INCLUSIVE DESIGN:
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Community engagement and communication are key to fostering inclusive design by building involvement, awareness, and support. Without clear communication, the importance of accessibility and inclusiveness as a community priority can be overlooked, leading to missed opportunities for collaboration and progress.

This communications strategy will ensure that messages reach the right audiences with clarity and impact. It provides a roadmap for building relationships, driving engagement, and securing support for inclusive design initiatives.

Additionally, this strategy will guide how communities engage with key partners, such as local governments, developers, and residents, while offering examples of messaging across various channels like social media, community forums, and newsletters.

PURPOSE

This communications strategy is designed to enhance public outreach. Active community engagement facilitates collaborative solutions for each area's unique inclusive design needs.

Engagement needs vary widely from time to time and from place to place. This strategy should be used as a framework, and communities should implement the elements that will work for them.

For more information on effectively communicating with your community, view the Community Engagement chapter in the Inclusive Design Toolkit.

KEY PARTNERS

By engaging various stakeholder groups, the approaches developed will be more comprehensive, inclusive, and tailored to effectively meet the distinct needs of the community. The key partners identified below will provide a wide range of perspectives and expertise to address challenges.

- ***The Disability Network Michigan:*** The Disability Network Michigan includes 15 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) across Michigan. As a network, they serve as advocates for inclusion and accessibility. The goal of the CILs is to ensure that people with disabilities have the services and supports essential to make informed choices, to have personal control over their own lives, and to participate to the fullest extent possible in the everyday activities of work, home, family, and community. Connecting with the CIL that serves your community is an important way to stay connected to the wider network of accessibility and inclusive design. Building a relationship and maintaining communication is a good way to stay connected to opportunities or initiatives.
- ***Builders, Developers, Architects, Design Professionals:*** These experts encompass a wide range of businesses including those who design and construct small renovations in existing residences to developers who build new subdivisions or site condominiums that include new residences. Builders, Developers, Architects, and Design Professionals understand the operational, regulatory, and financial challenges of constructing accessible residences, and their experiences are vital for shaping practical, on-the-ground solutions.
- ***Residents:*** Engaging residents in inclusive design initiatives helps to create a community that is supportive of design that benefits everyone. When residents are actively informed and involved, it leads to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable designs and policies.
- ***Non-Profit Organizations and Advocacy Organizations***: Disability advocacy and senior citizen groups are crucial to understand the needs of residents. These organizations often work directly with residents and can provide data, research, and insights to shape effective policies. Local non-profits with a focus on services or community development can also be valuable partners.
- ***Chambers of Commerce and Other Business Associations:*** Providing accessibility is a business concern; a lack of accessibility leads to fewer customers and contributes to workforce challenges. Business associations and chambers of commerce have a vested interest in promoting inclusive design and may be an important key partner to engage.

KEY PARTNERS *(CONTINUED)*

For every group, it is important to identify key individuals to receive tailored information. Customized communication formats will be necessary for each distinct audience. Some forms of communication will cross segments of various audiences and others will be relevant only to an individual group. The key is to segment the audience based on their needs. An example of some key messaging for distinct partner groups is provided below.

PARTNER		MESSAGING
Residents	→	Support for More Accessibility
Builders, Developers, Architects	→	Training on New Zoning Regulations
Non-Profits and Advocacy Organizations	→	Funding and Partnership Opportunities
Chambers of Commerce	→	Training, Funding, and Partnership Opportunities

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Communities have many channels available to communicate with residents, businesses, and other partners. Using a range of options can enhance participation and awareness. Some examples of messaging channels are provided below, though communities are encouraged to explore creative ways to leverage their communication resources.

