

MEDIA RELEASE

HIGHER GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR BUILDING OWNERS TO UPGRADE WITH ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The Building and Construction Authority, BCA is set to increase funding support by two-fold for its Accessibility Fund to enable building owners to retrofit their buildings with barrier-free-accessibility (BFA) features.

2. Currently, through BCA's \$40 million Accessibility Fund, building owners can receive up to 40% funding for a basic accessibility package that covers a minimum set of barrier-free features. With the revision, BCA will now co-pay up to 80% for basic accessibility package. The Accessibility Fund will also be extended to cover 40% funding for additional barrier-free-accessibility features beyond the basic features. The maximum value that can be granted under the enhanced incentive package will also be increased from \$150,000 per building to \$300,000 per building. [see Annex A for Fact Sheet on the Accessibility Fund]. Available with immediate effect, the scheme is open to all private buildings except for landed residential properties.

3. Since April 2007, the Accessibility Fund has supported applications from 19 building owners who have tapped on the fund to offset the cost of constructing basic accessibility features such as an accessible approach to their building via ramps or assistive technologies and an accessible toilet at the first storey. Some examples include Paradiz Centre @ Selegie Road, OG@Orchard Point and Friven & Co @ Tanglin.

4. "Shaping a friendly built environment has always been one of our key pillars. Our collaborative and holistic approach towards building a caring and inclusive society has enabled us to come up with a slew of initiatives via our Barrier-Free Accessibility Master Plan to drive all sectors towards achieving this aim. We hope that with the enhancements to the Accessibility Fund, more owners

of buildings built before 1990 will come forward to provide greater barrier-free accessibility to the buildings. Such improvement works on accessibility will benefit the customers and users of their buildings and help owners and companies discharge their corporate social responsibility. Over time, such works will shape a friendly built environment and help create a more inclusive society, enabling users with various mobility needs to move around with ease”, said Dr John Keung, BCA’s CEO.

5. BCA has also launched its Friendly Built Environment Portal, www.friendlybuildings.sg today. It is a one-stop portal for information on universal design and accessibility to cater to the special needs of different user groups. One of its key features is the Accessibility Rating System, where buildings are rated according to their level of friendliness, from levels one to four. The Accessibility Rating System provides useful details such as the types of accessible features and their locations in a building, thus encouraging greater mobility and a more active lifestyle among people of all ages and physical abilities [see Annex B for Fact Sheet on the Accessibility Rating System].

6. In line with BCA’s initiatives to build awareness , a series of seminars and workshops have been organised on universal design in conjunction with BCA’s Friendly Built Environment Week which was launched by Parliamentary Secretary for National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki bin Osman on 14 October 2008. Held at its research and education hub, BCA Academy of the Built Environment, renowned architectural practitioners of universal design from America, Australia, Hong Kong and Japan will be sharing best practices with industry professionals and tertiary students, from 14 October 2008 to 18 October 2008.

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FACT SHEET ON THE BCA'S ACCESSIBILITY FUND CRITERIA

The Code on Barrier-free Accessibility in Buildings (BFA Code) was implemented in 1990. Since then, all new buildings and existing buildings which have undergone major addition and alteration (A/A) works have been provided with accessibility features that are friendly to the persons with limited mobility. However, there remains a large stock of the pre-1990 buildings that are currently not accessible.

BCA's Accessibility Fund of \$40 million was introduced on 1 April 2007 to incentivise private building owners, with buildings built before 1990, to upgrade their existing buildings with basic accessibility features. Basic accessible features refer to accessibility from the entrance to and within the first floor and an accessible toilet on the same floor. The fund is used to co-pay up to 40% of the upgrading works subject to a cap of \$150,000 per building, to help defray their retrofitting costs.

BCA recently reviewed the funding support to give added impetus and encouragement for more building owners to adopt BFA. The changes are:

- a) Increase funding support for 'basic' accessibility package from 40% to 80% and extend the funding support beyond basic at 40%;
- b) Increase the maximum cap from \$150,000 to \$300,000;
- c) Extend the accessibility fund to all types of private buildings except landed residential properties.

Owners of 19 buildings have since made use of the funding to offset the cost of constructing these basic features. Some of these projects include Paradiz Centre at Selegie Road, OG@Orchard Point and Friven & Co at Tanglin.

