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free access.

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My name is Jill Taylor, and as mentioned, I'm an architect I've been in practice for 40 years, and I have a great interest in social justice and advocacy as it relates to accessibility to historic buildings insights access and heritage come together within

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within our urban and rural environments on Main Streets, and within open spaces that have cultural heritage value.

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We are newly focus now on enabling all people to be able to access our world, issues of systemic discrimination and enact adequacy of systems and legislation, have been brought into focus in the last two years by current events by the pandemic and deep

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social change. This affects the form of our preservation of cultural heritage in the most broad sense, and in the provision of universal inclusive systems of access of for design, and for reimagining our historic environment.

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In my thinking and work in my association with wiser people. I feel strongly that better access is a human right, and better access to authentic culture can bring justice, good living standards and even in some cases peace to the world that we're living

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in the subject of our panel today is accessibility to the built environment, and in particular existing and heritage buildings. When you're going to speak about existing legislation that supports heritage building accessibility and issues that relate,

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in particular, to your interest in main streets. We are going to give you an inspirational look into how good work can be done to foster access within the existing world, and also to talk about the rights of persons with disabilities.

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Today we have three very prominent and excellent thinkers and speakers, I welcome Anthea and David to this wonderful panel.

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They will speak for five minutes in that order.

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And after each presentation I will ask a couple of questions to the presenters and then move to the next presentation. At the end of the three presentations, I'll ask a couple of group discussion questions, and I hope that I can rely on the conference

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organizers to help me and time management.

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As I may be engrossed in the conversations and not realize that five minutes is almost up, or that our question period is almost up.

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I will introduce all three speakers, through their biographies and Sawyer have access design is speaking to us with your cup of tea from the UK.

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Since qualifying as an architect, and for the past 25 years. She has been an access consulting consultant providing advice on a wide range of projects and worked on many projects to improve access to historical buildings, and was recently, working on

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fantastic projects at Leicester Coventry and southern because the cathedrals and at Westminster Abbey, but she's also worked on local on the local level on smaller historic buildings, both public and private and has worked with the National Trust UK and

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improvements to historic gardens at Chartwell and when will the states and provide a training for National Trust and English Heritage, and others on access and education she has written a guidance book that everyone should take a look at which is called

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easy access to historic buildings for English Heritage.

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I'll now introduce the courteous biography and Thea who we work with extensively, and his has over 30, excuse me over 20 years of experience specializing in barrier free and Universal Design for architectural projects of various sizes and complexity.

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She has focused her career on helping clients to create accessibility and to understand how universal design is designed for everyone. And I

think that will really be a focus of our conversation today.

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As an educator in addition to speaking at conferences like this one she is frequently a guest speaker at lectures for design students at many of candidates universities, and the American Institute of Architects student conference.

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He is a member and instructor at the Royal architectural Institute of Canada, having developed and now is teaching their introduction to access to successful accessible design from the Human Rights Code to evidence based design to increase the marketability

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the ability of accessibility is fundamental to successful design and business.

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I will now introduce renowned advocate, lawyer David Lebowski David is a visiting professor at disability rights and legal education, part time at Austin Hall Law School and a past adjunct member of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law.

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He holds a volunteer. He holds volunteer leadership roles in the disability community, and as chair of the accessibility for insurance with Disabilities Act Alliance.

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He's a member and past chair of the Toronto District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee. He's also a member of the kindergarten to grade 12 education standards development committee appointed by the Ontario government to recommend reforms

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to tear down barriers impeding students with disabilities.

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With those brief introductions to people who have very long and illustrious careers. I will open the conversation for and Sawyer to join us for a five minute presentation.

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Welcome and thank you thanks gentlemen thanks so much for that lovely introduction, it's really nice to meet you all and great to be in Canada. It's getting dark at six o'clock at night here so it's it's evening.

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This is my last job of the day. And I would say the most enjoyable as well, just to start off I think we all agree as everyone said beforehand that it should be to make an achievement accessible and inclusive built environment that allows everyone to

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participate fully in all aspects of society.

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And I think it's also worth noting the survival of most historic buildings with depend upon their continued viable use, which may require alterations to improve access.

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So identity is a conflict between access and conservation. I think they can work together and achieve accessibility wants to respecting heritage and that allows us to keep buildings in us and I think both can gain from this approach.

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I won't talk too long about the legislation in the UK because it's not that different from what you have in Canada. But what is interesting is that when we're applying for planning permission or building regulation approval listed building consent which

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we have to apply for for certain historic buildings, we, we also have to supply, what we call the design and access statement. And this is the document that sets out general design issues.