- ***Community Forums and Meetings***: In-person or virtual gatherings for discussion and public input.
- ***Email Newsletters:*** Direct communication with residents for announcements and updates.
- ***Mobile Apps:*** Provide access to city services, alerts, and reporting tools.
- ***Official Websites and Portals:*** Central hubs for municipal information, services, and updates.
- ***Press Releases and Media Relations:*** Work with local media outlets to disseminate information.
- ***Public Access TV and Radio:*** Broadcast municipal meetings, updates, and educational content.
- ***Social Media Platforms***: Use for real-time updates, community engagement, and outreach campaigns. Includes Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X, and Instagram.
- ***Op-Ed Pieces***: Guest-written opinion-based articles presenting specific arguments or perspectives on current issues. Op-eds serve readers and are not meant to be a tool for public relations.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS *(CONTINUED)*

Creating support for inclusive design in your community requires a multifaceted approach. Every community faces different challenges; therefore, the options should be selected based on the need you are trying to address. The following examples of key messaging are broken into broad opportunities with a variety of messaging types within each topic. The example language is designed to help develop clear and consistent messages for each audience. Creating a schedule for key communications can ensure partners receive information at every step of the process.

KEY MESSAGING

While messaging should be tailored to specific audiences, maintaining consistency is essential. Policy discussions frequently emphasize problems, missing opportunities to build broader public understanding. The communications strategies outlined below use a proven technique to turn conversations into solutions.

This strategy employs a proven approach to guide conversations toward practical solutions.

By first establishing the shared goal of improving accessibility for residents, businesses, and the broader community, and then identifying challenges and opportunities, the approach is more effective at building buy-in and support.

While this guide provides sample language, often the most effective form of communication centers on personal experiences. Policy makers and users of the guide are encouraged to include their own experiences. Beyond what is offered in this guide, policy makers should respond to current reports, research, and events involving accessibility and inclusive design.

OPPORTUNITY #1: Inclusive design benefits everyone

- Emphasize the importance of inclusive design and how it supports everyone: a child on bicycle, a parent pushing a stroller, a delivery person with heavy packages, someone with temporary injuries (e.g., broken leg, post-surgery), or an older adult who wants to age in place.
- Examples of previous accommodations that have become mainstream (talk to text, voice commands, subtitles/closed captioning, or sidewalk ramps) creates the necessary public and political will to plan inclusively and develop better policies, laws, and projects.

FORMAT: OP-ED

MESSAGE:

Inclusive Design Benefits Everyone. Why Communities Must Do Better

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990. Since then, features that began as mandated "accommodations" have become standard and expected elements of our daily lives. Inclusive design is essential because it truly benefits everyone.

There are countless examples of previous accommodations that have become mainstream. Sidewalk ramps (or curb cuts), closed captioning and subtitles, voice commands, and talk to text are features that are now common regardless of our individual abilities. Without the ADA, many of these improvements would not have been mandated and ultimately mainstreamed.

The need for widespread accessibility is becoming increasingly pressing, especially as the Baby Boomers age. Faced with a disability, whether suddenly due to an injury or slowly due to age, the crucial question remains: can we remain in our homes, or even fully access our communities? Inclusive design supports individuals across the continuum, including children, parents, or older adults.

While individuals maintain the choice of where to live, regulations such as zoning and building codes should actively support the design and building of accessible homes and communities. Our homes and communities must be designed for everyone, regardless of ability. We must consider: what is the next invention that starts off as an "accommodation" but will eventually become standard because we prioritized inclusive planning?

FORMAT: SOCIAL MEDIA

MESSAGES:

Facebook /LinkedIn Post: Inclusive design supports everyone—long ago, curb cuts and ramps were considered unnecessary. Tell that today to

OPPORTUNITY #1: Inclusive design benefits everyone

a child on bicycle or a parent pushing a stroller. Without inclusive design, everyone suffers. It's time to think differently! #CommunityGrowth #InnovatingBarrierFree

Instagram / X Post: Inclusive design benefits everyone. If a place is accessible and welcoming to someone who is 8 and someone who is 80, it is probably a good place for everyone. #CommunityGrowth #InnovatingBarrierFree

FORMAT: PRESS RELEASE

MESSAGE:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Inclusive Design Benefits Everyone: Building Communities That Work for All

[City, State] — [Date] — Inclusive design—creating spaces, products, and systems that are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities—is not just about accessibility, it's about improving quality of life for everyone. From a child riding a bike or skateboard to a delivery worker on their route to an older adult aging in place, inclusive design ensures that communities function safely, efficiently, and equitably for all.