A guide to a complete list of accessibility features can be found on BCA's website, www.bca.gov.sg

Example of BCA's Accessibility Fund Recipient

FRIVEN & CO. @ TANGLIN



Building Owner - Singapore Post Pte Ltd
Building Type - Commercial
Lessee - Friven & Co. International Pte Ltd

Friven & Co.'s, latest lifestyle mall, Friven & Co. @ Tanglin is located along the Orchard Road belt, at 56 Tanglin Road.

Originally, the building with a basement with its main entrance at Nassim Hill, met BCA's minimal code requirements when used as a post office. Its access from Tanglin Road then was meant for loading and unloading of postal cargos.

The building was also uniquely built with multiple split levels to fit the site contours which made accessibility to the toilets and other floors difficult for persons with limited mobility.

To enable visitors to access the buildings from all entrances, BCA supported Friven with the following barrier-free accessibility upgrading works:

Key Basic Accessible Features



Ramp to mitigate difference in level at first storey to reach accessible toilet from other side toilet



Installation of new accessible toilets at basement and at 1st storey

Annex A



Conversion of non-accessible lift interiors to become accessible



Installation of 1 platform lift from basement car park to lift lobby concourse



Installation of 1 platform lift to 1st storey toilet from 1st storey level

Quote from Friven & Co's spokesperson

“As a local home and lifestyle retail specialist, we are attentive to the needs of all our customers. Hence, providing accessible features and facilitating convenient and easy access to and within the building aids the customer service experience. This also positions Friven in a positive light as a civic minded retailer, “said Mr Gary Loh, Executive Chairman of Friven & Co Ltd.

FACT SHEET ON THE BCA's FRIENDLY BUILT ENVIRONMENT PORTAL

The Friendly Built Environment Portal (www.friendlybuildings.sg) is a one-stop portal for information on universal design and accessibility to cater to the special needs of different user groups. One of its key features is the Accessibility Rating System.

BCA's Accessibility Rating System

BCA developed an Accessibility Rating System to categorise buildings according to their level of accessibility and friendliness. The objective is to encourage greater mobility and lead a more active lifestyle for people of all ages and physical abilities. Buildings are assessed on a voluntary basis and are categorised numerically from one to four, with four depicting a building with features beyond the BCA's current Accessibility Code. So far, 400 buildings have been assessed and details of their accessibility and friendliness are housed in our **Friendly Built Environment Portal**.

Benefits of BCA's Friendly Built Environment Portal

- Specially commissioned, it is a one-stop portal designed to educate and provide both immediate user and non-user groups with instantaneous information at their fingertips, enabling a well-informed journey regarding the accessibility and friendliness of their destination.
- Enables users with special needs to gain access to the information in a variety of means; the visually impaired are able to view the information with larger fonts and bright colours are incorporated to facilitate increased visibility for users with colour deficiencies. Finally, the hearing impaired will also have an opportunity to access to the information via a talking browser.
- Based on the user's search criteria, the portal will display their search results with a photo of the building, address and location map, friendliness rating and types of accessibility features and location.

Features of the Accessibility Rating System

S/N	Item	Description
1	Types of Rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings are categorised by 1 to 4 "smiling sunflower" to depict "friendliness" of a building, with 4 being the friendliest • 1 smile means that the building has basic accessibility features • 2 smiles mean beyond basic accessibility features

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 smiles mean compliance with the Current Code • 4 smiles mean features beyond the current code.
2	Participation by building owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary • Completed buildings
3	Rating Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site audits by BCA
4	Types of Buildings Rated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings frequented by the public. • These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ offices/commercial buildings ○ institutions ○ polyclinics ○ hospitals ○ libraries ○ shopping centres ○ markets/food centres ○ places of worship ○ industrial buildings ○ museums ○ parks ○ MRT/LRT stations ○ Hotels
5	Search for Buildings suited to the needs of the users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users can search for buildings according to a single criterion, combination or all of the listed criteria. The criteria are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ building types - eg shopping mall, polyclinics ○ types of accessibility features - eg accessible parking lots, toilets ○ user groups - eg wheelchair user, elderly, family with young children ○ friendliness ratings
6	Search Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For every building, the search will provide the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ photo of the building ○ address and location map ○ friendliness rating ○ types of accessibility features and location ○ intended user groups
7	Web Accessibility Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking browser for blind or partial visually impaired • Adjustable font size for the visually impaired • Web safe colours for colour-deficient vision