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There's also has to cover, inclusive access. And so it details the approach to inclusive design talks about what standards you're achieving about what can be done sets and all the key issues in a particular product project, and also should talk about

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how access is going to be maintained and managed in operation. So that's really useful because that comes at a very early stage in a project. And it really flags up access to something that's got to be considered whereas, otherwise it might not be thought

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about at this stages.

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The other issue I just want to mention in this funding.

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There's an awful lot of funding in the UK for her two tracks from the

National Lottery Heritage Fund. Now they mainly fund, not for profit, but they also fund commercial enterprise, when it's in partnership with a not for profit organization, and what

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the, the, the Heritage Fund do is whenever they're giving any funds they also require a very detailed piece of access work be carried out when you're altering an existing building they will fund an access audit of the building to look at what's there

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at the moment, see what can be improved, and to just make sure that every opportunity for improving access is covered when any work is being carried out.

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So that again it's really useful because that means access is bought up and considered very early on in the project at the very earliest stage.

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Another issue here is training in access issues. I've been training courses I do faculty training within National Trust. So staff understand access improvements that they can make to the properties that they look after.

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But I also do training with English Heritage and they run these free, open training days which are great, that anyone can come to whether they may have building owner and architect, conservation officer or someone who's just interested in access and heritage,

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and we run these days, three or four times a year and talk a lot about what access improvements you've been doing historic buildings we have lots of case studies.

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And so that's a really good opportunity to, you know, spread the word about access, and also let people who might not normally be involved in the conversation, get, get involved.

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And I think just also to mention we're not just talking about physical access, we consider a wide range of access needs we think about sight and hearing and new have a diversity and well well being.

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So we might be thinking about communication we might think about way finding or making spaces comfortable for people to use.

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And also, in, in the UK, equality, we have an Equality Act and the equality legislation covers nine protected characteristics. So we're also when we talk about access.

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We also think about things like age, gender identity religion and belief mace, and so on, because all these might have an effect about how accessible a building is to occupy, and, and, and us.

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And just to finish up I think I'm probably just about on time.

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I think it's just the final point to say I think when we consider access and inclusive design, what we will end up with is a building that's easier for everyone to use.

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It's, it's, it will, it's going to help anyone who wants to end and use the facilities in, in, in that building. It's also probably going to be more sustainable because we're not going to need to make as many alterations in the future.

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So that's all for me at the moment and I'm really looking forward to hearing other people's contributions, thank you john.

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Thank you very much, and and that's only a piece of what and spoke about it the heritage conference which was absolutely fantastic. I want to follow up on a couple of of quite with a couple of questions that could go on for a long time but I think that

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they, they're good to think about as we go through the other presentations today.

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Leslie talked about creativity and also intensification in the historic city and its heart, intensification plays a very big role in the development, not only of our village, our of our cities but also our villages, and I'm wondering how English Heritage,

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and the UK systems have responded to the issues of intensification and allowed for heritage and access to coexist in in intensified environments.

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And I think it's, it's an English Heritage have a very good approach to, to, to access and what's really helpful and what's made a lot of work possible i think is, we're not arguing with each other, they actually respect and understand the need for access

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improvements. And so I think it's, it's been a, it's been able to work together with the conservation professionals that makes the early bit the, The, the most difference here.

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The difference here. I think so in whatever sort of environment, you're talking about. I think it's if we have an understanding of each other's.

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You know requirements and wishes and desires in relation to the buildings that were work working on, it's going to work a lot better. Which is why I think it's interesting and useful to have training from, you know, from both sides actually so people

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can understand. Well the other winner possibly competing aims are coming from.

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I hope that's good, long enough, yes thank you and Leslie as a, as a planner talked about the tools that she was using in the city of Ottawa, to, to become, to, to, to work with heritage and access and intensification that was really helpful part of her

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conversation I think that the Equality Act is such an important aspect of the way of implementing access within the heritage framework. And I wonder if you could say a few words about that because that was something that was really very different for

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us when, when you, when you spoke at the heritage conference Could you elaborate on that. Yeah, sure, sure, we, we used to have separate legislation for different things we used to have a Disability Discrimination Act, the Sex Discrimination Act based

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Relations Act, and in 2010, they were all brought together under the Equality Act, and that covers nine protected characteristics, what it is it's not really building legislation, it's civil rights legislation.

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So what it says is that service providers, which might be someone who runs a shop or a business or a hotel or bar shouldn't discriminate against disabled people.

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It also covers employers education providers transport providers and people who are selling or renting out property. So it's very wide ranging, but basically what it says is, you shouldn't discriminate against someone on the basis of a protected carrot

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carrot characteristic, and it is all based on equal treatment. And so, someone in one protected group should have the same treatment as someone in another group.

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Now that's an equal standard treatment so it could be slightly different the way it's provided, but it's an equal standard, what it doesn't do is actually it doesn't have building standards within the app.