"When we design for inclusion, we design for real life," said [Name, Title, Organization]. "Every person experiences changing levels of mobility, vision, or dexterity throughout their life. Inclusive design recognizes this shared human experience and builds environments that respond to it."

Examples of inclusive design are already woven into daily life. Sidewalk ramps, originally created to assist wheelchair users, now benefit parents with strollers, travelers with luggage, and delivery personnel. Talk-to-text and voice command technologies—once accessibility tools—are now used universally through smartphones and home devices. Subtitles and closed captioning, initially designed for people with hearing impairments, are now standard in public venues, offices, and social media.

These innovations demonstrate that what begins as an accommodation often becomes a convenience, and ultimately, an expectation. Inclusive design doesn't just remove barriers, it sets higher standards for usability and community wellbeing.

"Inclusive planning is smart planning," added [Second Quote, e.g., local planner or advocate]. "It supports aging populations, strengthens small businesses, and makes our communities more resilient and adaptable."

The call for inclusive design is gaining momentum among policymakers, city planners, and advocates who recognize that equitable design leads to better outcomes for everyone. Communities that prioritize inclusivity in their policies, infrastructure, and public projects see long-term benefits in safety, economic growth, and social connection.

For more information about inclusive design and how it can strengthen your community, contact:

Contact Information: [Community Contact Name]; [Email Address]; [Phone Number]; [Website]

OPPORTUNITY #2: Local zoning changes are the first step to inclusivity

- Explain that allowing a variety of housing types makes housing more affordable and increases accessibility for everyone for a lifetime.
- Communicate updates to zoning regulations to ensure builders, developers, and community members are informed of the changes.
- Use these updates as an opportunity for the community to position itself as a champion of inclusive design.
- Raise awareness of the ongoing needs for additional changes at the state and federal level.
- Highlight the value of zoning changes by using data and research.

FORMAT: OP-ED OR BLOG

MESSAGE:

Regulatory Updates Pave the Way for Accessible Places in Our Community

Access to shopping, recreation, workplaces, and housing is vital. We are excited to announce some important changes that will make a big difference! While the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that new and renovated public spaces be accessible, [insert community name here] has recently adopted new zoning regulations to make [insert community name here] a truly welcoming and inclusive place to live work and play.

These changes are informed by the Planning and Zoning Toolkit for Inclusive Design developed by the Michigan Association of Planning and Disability Network Michigan and are a critical step to ensure that residents of our community can live here regardless of age or ability.

By aligning local regulations with best practices, we're creating a welcoming environment for all residents while maintaining the safety and quality standards that people expect. It's a win/win for everyone, and we should be proud of the progress we've made.

Want to learn more about these regulatory updates and inclusive design best practices?

Visit [Link to Resource] to understand these new changes!

FORMAT: SOCIAL MEDIA

MESSAGES:

Facebook /LinkedIn Post: Exciting news! Our local government has updated regulations to make it easier for homeowners, builders, and developers to create barrier free homes. These changes mean more affordable and accessible residences for everyone! Let's work together to support these efforts and raise awareness about the need for homes where everyone can age in place, no matter our age or ability. Learn more about these changes here: [Link]. #InclusiveDesignReady #SupportAllResidents #InnovatingBarrierFree

OPPORTUNITY #2: Local zoning changes are the first step to inclusivity

X Post: Our community just made big strides in accessible and inclusive design! With updates to local regulations, it's now easier for builders to create and renovate accessible homes. Let's continue raising awareness! #SupportAllResidents #CommunityGrowth #InnovatingBarrierFree

Instagram Post: We're proud to announce that our local regulations have been updated to support housing that is accessible for everyone! This means more options for everyone regardless of age or ability and a stronger, more just city. Spread the word!

