/summary.htm>
6. Disability in Canada: a 2006 Profile – Canada and BC summary information:
<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca>
7. Information about two relevant Real Estate Specialist certifications:
<http://www.seniorsrealestate.com>
<http://www.nahb.org>
8. Giving in Action Society:
<http://www.givinginaction.ca>

Appendix 3.

Interview Questions for Informant Interviews

Interview questions vary according to experience of the interviewees. The three main groups of interviews are: those with housing registry experience; those involved with supply/facilitation of adaptable and accessible units; and users/ consumers of affordable housing. Some interviewees will have experience and knowledge that touches on various areas, and for these interviews and a suitable 'hybrid' list of questions will be asked.

Each interview begins with "Introductory / Profile Questions for all interviewees", outlined below. After the introduction, an appropriate set of questions according to the type of experience of the interview will follow according to the type/group of interviewee, in a relaxed discussion format. The questions are intentionally open ended and interviewees are invited and encouraged to add information and advice that they think is important. The interviews are up to 30 to 40 minutes, and if the interviewee is interested and able to continue the discussion could continue for additional time.

Introductory / Profile Questions for all Interviews

The interview will start with a brief description of the project objective, confirm understanding (and examples of what is a housing registry), etc.

- 1) Are you comfortable with me recording this interview, so that I can fill in any gaps and holes in my notes after our conversation?
- 2) In the research report for this project, are you comfortable with attributing the thoughts and ideas that you share with me today to you personally, and/or your organization? Are quotations for my report acceptable? I could send you any quotes I may attribute to you or your organization for review.
- 3) What is your involvement / role with your organization?
 - (If needed) How is this related to adaptable and accessible housing?

Questions for Interviewees with Housing Registry Experience

1-3. See standard questions under "introductory / profile questions for all interviews" above.

- 4) How and when did the need / idea for a housing registry emerge, and what is the history / evolution?
 - Who were the key players and sectors in setting up the registry funding and supporting it, etc.?
 - Who are the current operating contributors and funders? What is the annual budget?
- 5) How do you collect data, from whom, how do you organize it?

- How do you validate the data for accuracy, how do you keep it current and accurate?
 - How have you come to the decision about what data you collect about the units (and confirm what information is collected) in the registry?
 - How do users access this information, and what type of feedback / discussions have you had with users about the data and information available?
 - What is your data on usage (# and profile of people accessing) and results (how many registry users find housing)?
- 6) Did/do you have challenges about how to define adaptable and accessible housing in the Register? Which standards, definitions, features, and metrics have you used and what led you to that choice?
 - 7) Has the Registry raised awareness of the market demand for adaptable housing – are more units being built with adaptable/accessible features? Is there a supporting regulatory framework for participation in the registry?
 - 8) Is the registry achieving its intended objectives? (discuss)
 - 9) What are your most significant challenges and obstacles? How have you surmounted them (or tried to)?
 - 10) What are the greatest achievements of the registry, and how did you achieve them?
 - 11) If you could dream for a moment, what are the top two things you would do to make it better? (“What would you ‘rewind’ and do over again with a different approach?”)
 - 12) What are your recommendations for a province-wide registry of accessible and adaptable housing?
 - e.g. funding, who to involve, how and whom to collect data, etc.
 - 13) Can you recommend some sources of information and inspiration: other registries, research, people?
 - 14) What additional ideas, thoughts, advice, and concerns could you share with us?

Questions for Suppliers / Facilitators of Adaptable and Accessible Housing

- 1-3. See standard introduction and questions under “introductory / profile questions for all interviews” above.
- 4) If you have experience or knowledge about working in jurisdictions that have a housing registry, could you share it with me?
- 5) Please describe your involvement (role) and your interest in adaptable and accessible housing.
- 6) How would you describe the current and future demand for adaptable and accessible units in BC? (both rented and owned units, and are there specific issues and needs?)

- How might a Registry play a role in providing information about the demand for adaptable and accessible housing?
- 7) (If applicable to the interviewee) In the markets / regions in which you work, how do people currently find appropriate accessible and adaptable housing?
 - 8) Do you specifically market (for sale or rental) dwelling units with accessible and adaptable features?
 - If yes how?
 - If not, do you know of others who do this or specialize.
 - 9) Could a province-wide Registry of Adaptable and Accessible Housing make it easier to sell/rent adaptable/accessible units? Would it make it more likely for you (and others) to build accessible/adaptable units?
 - 10) What do you think are some of the ingredients for success in launching and operating a registry for adaptable and accessible housing?
 - 11) What challenges would you anticipate?
 - 12) How likely would you / your colleagues be to join the registry and use it? What would make you most likely to join and participate?
 - 13) Would you be considering partnering on creating and/or operating a BC Registry, if so what do you think you could contribute?
 - Would your organization possibly contribute data to this potential registry, and what might be the opportunities and challenges?
 - 14) Can you recommend some sources of information and inspiration: other relevant registries, research, people, partners, funders?
 - 15) What additional ideas, thoughts, advice, concerns could you share with us?

Questions for possible Users / Consumers of a BC Adaptable and Accessible Housing Registry

1-3. See standard questions under “introductory / profile questions for all interviews” above.

- 1) Please describe your (organization’s) involvement and your interest in adaptable and accessible housing.
- 2) How do people who need accessible and adaptable housing currently find it?
 - Issues re quantity, characteristics of the units, communication about availability, cost, quality, etc.
- 3) Is it your organization’s role, and are you currently successful in identifying units to meet users’ needs? (to what degree) What are the challenges?

- 4) Would a province-wide Registry of Adaptable and Accessible Housing make your job easier and meet your needs? (Or if it would not help you, why?)
 - examples and commentary about existing registries, if relevant
- 5) What do you think are some of the ingredients for success in launching and operating a BC Registry for adaptable and accessible housing?
- 6) What type of registry format would be useful (including how users would access the information, and what kinds of information should be collected and available)?
 - Recommendations for determining appropriate definitions and criteria of adaptable and accessible housing to be used in a Registry
- 7) What challenges for such a Registry would you anticipate?
- 8) Would you be interested in participating in a possible BC registry for adaptable and accessible housing, if it was to be created? If yes, what role would you see for yourselves and others in developing and operating it?
 - How likely would you / your members be to join the registry and use it as a tool to meet housing needs? What would make you most likely to join and participate?
- 9) Would you considering partnering on creating and/or operating a BC Registry, if so what do you think you could contribute?
- 10) Can you recommend some sources of information and inspiration: other relevant registries, research, people, funders, partners?
- 11) What additional ideas, thoughts, advice, concerns could you share with us?