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I know it's not, it's not that dissimilar to the Americans with Disabilities Act, but they actually have standards within that I'm afraid I'm not sure what the Canada equivalent is, but it doesn't have Stan does it just says you shouldn't discriminate.

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And what it talks about doing is making reasonable adjustments. And so if you were altering a building if you're altering a heritage Main Street building a reasonable adjustment might be, you know, initially as they're saying whether you're, you could

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provide step three access, but also thinking about the, the information available about the signage about that, that is the door heavy to open, is it all delays, is there any other any markings on the glazing, so a whole range of issues, but a reason

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that adjustment might also be something to do with policies and procedures, it isn't just to do with building alterations, but what it does because the act itself just says you shouldn't discriminate.

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It allows it allows me to go to a building owner and say, if you don't make access improvements, you might find yourself discriminating, and then you might be sued.

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a stick to get people to do things, which is actually quite, from my point of view it's, it's quite useful and people. There's some people this is sometimes not a clear understanding of the act because it doesn't say building has to be accessible it says

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the service within that building or the employment opportunity has to be accessible.

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So I hope that explains it a little bit longer, yes and and that last is a bit confusing. We see it in the AODA as well. And it does provide some degree of confusion I know that the, and I talked about that all the time.

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And, and it's a good segue into these convert presentation but I did want to just ask one question because the international experience is so valuable to us and Canada and that is, you know, on Main Streets, there may be shops are.

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And that may be able to provide partial accessibility but don't have washrooms for example, on the ground floor, and want desperately to help in terms of achieving goals, but I'm wondering what the town's do the municipalities, or the local bi as to similar

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to to RBA is what they can do to make the streets more accessible to make that possibly think about washrooms that are accessible on the street so that whatever we can do is not only up to the, the owners and the tenants of the, of the buildings but also

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that the municipality takes their takes their role on within the mainstream context.

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Yes. And it's interesting, not just on on on Washington so I was recently doing some work computer outside the cathedral there's a lovely square and the shops all around the square.

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And there's a step into each shop and the, the, the, the local authority was going to be pave the score, the square. And what I asked them to do and in fact what's happened, which was amazing was they actually based the level of the whole of the public

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round. And so, it allowed people, the individual shop and this didn't each have to have a lot of manpower outside their shoulders fantastic.

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And that was, I mean that was one success in, you know, an awful lot of failures, it doesn't always happen, but it was amazing. When it worked and they did a really lovely scheme in the public realm.

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With seating and gentle gradients and planting and actually improved all the businesses around which was great. it was a great success so we said that something that's one example where did actually work that way

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So, that's it. Thanks.

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Thank you so much and thank you very much for your presentation. And I want to move to the and your corporate he's going to speak to us about for about five minutes, and she's going to look at this from the Ontario perspective and.

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And I would like to before you even start if you do use the word low hanging fruit once, and I think that that would be great because that's what we talked about a lot of times it's, you know, you can't always achieve everything, but you've got we've

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got to start.

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Thank you for you if you would begin now.

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after the three o'clock break. We're going to actually show some pictures so if you're really into pictures, we're going to be showing some pictures during that section, but not for this one, so forgive me, but I'm having to do that a little bit of on

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the fly here because so many of the things I was thinking I was going to be presented were covered so beautifully by Leslie and the keynote address then and now by and that I'm going to be absolutely a little bit.

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So first I guess I'll start by and it's sort of a shame that David Lebowksi is not speaking first because like and it's often legislation

that helps us to better explain to people the liability risks of not making things accessible.

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And so he's going to explain that in greater detail but just sort of brief context for Canada.

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We have the accessible Canada Act, which was passed in 2019.

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There are no standards yet developed under that act, and it covers federally regulated industries and buildings in Ontario we have the from a built environment perspective and as an said it's not all about the built environment.

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But that's what we're talking about here today. It's.

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We have the Ontario building code, which talks about how to build buildings and for those techies out there, the section that's related to the types of buildings we're talking about here, not housing is section 3.8.

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So there's a designated section of the building code for accessibility in the built environment. And it's all located in 3.8, in addition to the building code we also have the AODA or accessibility for Ontario's with Disabilities Act, which was passed

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in 2005. There is only one standard right now that relates to the built environment. We have three new standards that are under development. Each that have component which will touch on built environment for health and education.

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And I'm hoping David will be speaking to that later. And the one standard that currently is in places the design of public spaces.

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And as a part of my presentation this afternoon, I'll be providing resources, or if you're following me on Twitter, then you probably noticed I've already started posting some resources for you at TKURDI, and Twitter.

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But.

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So how does this work for businesses. Well, there's a couple of really important things you need to know.

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The design of public spaces mostly relates to exterior spaces which are probably outside of your control. If you're releasing a space for example if you own the property.