#SupportAllResidents #CommunityGrowth #InnovatingBarrierFree

FORMAT: PRESS RELEASE

MESSAGE:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

[Community Name] Takes Major Step Toward Inclusive Design with Regulatory Updates

[Community, State] — [Date] — The [Insert Community Name] is proud to announce important updates to its regulatory framework for more inclusive and accessible design, aimed at increasing availability of accessible housing across the community. These changes were developed with guidance from the Planning and Zoning Toolkit for Inclusive Design, developed by the Michigan Association of Planning and Disability Network Michigan, to remove barriers that have hindered the development of accessible housing.

"This is a pivotal moment for our community," said [Key Official], "[Insert Community Name] is committed to being a leader in inclusive design, and these regulatory changes are a key step forward in [Insert Community Name Here] being more accessible for everyone."

The community's updated regulatory framework includes flexible zoning to allow new accessible housing to be built, and includes ideas for homeowners who want to renovate and create a barrier free home. In addition, there are best practices for businesses who want to build their customer base and become more accessible.

Residents are encouraged to stay informed about these changes and support inclusive design throughout the community.

Call to Action: The [Insert Community Name] has a host of resources for builders, developers, architects, and homeowners to learn more about these regulatory changes. For more information, visit [Link to Resource] or contact [Contact Information].

Contact Information: [Community Contact Name]; [Email Address]; [Phone Number]; [Website]

OPPORTUNITY #3: Inclusive communities thrive

- Communicate that inclusivity isn't just for social good, but it can also drive the economy. It attracts and retains diverse populations. It can support local businesses by allowing more civic and economic participation.
- Engage potential partners to create more meaningful and impactful investments.
- As the community positions itself as a champion of accessibility and inclusivity, there will be more activities, residents and customers.

FORMAT: OP-ED OR BLOG

MESSAGE:

Inclusive Communities Thrive

Inclusivity is often framed as a matter of fairness or social good. But inclusivity is more than a moral imperative—it's also a smart investment in a community's future. Inclusive communities don't just feel better to live in; they perform better economically, socially, and culturally

An inclusive community attracts and retains a diverse population. When people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate fully in civic life, they contribute more—by opening businesses, volunteering, attending local events, and investing in their neighborhoods. A truly inclusive environment ensures that no one is left on the sidelines, whether it's a senior who wants to age in place, a person with a disability navigating downtown, or a new resident seeking a sense of belonging.

Inclusive design and policy make economic sense. Consider a downtown where sidewalks and businesses are accessible, the signage is clear, and the websites for the downtown businesses not only communicate the hours of operation, but also their accessibility. Not only does this serve residents with disabilities, it welcomes parents with strollers, delivery workers, and tourists, day and night. That translates to more customers for local businesses, stronger foot traffic, and a more vibrant local economy.

When a city positions itself as a champion of accessibility and inclusivity, it sends a powerful message: everyone belongs here. That message attracts residents, entrepreneurs, and investors who value innovation and equity. Inclusive communities tend to see higher civic participation, greater social trust, and more sustainable economic growth—because people are more likely to stay, invest, and participate in places where they feel welcome and empowered.

But inclusion doesn't happen by accident—it requires collaboration. Local governments, nonprofits, developers, and businesses all have a role to play. By working together to remove barriers and create accessible infrastructure, communities can make meaningful, lasting investments that benefit everyone. These partnerships can spark creative solutions—like

OPPORTUNITY #3: Inclusive communities thrive

inclusive housing developments, accessible public spaces, or small business programs that prioritize universal access.

Building an inclusive community is a strategy for prosperity. When we plan and invest with inclusion at the center, we create places where people want to live, work, and thrive. That's not just good ethics—it's good economics.

FORMAT: SOCIAL MEDIA

MESSAGES:

Facebook/LinkedIn Post: Inclusivity is a powerful strategy for prosperity and a smart investment in a community's economic future.

