



Case Study on Bridgwater Project

VisitAble Housing in Winnipeg, Manitoba

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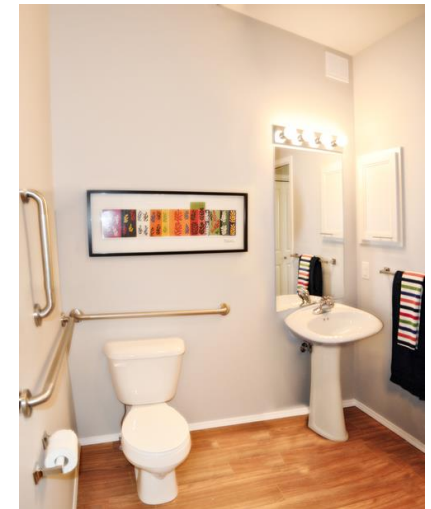
CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES

Introduction to Bridgwater Project (2006-2021)

- A housing development project initiated by Province of Manitoba (Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation).
- The first neighbourhood plan in Canada that includes a large proportion of housing to be built as VisitAble.
- Over 1,000 single-family homes will be built with VisitAbility features in three Neighbourhoods in Bridgwater Project: Bridgwater Forest, Bridgwater Lakes, and Bridgwater Trail.
- Vision – A walkable neighbourhood with a diversity of housing.
- Key features – VisitAble housing, increased green space, mature forest, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths.

Concept of VisitAble Housing

- Visit + Able
- Three basic accessibility features that provide easy access on the main level for everyone
 1. No step entrance
 2. Wider doorways and clear passage on the main floor
 3. A main floor bathroom (or powder room) that can be accessed by visitors who use mobility devices



Case Study Methods and Participants

- Methods: A document review, interviews with stakeholders and a residents' survey.
- Individual Interviews
 - Intended to examine perceptions and experience about VisitAble housing among stakeholders involved in the project.
 - 21 participants (6 homeowners/residents, 3 policy makers, 3 building and development consultants, 6 homebuilders, and 3 home salespersons).
- Residents' Survey
 - Intended to obtain feedback about residents' experience with VisitAble homes.
 - 40 residents out of roughly 200 households of VisitAble Housing in the neighbourhoods participated in the survey.

VisitAble Housing Best Practice in Canada

Bridgwater Project (2006-2021)

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Development of Bridgwater Project

- To incorporate VisitAble Housing, Manitoba Housing undertook the following:
 - Extensive consultations with building and development professionals
 - Focus groups to examine consumer responses to VisitAble Housing
 - An aggressive marketing campaign to inform the public about VisitAble Housing
 - A VisitAble Design Consultant Team in 2007 to perform a cost analysis on VisitAble Housing
- 14 lots for VisitAble Housing were tested in the first neighbourhood, Bridgwater Forest.
- The proportion of VisitAble houses was increased to over 50% of all lots in other neighbourhoods (Bridgwater Lakes and Trails).

VisitAble Housing Consultant - Strategies

STRATEGIC PROCESS

GOAL

**Publicly
Funded
Housing**

Regulation

visitable features
mandated

Advocacy

- technical assistance
- partnerships

Incentives

- financial assistance
- support programs
- certification programs
- design awards