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Then there's going to be those exterior elements important to you. There are only three elements that go inside the building for the design of public spaces and that service counters which are going to be a big thing for for businesses and retail, but

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also waiting areas with fixed seating, so if you don't have fixed seating, technically it doesn't apply so you've got to kind of look outside of the legislation and fix queuing so again if you have queuing but it's not fixed.

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Again, you're going to have to go outside of the legislation to look for help and there's lots of really good help so don't don't despair. It's pretty easy for the building code.

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While they do provide lots of good information, they don't specifically mentioned accessibility for staff and business. So if you look at the requirements there they're very sort of general kind of requirements and I tend to find one of the biggest problems

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we see is that people have traditionally thought about accessibility if they're going to be applying it to the public areas, only. And as mentioned today, the silo effect of the, you know, heritage conversation, and the separation of accessibility instead

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of thinking about design holistically has caused all kinds of problems, and sometimes some real sort of combative moments. And I'd say that here Ontario we've seen a dramatic shift in the last few years, where we're seeing the conversation change to exactly

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what Leslie was talking about at the beginning and what was just mentioned is happening in England Furman is the idea that they shouldn't be in competition that if you really understand sustainable design, then you don't want to build something wrong

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and have to fix it. And you want to keep existing buildings for as long as you can to be useful and viable.

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Currently that hasn't been the process, and today I'm really excited that the other sessions are going to be talking about the business case for accessibility, why you should be looking beyond the code is David's going to talk about what is the legislation

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tell you you need to be doing. Above and Beyond the minimums defined by the building code, and the ADA.

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And then working with accessibility consultants like desirable environments, is a great place to start. But the design process is the wrong time to get started.

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As a business owner. If you want to make your spaces accessible, you have to be doing it a lot longer. sooner or before they hire the architect so just really quickly because I'm at a time.

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You want to make sure you're making sure your functional program that means all the space size and you're doing is, has been coordinated with whatever accessibility standards you want beyond code minimum.

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You want to be doing, looking at your furniture fixtures and equipment to make sure nothing you're bringing into the space is inaccessible. And you want to make sure that your budget planning includes all of the accessibility things that you're going

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to need so that you can implement it either at the time of the build, or as a part of phased Capital Management Planning, so I'll just leave it for there for now and hopefully we can get back with some more questions.

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Thank you very much. See, that's fantastic. I have, I have a question about some of the conversations we've had and one phrase that sticks in my mind is nothing about us without us.

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And that was touched on, with the planning and accessibility committees and how to bring heritage and access together. But I think it's so fundamental to the design of heritage.

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Access Programs and design and architecture in general and how are we going to make sure that that happens, what does it mean and how do we make sure it happens.

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Right, so just like women are not fans of having men make health care decisions about them. I have people with disabilities do not really want non disabled people being the gatekeeper to decide what should or should not be accessible.

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And again, I'm really glad to see that we're talking about reforms in education as a part of this conference because that's one of the problems is that as a business owner if you hire an architect or interior designer or anybody else.

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You, you would say, do you know how to do accessibility, and they'll say yes because they think accessibility is the building code in the day which David will talk about is not sufficient.

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So, what do you need to be doing above and beyond code is a missing piece.

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And even with those missing pieces filled in with great resources like the Civ clearing our path or Gallaudet University had a design for deaf people, or any of the other great municipal resources that Leslie was mentioning, which unfortunately still

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largely focused on wheelchair accessibility.

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The best bet is to talk to people who lived experience. And so we routinely help projects, assemble and accessibility advisory committee.

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We try to include a wide range of different disabilities so you're talking to people with autism, as well as well as people in the deaf blind community, as well as people who use scooters and people he is guide dogs.

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so try to get that sort of cross section.

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The thing to be careful of is a personal preference or weeding out the personal preference versus something that's going to generally help somebody from them to fill your group.

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But to have these consultations, right from the very beginning, we're thinking about doing this, what should we be thinking as we start the planning of this, and then regularly meet with them to review what it is, you've done and plan so far to see if

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there's gaps the provide tremendous feedback, they can help us with products that we're looking at, it's it's an amazing process people shouldn't be afraid of it.

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moderated Well, it can be a tremendous learning experience and the outcomes are so much better. And as you said, there's many opportunities for low hanging fruit.

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We doesn't it's not all about the super expensive stuff it color contrast can make a really big difference to a large percentage of our population so paint the door frame.

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Provide color contrast and door handles, make sure your counter is a different color than the surroundings, make sure the mounting of the paint machine is not fixed and rigid, but can be lifted and move for people with different needs.

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Make sure the lighting is good for people like me are hard of hearing, and rely a lot on liberating. So these are some of the things that you can do not complicated, and there's lots that we always encourage our clients to pursue.