Inclusivity is often framed as a matter of social good, but it also drives the economy. Every dollar spent on good design brings major returns. Inclusive communities perform better economically, socially, and culturally.

Why? Because an inclusive environment attracts and retains a diverse population. When a city positions itself as a champion of accessibility, it sends a powerful message that attracts residents, entrepreneurs, and investors who value equity. When people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate fully in civic life, they contribute more—by opening businesses, volunteering, and investing in neighborhoods.

Inclusive design and policy make tangible economic sense. For example, ensuring that sidewalks are accessible, downtowns are well-lit at night, and signage is clear serves residents with disabilities, parents with strollers, and deliveries. This translates directly to more customers for local businesses, stronger foot traffic, and a more vibrant local economy.

Achieving this level of meaningful investment requires deep collaboration. Local governments, nonprofits, developers, and businesses all have a role to play. By engaging potential partners, meaningful and lasting investments can be made that secure sustainable economic growth for everyone. #InclusiveDesign #EconomicDevelopment #CommunityBuilding #SmartInvestment

X Post: Inclusivity isn't just a moral imperative or about social good; it's a smart investment and a strategy for prosperity. Designing accessible communities drives the economy by attracting and retaining diverse populations. Every dollar spent on good design brings major returns, translating to more customers and vibrant local economies. Collaboration across government, nonprofits, and businesses is essential to make these meaningful investments! #InclusiveEconomy #CommunityBuilding

OPPORTUNITY #3: Inclusive communities thrive

Instagram Post: Why design inclusive, accessible communities? The data speaks for itself! Every dollar spent on good design brings major returns — stronger more just communities and a thriving local economy. Together, we can make a difference! #CommunityGrowth #InnovatingBarrierFree"

FORMAT: PRESS RELEASE

MESSAGE:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Inclusive Design is Smart Economics: New Focus on Accessibility as a Strategy for Community Prosperity

[City/Organization Name] Highlights How Accessible Communities Drive Economic Growth, Attract Investment, and Ensure Sustainable Development

[CITY, STATE] – [Date] – A growing consensus suggests that building truly inclusive and accessible communities is not merely a moral imperative or a matter of fairness, but a smart investment and a robust strategy for long-term prosperity. According to recent findings, every dollar spent on good design brings major returns, leading to a thriving local economy and stronger, more just communities.

Inclusivity serves as a powerful economic driver. When people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate fully in civic life, they contribute significantly by investing in neighborhoods, opening businesses, attending local events, and volunteering. This strategy helps attract and retain diverse populations.

Economic Benefits of Accessible Infrastructure

Inclusive design and policy demonstrate clear economic sense. When a city proactively positions itself as a champion of accessibility and inclusivity, it sends a powerful message that "everyone belongs here". This message is crucial for attracting residents, investors, and entrepreneurs who value equity and innovation.

Specific measures of inclusive design directly boost commerce:

- Consider a downtown area where businesses and sidewalks are accessible regardless of weather or time of day and business websites communicate both hours of operation and respective accessibility.
- This welcoming environment not only serves residents with disabilities but also welcomes tourists, delivery workers, and parents with strollers.
- The resulting stronger foot traffic translates directly to more customers for local businesses and a more vibrant local economy.

Inclusive communities tend to experience higher civic participation, greater social trust, and more sustainable economic growth because individuals are more likely to stay, participate, and invest in places where they feel empowered and welcome.

OPPORTUNITY #3: Inclusive communities thrive

Call for Collaboration

Building these inclusive communities requires intentional planning and significant collaboration. Inclusion does not happen by accident. Local governments, nonprofits, developers, and businesses must work together to remove barriers and create accessible infrastructure, making meaningful and lasting investments that benefit everyone. Engaging potential partners is key to creating the most impactful investments.

Inclusive centered plans and investments result in places where people genuinely want to live, work, and thrive—a scenario that is both "good ethics" and "good economics."

