

ANNEX B – FACTSHEET ON BCA’S INITIATIVES FOR AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Approximately 25% of the Singapore population will be aged 65 or older by ¹. It is therefore important to make Singapore an inclusive and age-friendly city, where people of all ages and abilities can move freely and participate in all aspects of life. Accessibility in the built environment is a key enabler to making Singapore an inclusive and age-friendly city. It is achieved through the following key strategies:

- a. Establishing accessibility standards;
- b. Promote universal design (UD)² adoption;
- c. Engaging in outreach and partnerships to improve accessibility of public spaces; and
- d. Drive accessibility upgrading for existing buildings.

Establishing Accessibility Standards

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

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

3 The latest Code 2025 was introduced on 7 April 2025 with effective implementation from 1 November 2025. Code 2025 introduces enhanced requirements for barrier-free access, hearing enhancement systems, elderly-friendly features, and improved facilities for breastfeeding mothers. These updates reflect BCA's commitment to creating an inclusive built environment that serves diverse user needs.

Promoting and Enabling UD Adoption

4 To promote and enable wider implementation of UD, BCA works closely with partners to accord recognition for voluntary adoption.

i. Recognising Exemplary UD Projects

5 To encourage the pursuit of exemplary UD implementation in buildings and innovations in user-friendly designs, BCA recognises outstanding projects with the

¹ Source: Singapore Department of Statistics), Population in Brief 2021.

² UD refers to "design for all". In the context of the built environment, it seeks to create more inclusive building infrastructure that addresses the needs of all age groups (e.g. families with young children and infants, elderly persons) and persons with varying abilities (e.g. wheelchair users, ambulant disabled, those with visual/hearing impairments) to the greatest extent possible.

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Universal Design Excellence Award (UDEA). The UDEA replaces the voluntary UD Mark certification scheme and awards³ which ran from 2012 to 2021.

6 Since inception, 9 projects have been conferred the UDEA. More information on past UDEA projects can be found at <https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/bca-awards/universal-design-excellence-award/universal-design-excellence-award-winners>

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

7 BCA rolled out the Universal Design index (UDi) self-assessment framework on 1 June 2022, which includes a checklist⁴ of accessibility and UD features that developers and designers can use to

- (i) learn about and consider UD provisions that can be included in their projects; and
- (ii) obtain an indicative measure of the level of inclusiveness of their developments.

8 In doing so, BCA aims to encourage developers and designers to provide accessibility and UD features beyond the prevailing requirements under the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment. The framework will also enable BCA to gather more comprehensive data on building accessibility.

9 The public can also benefit from the information submitted by developers and designers in the UDi through an information portal at <https://go.gov.sg/bcaud-infoportal>. The public can obtain a sense of,

- (i) the level of user-friendliness of newly completed buildings, and
- (ii) the availability of selected user-friendly features to allow users with specific needs to pre-plan their visits to buildings.

As of June 2025, information from close to 520 buildings is available.

Engaging in Outreach and Partnerships

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

i Partnering the Community to Address Accessibility Gaps

11 The Accessible City Network (ACN) was launched in 2021 as a recommendation under the Third Enabling Masterplan. Through a community-

³ Under the UD Mark certification scheme and awards, BCA has given more than 270 UD Mark awards to almost 100 developers and architectural firms to recognise their efforts in user-friendly building design.

⁴ BCA has included the checklist in the list of documents that developers and QPs will have to submit as part of their application for Temporary Occupation Permit or Certificate of Statutory Completion on or after 1 September 2022.

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driven, 3P (people, public, private) approach, the community partnerships will identify barriers and inter-connectivity challenges in localised precincts, prioritise needs, and co-develop solutions. The current partnerships under the ACN are *Our Accessible City @ CBD (Raffles Place)* and *Our Accessible City @ CBD (Robinson Road)*, which aim to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities to navigate the central business district, access amenities and find employment opportunities.

ii Raising Industry Capabilities

12 The Certification Course for UD Assessor, conducted by BCA since 2012, aims to promote the appreciation and application of UD principles, and to deepen the understanding of various disabilities among built environment professionals (e.g. architects, developers, facilities/project managers). As of June 2025, we have trained about 700 industry professionals.

13 The course was enhanced in June 2023 to keep abreast of the latest UD initiatives and to enhance the awareness of senior-friendly design, by including topics on designing to enable ageing-in-place and for persons living with dementia. A refresher course is also available for previously certified UD assessors to update themselves with the latest developments in UD.

iii UD Design Guides

14 BCA has worked with public agencies to develop and introduce the “UD Guide for Public Places” in July 2016. The guide seeks to raise awareness on the needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly as well as families. It also provides guidance to designers on how to integrate UD principles into the planning of public buildings and facilities such as public transport, hawker centres and parks.

Driving Accessibility Upgrading for Existing Buildings

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

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

ii Incentivising Voluntary Upgrading of Private Sector Buildings

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

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

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