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Oh that's great. Yeah, I just want to ask you one more question before we open it up to a panel discussion with and and Thea, we're still having a bit of trouble getting David into the conversation so we're hoping that he joins us before to 10 deadline,

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but I wanted to ask you about buying biases and myths, you mentioned bias in a, in a very interesting way that people don't often think about and that is that even if you have a disability.

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Committee, there may be people who are biasing towards their own disability in the conversation and then the wish list. So that's one bias, but I think more generally the myths and bias together is something that we struggle with, with heritage means

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streets and accessibility.

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Yeah, absolutely. I mean, Everybody's got biases.

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And if we, if we are aware of them, that sort of helps I also like and teach a lot of courses and my favorite is the accessibility boot camp that where I take people through and I'm hoping to take you in your office through at some point, but to actually

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start people with, what are the biases and myths and misunderstandings about what is a disability.

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What are people with disabilities capable of or want to do.

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Unfortunately, the reality is, a lot of people with disabilities are forced in the lives of poverty, because our building code doesn't say that. Employment has to be accessible, our urban planners are not trained how to create accessible environments

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and urban planning just as much as we're talking about the heritage planning or urban planning documents are not coordinated either with accessibility so you could have an accessible house if you're lucky, you might have an accessible workplace if you're

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lucky, maybe an accessible health place but the connecting tissue between those things that you need from from the transit to the sidewalks are not accessible.

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So, if we thought about why do people resist accessibility sometimes particularly inherited we say, well it is heritage and we must preserve it and I think Leslie was talking this morning about the significant shift we're seeing and the change of that.

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There's also sometimes worry about the preserving the historical materials that if you're adding something new, you might be adding

modern materials that doesn't have to happen.

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We can definitely use matching or historical type of materials to blend and create accessible environments that are just as beautiful. And then the third type of method we often hear is that if you do accessibility the value of historic building has been

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reduced and I would say that, you know, I guess it depends on how you think about discrimination because if you're not making it accessible. It's discriminatory and in today's world of social media.

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You wouldn't want people to be, I know a beauty Alliance and David's group has put together videos of going to buildings that are brand new that government has spent money on and said, look at all of the barriers that are building code and the ADA still

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allowed to happen and that the architects weren't trained and the interior designers weren't trained how to prevent. So, you know, sometimes we see it's pretty easy for people to accept, of course we have to change the building for security, electricity,

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heating modern toilets, and even parking facilities were on a historic site, the tourist shopping is allowed.

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So the arguments to not do it sometimes don't really fit and they don't align not only with what we said for us. Sustainability but I've lost he was saying they don't really align with our diversity and inclusion policies, and they certainly don't align

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with our legislation with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the interior Human Rights Code, and the entire Human Rights Tribunal has actually published trying to warn people.

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If a complaint is made against your building. We do not accept as a defense that you followed the building code in the ADA, you must do more to meet the level of expectation that buildings and spaces shall not discriminate against people.

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So what is the more, and everybody's trying to guess so if I could ask government to fix something I'm constantly asking them please update the building code for 20 years municipalities he told us how to do it.

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There's lots of good resources available.

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I think at the heritage.

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Canada conference we heard from John, who said that the obesity is the basement not the ceiling and that really struck me as a great, a great way to think about existing legislation which the end of the deadline, not the.

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The deadline is 2025 we have to keep reminding people of that they say oh, it comes into effect and 22 no no it's the deadline for compliance and that's that's really hard with clients to get them to work on that.

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So I want to do a couple of things I want you to have an ask the question and then the reverse. And then I'd like maybe if K or Constance can send us a question from the group, we can we can take that on and hopefully David will join us and I'm sorry

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he hasn't there's just so much information that he has to share.

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So, and what would you like to ask the about, about what she said, Yeah, some something that I find quite interesting that I've I've I've used to encourage people to do things is talk about the aging population, and how disability and he does a combination.

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And that's something that I've found quite useful to try and encourage people to do things. Is that something that you've been able to use or is that a big issue and can Canada is that something that you can use to help you know encourage people, and

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also spending versus the other the other one isn't it.

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Right, so, um, yes, absolutely.

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My background was in sustainable design. That's really what I wanted to do and I kind of got sidetracked into the world of accessibility but I actually found that there's a ton of convergence in between

these two disciplines that if you're trying to make

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a space, more sustainable or green.

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There's a lot of products that you can pick that also make it more accessible so like automatic like switches for example.

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And I have a whole article and a presentation about that too but to get to your question, yes demographics, is something that we look at for a lot of reasons, but we haven't looked at so much for thinking about accessibility and the business case for

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accessibility will be covered later this afternoon. But right now or in 2017, the Disability Studies said that we had 22 plus percent of the population where people with disabilities.