FORMAT: DIRECT COMMUNICATION

MESSAGE:

Dear [Organization/Community Group]:

[Insert Community Name] recognizes the vital role the [Insert Organization Name] plays in driving our local economy, attracting investment, and ensuring the success of our community. We are reaching out today to discuss a strategy that is proving to be a smart investment in our community's future: building truly inclusive and accessible infrastructure and policy.

While inclusivity is often framed as a moral imperative or matter of fairness, it is equally important as an economic driver. Positioning our community as a champion of accessibility and inclusivity sends a powerful message that "everyone belongs here," which attracts residents, entrepreneurs, and investors who value innovation and equity.

The Business Case for Inclusion

We believe that inclusive design and policy make immediate and quantifiable economic sense for your members:

1. Increased Customer Base and Foot Traffic: When we focus on accessibility, we ensure that sidewalks, businesses, and digital platforms are welcoming to everyone. This not only serves residents with disabilities but also welcomes tourists, delivery workers, and parents with strollers. This increased accessibility translates directly to stronger foot traffic and more customers for local businesses, fostering a more vibrant local economy.

2. Attracting and Retaining Talent: Inclusive communities attract and retain diverse populations. When people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate fully in civic life, they contribute more—by opening businesses, volunteering, attending local events, and investing in their neighborhoods. This contribution supports local businesses and drives the overall economy.

3. Sustainable Economic Growth: Studies indicate that every dollar spent on good design brings major returns, contributing to a thriving local economy. Inclusive communities tend to see more

OPPORTUNITY #3: Inclusive communities thrive

sustainable economic growth and higher civic participation because people are more likely to stay, invest, and participate in places where they feel welcome and empowered.

Call to Collaboration

Inclusion does not happen by accident; it requires intentional planning and collaboration. As noted previously, engaging potential partners is crucial to creating the most meaningful and impactful investments.

We must work together to ensure that our local businesses and community groups join [insert Community name] in removing barriers and creating accessible infrastructure. This partnership is essential for implementing creative solutions—such as small business programs that prioritize universal access or making sure local business websites communicate their respective accessibility features alongside hours of operation and directions.

Building an inclusive community is, ultimately, a strategy for prosperity. By planning and investing with inclusion at the center, we create places where people want to live, work, and thrive. This is truly "good ethics" and "good economics."

We seek your leadership in communicating the economic benefits of this strategy to its members and invite you to meet with us to outline specific collaborative initiatives.

Very truly yours,

[Your Name] [Your Title]

[Your Organization]

[Your Contact Information]

OPPORTUNITY #4: Make accessibility the standard

- Encourage the move from a reactive model (providing accommodations when requested) to a proactive one where inclusive design principles are integrated from the beginning.
- Educate builders, developers, architects and homeowners about the lifetime benefits that small investments at the beginning of a project will have for the resident while alleviating cost concerns with data-backed responses to provide reassurance and clarity.
- Communicate that legal compliance is the floor, not the ceiling. ADA is the legal minimum and it has limits. The ADA does not require that public places be made more accessible.
- Illustrate that accessibility doesn't mean overly clinical and uninviting.

FORMAT: OP-ED OR BLOG

MESSAGE:

Beyond the Blueprint: Why Proactive Design Must Become the New Standard

For too long, the construction and development industries have treated accessibility as an afterthought—a necessary obligation or a measure taken only when specifically requested. This reactive model, where accommodations are provided after a need arises, is inefficient and limits potential. A definitive move toward a proactive model where the principles of inclusive design are integrated seamlessly from the inception of any project is needed now.

Elevating accessibility standards begins by shifting perspectives, understanding that legal requirements are the starting point, not the ultimate goal. For instance, the ADA serves as the legal minimum, or the "floor," but it is certainly not the "ceiling". The ADA has inherent limitations and does not prohibit public places from achieving higher levels of accessibility than mandated. To create truly functional and welcoming spaces for everyone, standards that go far beyond legal compliance are necessary.