Basic access
is the norm

STRATEGIC PROCESS

GOAL

**Privately
Funded
Housing**

Advocacy

build
consumer
support

Incentives

- financial assistance
- certification
- publicity
- recognition

Regulation

Building Code
revisions

Growth in no.
of homes with
basic access

Developer Costs of Bridgwater Neighbourhood

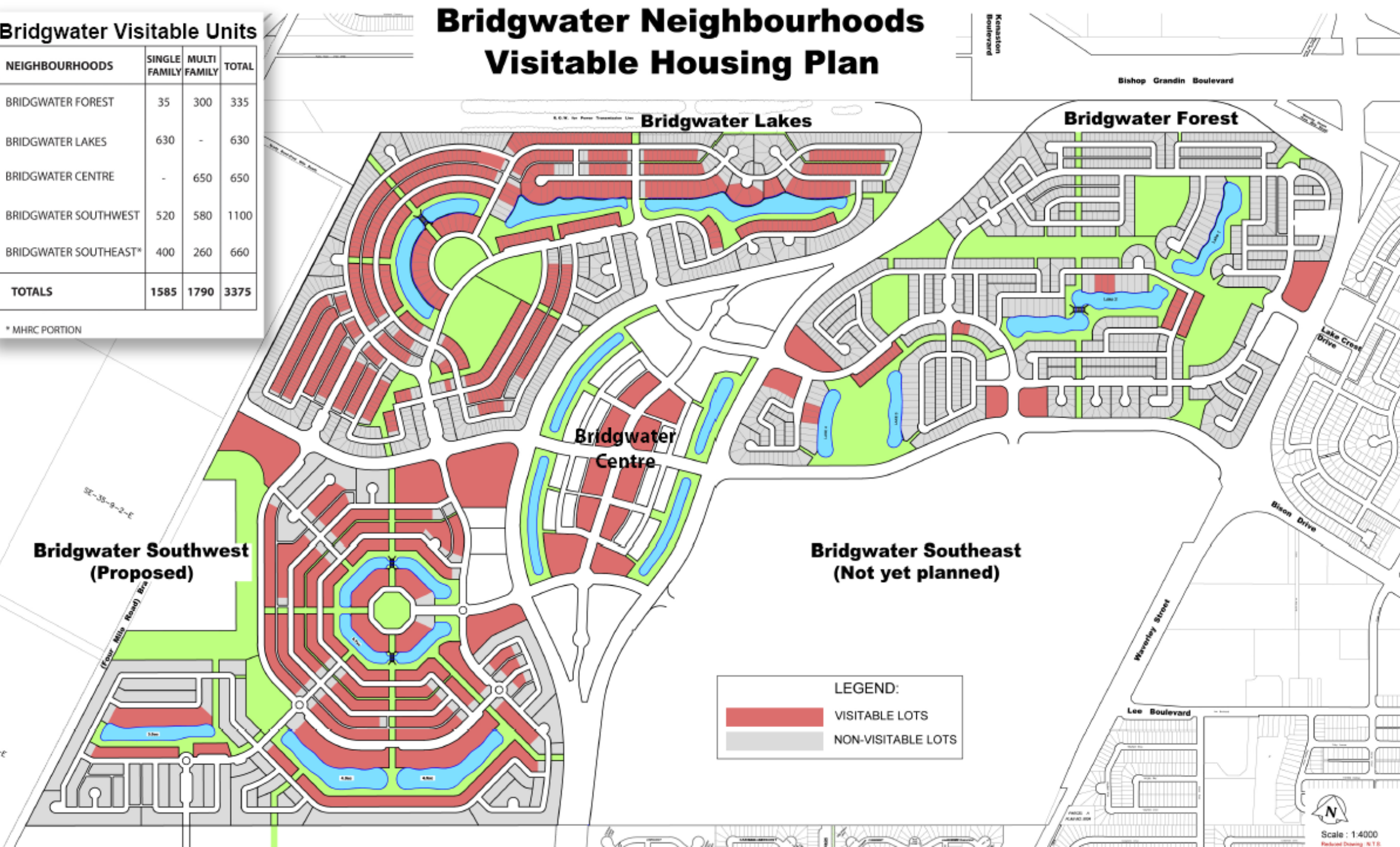
- VisitAble houses in Bridgwater are primarily two types:
 1. Non walkout/lookout design
 2. Walkout – Lookout design
- VisitAble Lots - Lots are pre-engineered to accommodate no step entrance and drain to a pathway at the rear yard.
- Contributing factors to increased development costs of a VisitAble Lot include build up of roadway, rear pathway and drainage, deeper service lines (water and sewer).
- Engineering consultants estimate the added cost of providing a VisitAble Lot is roughly \$2,700 per lot.