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And in Ontario significantly in 2017 we had more people over the age of 65, then 14 and under.

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And at 65, people are self reporting that they have 40% of disabilities. So in addition to those kind of numbers, none of these numbers count how many of us have temporary or situational Disabilities at one time so we tend to think about, well, the average

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person doesn't have a disability, but actually the human experience is a life full of different types of disabilities. And as we get older and their baby boomer population is certainly demonstrated this.

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So we have about 1000 Canadians a day turning 65 and in the states it's about 10,000, Americans turning 65, and that is where a lot of money comes into it.

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So we're seeing a dramatic start to the change or products and housing and other types of facilities that are don't want to lose that buying power as you said so yes that's a very convincing argument to talk about I'm really excited as I said that there's

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a business case session happening as a part of this event.

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Thank you. Thanks. Thanks very much see it and then, now I'm.

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Do what would you like to ask, and about her experience in the UK and maybe particularly about the you know the the international influences that I think affect our effect but get transferred to the UK faster than they get they get over to us and I think

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there's a lot of transference that happens in conferences and, and between projects and, and, maybe, focusing on that plus. Also, I'd like to get a thank you would ask the question.

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Yeah.

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I can ask me something else.

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I mean something I was, I was running a training session today, and something that we had a really interesting discussion about was newer diversity. And that's something that's recently in recent years just become a very big issue here, and I'm sure that

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spread across to Canada as well, but it's something that people in the UK didn't really think about until probably only two or three years ago, and now it's become.

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It's, and the whole things about access and well being and having buildings where you.

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They will accommodate people with a whole range of numerous divergent issues, whether we're talking about someone that on the with autistic spectrum condition, someone who's dyslexic, someone elder person with dementia, all those sorts of issues would

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be on being sought about more, and it's sometimes quite hard to get people to recognize that it's not just about wheelchair users that some something that you that you said which I would agree with you wholeheartedly.

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We start off our sessions probably fairly similar to what you do. By asking people what they, what's the first thing that comes to mind when they think about disability and access.

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And, you know, half of them saying, maps, instantly we will transcend the ramps, and we've, we've got better I've been doing this for a long time. And we've certainly got a lot better and now people will think will say something like, you know, fish visual

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impairment or dyslexia was a more broader issue so I think it's interesting the way that it has spread out.

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So I think that's maybe something that's happening here, and also we've possibly, I don't know if we're behind you in this, but we've also just in the past couple of years had lots of issues about gender identity, particularly in relation to washrooms

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and things. And that's something that we haven't got any legislation really about that yet, but it's working. These things take a while to work into legislation, our legislation is possibly like you're still pretty based around physical access, there

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isn't that much about sensory issues that we do have things guidance on visual contrast and manifestation on glazing and stuff it does tend to be large live and physical access, but it tends that there's a sort of time lag it takes maybe up to five years

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so what we're talking about now to get into the building regulations, but it does usually get there in the end. So I hope that was, you know, interesting from the UK perspective and I'd be interested to hear their sort of equivalent, Canadian version.

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What would you like to ask him to say, Do I answer that or do I listen to any questions that you are a couple of things that you said, and that were also reflected what I heard in the IAP presentation that was done yesterday morning.

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and heritage. And then I know you know many people actually who are a part of this conversation I know some of them were attending as well. And and that was the idea of the level of accommodation. So on its.

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They were presenting projects that they deem to be successful for accessibility in Sweden.

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And yet most of the examples, they were showing while they improved access would not actually be compliant with our legislation and standards. So they were showing ramp access but the, the, you know, if somebody were to go Okay, I will copy that I was

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thinking oh gosh no, no, no.

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It's got all kinds of or it's really out of date. So I think one of the things I wonder about is how do you have

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appropriate accessibility and how do you help clients understand that if they follow the minimum today or even, you know the accepted practice today when the building opens in three to five years, it's no longer going to be compliant because we don't

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really have the courage to change, make the change we know that needs to happen. So I'm curious how you help your clients or convince clients to go above and beyond and look at best practices.

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Yeah, well, we have a similar situation to you, building regulations on minimum standards that everyone treats them as if they're the standard. And so I have to spend a lot of time telling people that it is a minimum standard, but we also have, we have

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British Standards bs guidance that tends to get reviewed more frequently. But that's good practice guidance that's not regulation, but it is so it's not you know it's not something people have to do.

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But what's interesting is we often see changes in the budget standard before they get into the building regulations and one particular example about this.

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Our standard wheelchair accessible toilet the individual cubicle for a wheelchair user is 1500 millimeters wide by 2.2 meters, meters long. In the Business Standard it's wider it's 1700.