This shift requires education directed at key stakeholders, including builders, developers, architects, and homeowners. Communicating clearly the substantial lifetime of benefits that even small investments made early in a project will yield for the future residents is important. These initial efforts pay dividends over the life of the structure.

Simple upgrades include replacing round doorknobs with lever handles, improved lighting, removing area rugs, and installing voice controls. More involved renovations might include wider doorways and new doors (think about door swings) and placement of additional studs for future grab bar support. Looking at new appliance purchases, ask yourself: could I use this appliance if I was in a wheelchair?

A common hesitation often centers on perceived burdens: concerns about costs and aesthetics. Alleviating these cost concerns by providing data-backed responses offers clarity and reassurance to stakeholders. The idea that inclusive design must automatically be expensive is a myth that must be debunked using evidence.

Furthermore, challenging the misconception that accessibility mandates a sterile or uninspired appearance. It is crucial to illustrate clearly that

OPPORTUNITY #4: Make accessibility the standard

making a space accessible does not mean it has to be impersonal. Inclusive design can and should be beautiful, modern, and fully integrated with high-quality aesthetics.

Integrating inclusive design principles from the beginning fulfils not only a legal duty, but makes accessibility the undisputed standard. Moving beyond accommodations and investing in spaces is inherently better for all residents over the long term. It is time to embrace proactive design—it is the smart investment, the better standard, and the most comprehensive way to build our future communities.

FORMAT: SOCIAL MEDIA

MESSAGES:

Facebook /LinkedIn Post: Why Proactive Design is the Smart Investment:

- Lifetime Benefits: Even small investments made at the start of a project yield a significant lifetime of benefits for residents. Small changes made at the outset of a renovation are affordable and can allow a resident to stay in their home longer.
- Aesthetics and Design: Accessibility does not mean "institutional." Inclusive design can be fully integrated with modern, high-quality aesthetics.
- Myth Busting: We can alleviate cost concerns by providing stakeholders with data-backed responses that offer clarity and reassurance.
- Community Value: When there is room for everyone in a community, everyone benefits. A home and a community should truly be livable for a lifetime.

Let's make accessibility the standard, ensuring we build spaces that are welcoming and sustainable for decades to come! #ProactiveDesign #InclusiveDesign #Accessibility

X Post: Make accessibility the standard, not an accommodation! Shift from a reactive model to proactive inclusive design integrated from the beginning.

Simple upgrades like replacing round doorknobs with lever handles, improved lighting, removing area rugs, and installing voice controls yield lifetime benefits and are affordable, helping residents stay in their homes longer. More complex renovations might include wider doorways and new doors (consider door swings), and placement of additional studs for future grab bar support. For new appliance purchases, ask if wheelchair users could operate it.

Communications must stress that legal compliance (like the ADA) is the floor, not the ceiling.

Plus: Accessibility doesn't have to look institutional! #InclusiveDesign #LifetimeLivability

Instagram Post: Design For A Lifetime, Not Just A Season!

Accessibility must be the standard, not just an accommodation. The shift must be from a reactive model (providing accommodations when requested) to a proactive one where inclusive design principles are integrated from the beginning, must be prioritized going forward. #InclusiveDesign #LifetimeLivability

OPPORTUNITY #5: A home and a community should be livable for a lifetime

- Use stories to connect inclusive design in zoning and building codes on a personal level
- Emphasize that small changes in the outset of a renovation project are affordable and can allow a resident to stay in a home longer.
- Illustrate the benefits to everyone when there is room for everyone in a community.
- Inform residents about options and support available if a retrofit is anticipated or needed.

FORMAT: DIRECT COMMUNICATION

MESSAGE:

A Call to Action for Proactive Design: Building for a Lifetime

[Date]

Dear Home Builders and Developers,

Homebuilders and developers are an integral part of any inclusive design team, and we are reaching out today to remind you that making accessibility the standard in every project designed and built makes good business – and community building – sense. Creating spaces for everyone, no matter their age or ability, is a goal shared by homebuilders, developers and municipal professionals alike.

