

Annex A: Factsheet on BCA's initiatives for an accessible and inclusive Built Environment

1 Accessibility in the built environment is a key enabler to making Singapore an inclusive and age-friendly city. It is achieved through the following key strategies:

- a. Establishing accessibility standards;
- b. Driving accessibility upgrading for existing buildings; and
- c. Engaging in Outreach and Partnerships, including promotion of Universal Design (UD).

A. Establishing Accessibility Standards

(i) Ensuring Minimum Standards through Code on Accessibility

2 BCA first introduced the Code on Barrier-free Accessibility in Buildings in 1990. Since 2007, the Code has been updated to the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment ("Code") which provides the baseline standards for making buildings accessible to persons with disabilities and other users.

3 All new buildings projects and existing buildings undergoing addition and alteration (A&A) works requiring plan submission to BCA must meet the requirements of the prevailing Code. The Code has undergone several reviews (around every 5 years), with its scope progressively expanded to include Universal Design (UD) principles to better meet the changing needs of the population. The revised Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment 2025 ("Code 2025") aims to:

- a. Address current gaps and future needs of persons with disabilities, the ageing population and young families
- b. Improve clarity of the design requirements and promote deeper understanding of the underlying principles and intent of the requirements

4 Improving accessibility for persons with disabilities continues to be a key focus. The Code 2025 will require barrier-free access for all key building entrances linking to neighbouring buildings, commuter facilities, park connectors, and covered walkways. When providing shelter over an access route, priority must be given to the barrier-free access route (e.g. ramp). For instance, if a non-barrier-free access route (e.g. stairs) is sheltered, its barrier-free alternative must also be sheltered. Warning tactile ground surface indicators will be standardised at stairs to provide consistent alerts for persons with visual impairment. The requirements for hearing enhancement systems have been updated with detailed specifications regarding location, room sizes and system types to better serve people who are hard of hearing, enabling them to interact more effectively within buildings.

5 Significant enhancements for the elderly and breastfeeding mothers have been introduced following close consultations with stakeholders. Resting

areas will be required at alighting and boarding points, and a larger proportion of toilet cubicles must provide grab bars to cater to elderly users. Lactation room requirements have also been enhanced to include more buildings, with larger buildings required to provide more of such rooms.

6 Code 2025 was introduced on 7 April 2025. There will be a grace period of more than six months for industry to incorporate the updated requirements into the design of their projects. The Code's requirements will apply to buildings where the first set of plans are submitted to BCA for regulatory approval on or after 1 November 2025.

7 The Code Review Committee for Code 2025 comprised representatives from the following organisations:

1	Building and Construction Authority (BCA) - Chair
2	Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA)
3	Real Estate Developers' Association of Singapore (REDAS)
4	Housing and Development Board (HDB)
5	Land Transport Authority (LTA)
6	National Parks Board (NParks)
7	Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)
8	National University of Singapore (NUS)
9	Singapore Association for Occupational Therapists (SAOT)
10	Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
11	Disabled People's Association (DPA)
12	Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA)
13	Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore) (MDAS)
14	Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH)
15	SPD

(ii) Encouraging Provisions Beyond Baseline Standards Through the Universal Design index (UDi)

7 The UDi, introduced in June 2022, provides a self-assessment framework that allows developers and Qualified Persons to consider UD provisions that can be included in their projects and obtain an indicative measure of the level of user-friendliness for their projects.

8 The submission of the UDi forms part of the application for building plan approval and enables BCA to gather data on building accessibility. BCA also shares information of selected user-friendly features submitted by developers and designers for the public through a portal at <https://go.gov.sg/bcaud-infoportal>. As of March 2025, information from close to 440 buildings is available.

B. Driving Accessibility Upgrading for Existing Buildings

(i) Requiring Existing Buildings Undergoing A&A to Provide Basic Accessibility

9 To accelerate accessibility upgrading in older buildings, BCA has implemented building legislative amendments in June 2023 requiring existing commercial and institutional buildings without basic accessibility features to provide these when undertaking A&A works, regardless of where such works are carried out in the building. These features generally refer to an accessible building entrance, an accessible washroom, and an accessible route connecting the two. The requirement applies to buildings with Gross Floor Area of more than 500 m².