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millimeters wide. And so, I tell people all the time. If you build it to the minimum standard, you will have to change it, because within a year or two that will come in, and it's just going to be such a waste of money to change.

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Don't do it, do it to the good standard now, but all I can do is, is, you know, tell people to do that, we don't really, I don't think, probably very similar to what what you do.

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There's not a. It's sometimes very difficult to encourage people to do the right thing. And that's where the Equality Act again comes in because I can say, if that's too small, and the building opens, someone might sue you.

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Because it's not accessible, and you are discriminating against someone with a disability. And so, you know, if you don't want to risk that, why don't we meet the best practice standard and make it bigger.

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And I think that's you know that's the way that we can do it but it's not ideal. It is a constant struggle, merely, probably the same as you have to try and encourage people to that minimum standards, as David said, minimum standards, the standards we

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have on minimum standards, not the standard.

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So I don't know if we do that much differently to you in Canada I suspect it's, it's much the same. And to be fair to Jill and architects and interior designers are often the line for not caring about accessibility, they're actually between a rock and

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a hard place on most projects as I'm sure they are in England, because the budget isn't there, it wasn't included in the feasibility study did the lack of coordination from the start of the project, means the architects are like, I don't have the space

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the budget. Do I have a magic wand. So this is why to me, and while it's important to focus on education and events like this to raise awareness if we don't see the change in the building code.

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It's really hard for competitive bid process and for owners who are trying to find that right level of requirements to, you know, what they're trying to do.

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If we don't fix the legislation it's enormously difficult and the rate

of change for in our legislation has been so slow were least 20 years out of date.

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We I agree with the other points that you made earlier as well but you also have to think about it at the very very beginning of a building project. So I think that's, we know that that's a very good point.

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I it. Most of the projects I'm involved in I would always say that they've thought about access too late.

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Because then, as you say, you are trying to catch up and the money isn't into it. I'm telling people when they're when they're first talking about the brief project, I start talking about where the detailed design issues, and they're sort of said well

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are you talking about hearing enhancement now. I said, Well, if you don't talk about it now, you won't think about it when it comes to that point you're going to tell me you can't afford to do anything. So I want you to get the money in the budget now for doing this. You know, so I think that that was

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You've got to flag up digitas who's really early on. Well I like what you said to about the the the society as a whole supporting the business owner by raising the level of the street and the sidewalks, yes you know removing that one step into all of

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those heritage street front buildings, would you know help to improve things right away.

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But it's not just as we said about the wheelchair access to the zero step entry it's about assistive listening like right now, I wear this lanyard because this is an international symbol for customer service for people with invisible disabilities and

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this is invisible, invisible disabilities Awareness Week, and 70% of disabilities are invisible like mine we don't use a wheelchair or white cane or a guide dog.

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So there's a bunch of people who right now like me who are hard of hearing. We're wearing masks and our service providers are behind Plexiglas so Assistive Listening is a very low cost thing to add that

would significantly improve again accessibility

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for people who are deaf and definitely but for everybody.

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What did you.

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So there's a whole all kinds of opportunities as Joe was saying for low hanging fruit and for beyond the agree may be really expensive space impacts of mobility disabilities to, to help address greater accessibility for everybody.

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Yeah, we have a couple of minutes left and I'd like to.

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I'd like to focus our last few minutes of discussion on on big plays and owners of buildings, and the municipalities and the province, you know, big as are funded.

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I believe I don't know too much about this but I think they're funded jointly by municipalities and the province, and the business owners in their areas.

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So they're kind of in the middle, and they have a very important role to play, both in advocating up and advocating down.

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So how do you think big is can take this challenge, and provide a leadership role at both ends.

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I'm going to let fear start on this because she's not familiar with your BP is.

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This is temporary. Yeah.

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So again, I love the way that Alf and Constance and all the people who are involved in organizing this event and put it together if you can stay for the whole day.

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The other sessions are really going to break into a lot of this breakdown.

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But from a BA perspective again it's thinking about, you know, as was mentioned.

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What if the BA and her and Jill was helping the individual stores. So for example, during the pandemic. We saw a lot of patios being opened out onto the street.

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And so these restaurants can serve food to people in a way that was perhaps safer.

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The problem with that was that accessibility wasn't required and most of those permit application so as you were saying in a plan is really good. So, providing resources, making sure the free resources that are available are front and center to your members

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of the CIA.

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The city of Winnipeg actually put together a really good application process through the city so that you couldn't actually receive an application if you hadn't done that.

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So consulting with the city with the accessibility coordinator and the heritage coordinator of the urban planner, thinking about for those restaurants.

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Where's the washroom in those restaurants, well it's often in the basements. So you've made the place where people are eating and drinking or bars, a place, they're going to need to use the facilities at some point.