For too long, the industry has operated under a design and build model where accommodations for physical or cognitive limitations are provided only when specifically requested. We encourage you to join us and embrace a proactive model where the principles of inclusive design are integrated into building specs and designs right from the beginning.

This means recognizing that legal requirements, such as the ADA, serve as the legal minimum, or the "floor," and not the ultimate goal, or the "ceiling". The ADA has inherent limits, and it certainly does not prohibit public places or homes from being more accessible than mandated. To truly deliver quality and sustainable housing, we must look beyond minimum compliance.

Addressing Key Industry Concerns

We understand that adopting higher standards often raises two primary concerns: cost and aesthetics.

First, cost concerns can be alleviated by considering data-backed responses that offer reassurance and clarity to all stakeholders. Furthermore, emphasizing small investments at the beginning of a project can yield a significant lifetime of benefits for future residents. Initial, minor changes implemented at the outset of a renovation or build are affordable and can ultimately allow a resident to stay in their home longer.

Second, it is crucial to recognize that inclusive design does not mean institutional or impersonal. Accessibility can be fully integrated with modern, high-quality aesthetics.

OPPORTUNITY #5: A home and a community should be livable for a lifetime

The Lifetime Value of Inclusive Design

Building a home and a community that is truly livable for a lifetime has immeasurable value.

By integrating inclusive design principles now, you ensure that there is room for everyone in a community, which ultimately benefits everyone. Your commitment to these principles ensures that the spaces you create are not just structures, but genuinely welcoming, sustainable homes for decades to come.

We look forward to working with you to make proactive, inclusive design the undisputed standard across the industry.

Sincerely,

[Your Name/Organization]

FORMAT: SOCIAL MEDIA

MESSAGES:

Facebook / LinkedIn Post: "Stop Building for Now, Start Building for a Lifetime!

It's time for a major shift in how we design our communities. We must move beyond the reactive model—only providing accommodations when requested—to a proactive one where principles of inclusive design are integrated into project design right from the beginning of a project.

Legal compliance is the floor, not the ceiling! The ADA represents the legal minimum and has inherent limits. We encourage builders, developers, architects, and homeowners to strive for higher standards, understanding that the ADA does not prohibit public places from being more accessible than required. Learn more at [Link]

#ProactiveDesign #InclusiveDesign #Accessibility #LivableForALifetime #HomeBuilding #Development #DesignForAll

X/Instagram Post: Make Accessibility the Standard: Go Proactive!

It is time to shift from a reactive model to a proactive one, integrating inclusive design principles from the beginning of every project.

Legal compliance is the floor, not the ceiling! The ADA is the legal minimum and has limits. It does not prohibit places from achieving higher accessibility.

Informing partners like homebuilders and homeowners about the substantial lifetime of benefits these efforts provide. Even small changes made at the outset are affordable and can allow a resident to stay in a home longer.

Crucially, accessibility does not mean impersonal. Cost concerns can be alleviated using data-backed responses. When there is room for everyone in a community, everyone benefits, ensuring a home is livable for a lifetime.

#ProactiveDesign #AccessibilityStandards #DesignForAll

NEXT STEPS

Summary:

Below is a summary of the communication process.

Step 1: Identify interest holders, partners, and audiences for communication

Step 2: Identify appropriate communication channels for each audience

Step 3: Establish methods to collect and use feedback from your audience

Step 4: Create a consistent release schedule for communications and identify who will be responsible for the creation and release of messages

Step 5: Create messages for communication

Step 6: Release messages on respective communication channels

Step 7: Collect and use feedback from your audience

Step 8: Adjust messaging and communication in accordance with feedback received

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Stories are more compelling. There is scientific evidence about how our brains change when we are engaged with a storyteller. Personal stories are effective for garnering support. Stories are a type of communication that is particularly suited to influencing action.
- The messaging examples provided should be tailored to your community.
- Consistency in messaging is essential.