(ii) Incentivising Voluntary Upgrading of Private Sector Buildings

10 To improve accessibility in pre-1990 privately-owned buildings, BCA introduced the \$40 million Accessibility Fund (AF) in 2007 to incentivise building owners to carry out voluntary upgrading. The AF co-funds up to 80% of the construction cost for basic accessibility features, and up to 60% of the construction cost for UD features, capped at \$300,000 per development.

11 The AF was subsequently enhanced to allow more building owners, with buildings that already have basic accessibility features and which were built before the implementation of 2013's Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment (i.e. after 1990 and before 2013), to tap on the fund to put in more UD features. For this group of buildings, the AF co-funds up to 60% of the construction cost for UD features, capped at \$100,000 per development.

12 As of March 2025, 160 private building owners have utilised the AF to retrofit their buildings with accessibility features. BCA will continue to accept applications till 31 March 2027 to incentivise eligible building owners to carry out upgrading of basic accessibility features and UD features

13 To address cashflow challenges in larger projects, BCA offers an interim payment option for upgrading works valued at \$200,000 or more that include lift installation. Building owners can claim this one-time interim payment at any stage during the project, making it easier to manage substantial accessibility improvements.

14 Please see Table 1 for examples of building features that are eligible for AF co-funding. For more information on how to apply for the Accessibility Fund, visit <https://go.gov.sg/bcaud-af>

Table 1. Examples of building features that are eligible for AF co-funding

Accessibility features
• Ramp and handrails • Lifts, platform lifts and stairlifts • Wheelchair accessible toilet • Accessible car parking lot
Universal Design (UD) features
• Elder-friendly toilet cubicle and urinal • Lactation room and lactation pod • Diaper Changing Station • Child-friendly WC, urinals and wash basins • Family car parking lot • Hearing enhancement system

C. Partnership, Outreach and Promotion of Universal Design (UD)

15 As Singapore's society becomes more diverse, evolving social dynamics and user expectations require stronger collaboration and partnership with the community and industry stakeholders. These partnerships will enable stakeholders to play an active role in shaping a more accessible and inclusive built environment.

(i) Partnering the Community to Address Accessibility Gaps

16 The Accessible City Network (ACN) was launched in 2021 as a recommendation under the Third Enabling Masterplan. Through a community-driven, 3P (people, public, private) approach, the community partnerships will identify accessibility and inter-connectivity challenges in localised precincts, prioritise needs, and co-develop solutions with agencies. The partnerships under the ACN are Our Accessible City @ CBD (Raffles Place), Our Accessible City Network @ CBD Robinson Road, Our Accessible City @ Boon Lay Neighbourhood, and Our Accessible City @ Nee Soon Central.

(ii) Raising Industry Capabilities

17 The Certification Course for UD Assessor, conducted by BCA, aims to promote the appreciation and application of UD principles, and to deepen the understanding of various disabilities among built environment professionals. As of March 2025, we have trained about 700 industry professionals. The course was enhanced in June 2023 to keep abreast of the latest UD initiatives and to enhance the awareness of senior-friendly design, by including topics on designing to enable ageing-in-place and for persons living with dementia. BCA also worked with public agencies to develop the "UD Guide for Public Places"

in July 2016, to assist designers in incorporating UD principles in the design of public buildings and infrastructure.

(iii) Recognising Exemplary UD Projects

18 To encourage the pursuit of exemplary UD implementation in buildings and innovations in user-friendly designs, BCA recognises outstanding projects with the Universal Design Excellence Award (UDEA). Since inception, 9 projects have been conferred the UDEA. In 2024, two projects – St Andrew’s Nursing Home (Tampines North) and TTSH Integrated Care Hub – were awarded the UDEA. More information on past UDEA projects can be found at <https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/bca-awards/universal-design-excellence-award/universal-design-excellence-award-winners>