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So maybe the big could have organized to have accessible porta potties also available on public realm of shared facilities, between them. And then, you know, one of the things I'm hearing a lot from the disabled community is they're worried about losing

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some of the accommodations that have happened during co-head.

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As things returned to normal. And yet, because of CO would be have a

much larger number of people with disabilities, these people with long term Cove ID or that have suffered the consequences of even recovering from coded have, again, boosted our numbers

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people who have fatigue issues and breathing issues and asthma and and other types of environmental sensitivities, which again are not covered by our building code, and could be you know so so these are the types of things that I think big, could be advocating

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if there isn't help for support advocate to the government saying this is a help and support we think is missing, please change the building codes so we have better direction.

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Please help us with funding like you're talking about that they have in England. I, but also thinking, how could we be helping each other. Yes. Yeah, yeah.

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Yeah, yeah. It's interesting here in, in, in, in the UK just about six months ago so the government announced a heritage Action Fund to help historic high streets cope with the after effects of covert covert and a lot of premises of smaller premises of

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shut should have had to shut down. And it's not a huge amount of money I think it was about 100 million pounds or so so not a lot and it was focused on about 20 different high streets, main, main streets as you're saying.

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That's what we said what have a few of us will be reading about this and we immediately got on to anyone who would listen and say, if you're going to do this, please think about access.

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Don't give anyone money or if you're going to donate money to do some walks to improve high streets if you're going to fund anything, please can we make sure what your funding is accessible, and is improving access, because we certainly do.

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I mean it's a, it's a great idea with a huge amount of money but it might make a difference and businesses will benefit from this, but we also want to make sure that access benefits as well, because as you say they've been accepted the same here lots

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of things. Lots of cafes and restaurants and bars are spread out onto the pavement making it very difficult to navigate.

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But there have been some areas where, you know, modes of being closed off and the smoke destinations which is good, but access hasn't always been thought about as a priority.

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So I think, you know, whenever there is any money available for anything it's just really important that we think about access initially.

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Early on, and it doesn't have to cost or whatever, you know, it's just being aware of what the issues are there it's not necessarily an extra cost, usually tell people there's some specific costs that are different, right that, in a sense, our standard

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practice we sort of stopped designing too early because we weren't defining designing for all kinds of people we were thinking who we were designing for that people age and then aging has disability associated hearing loss.

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So, there are some costs, I don't want to try to sell it as a cost.

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But, but there are many things that you can do or that are low and no cost and things that you can plan for to phase in so you can do your capital management planning it's coming we don't have it yet but we, we have a plan to put in place.

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Yeah, yeah, sure. No, I agree. I'm getting prompts and unfortunately we have to draw this conversation to a close, first of all I did receive a message from David and he apologizes for not being able to join us.

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I just want to say I've recently watched a number of videos closed caption videos that he's produced, which I'm sure that conference organizers will make available to people absolutely fantastic.

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Inspiring videos from David on the issue of human rights and justice and accessibility. I want to thank you and and and for this interesting conversation.

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It's been very valuable and it was great to get to know you over to conferences and Thea to continue on with you tomorrow.

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And, and, over a long period of time. And, and to thank everyone who joined us, and hope that this was a value to you. Thanks, everyone.

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Thank you. Thank you.

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Thank you all for, for joining us for this great panel again it was disappointing that David was not able to join us.

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And he was really looking forward to it so I am. I'm sorry that he was not able to join us in a couple of minutes we're going to be moving into a break, and the break the break is going to be till until 220.

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So at 220 then we're going to ask you to come back, but we bought two sessions so I'm going to put some links in the chat right now. Please, take, take note of those.

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And the links are for the jokes or they've already gone in are they ahead of me today. So the breakout sessions are going to be based on to the business case for accessibility.

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And that's what we're going to have speakers, rich Donovan and Michael semen joining us for this one.

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The whole premise around this is main streets in Ontario have many older and heritage buildings, however property owners do not always see the value and making them accessible business tenants would like to bring in more customers through enhanced access,

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but they may not be inclined to invest infrastructure funds into a building, they do not own the session explores the reasons why it makes sense economically, socially, and sustainable sustainably to invest in accessibility whenever and wherever possible.

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So this is going to be a great conversation and that's going to be session one, the business case for accessibility and you can see the access code in there.

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At the same time, there's going to be a second session led by moderator Jim Mountain with, with a number of speakers here, and this session is going to be based on the whole idea of training students training new people who are coming in to the profession

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to see things from a different point of view so in order for change to happen to the students must be included in the conversation about how heritage or even just old buildings can be made more inclusive, how is the topic accessible and how could

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curriculum be changed to update that one so we look forward to seeing you back at 220, they're sure your codes please for going into the rooms, and we'll see you back in a few minutes.

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After that, thank you.