Bridgwater Visitable Units

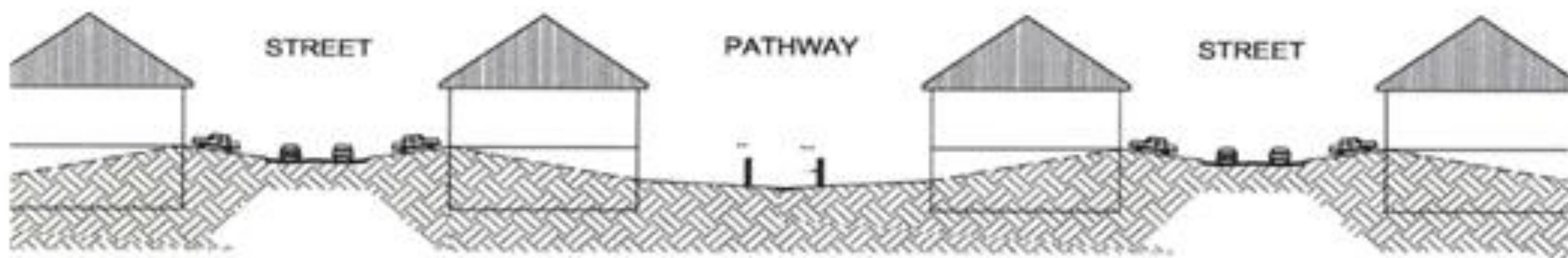
NEIGHBOURHOODS	SINGLE FAMILY	MULTI FAMILY	TOTAL
BRIDGWATER FOREST	35	300	335
BRIDGWATER LAKES	630	-	630
BRIDGWATER CENTRE	-	650	650
BRIDGWATER SOUTHWEST	520	580	1100
BRIDGWATER SOUTHEAST*	400	260	660
TOTALS	1585	1790	3375

* MHRC PORTION

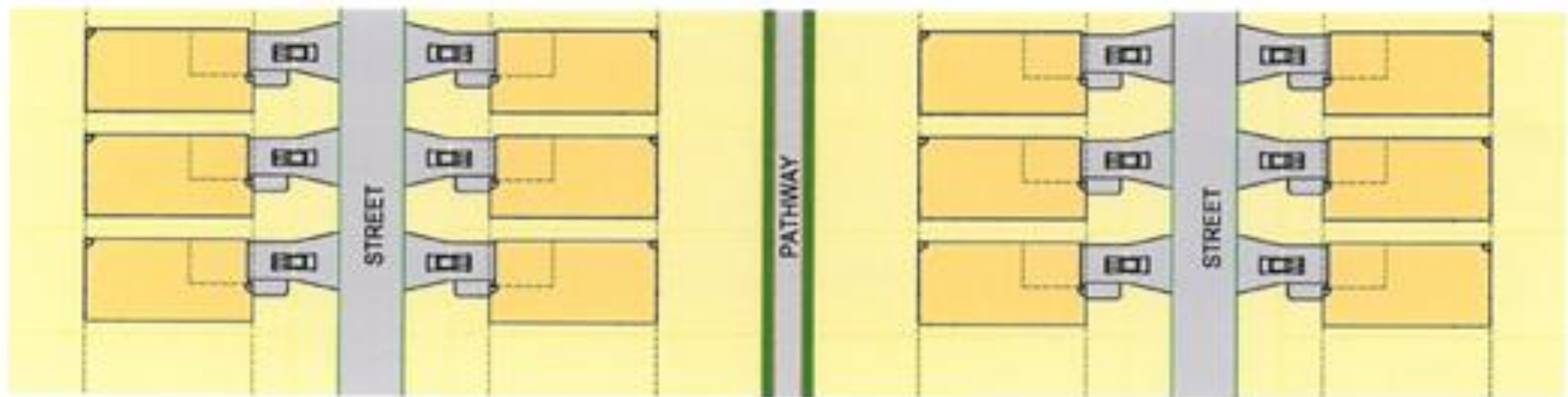
**Bridgwater Neighbourhoods
Visitable Housing Plan**



Visitable Lots



PROFILE



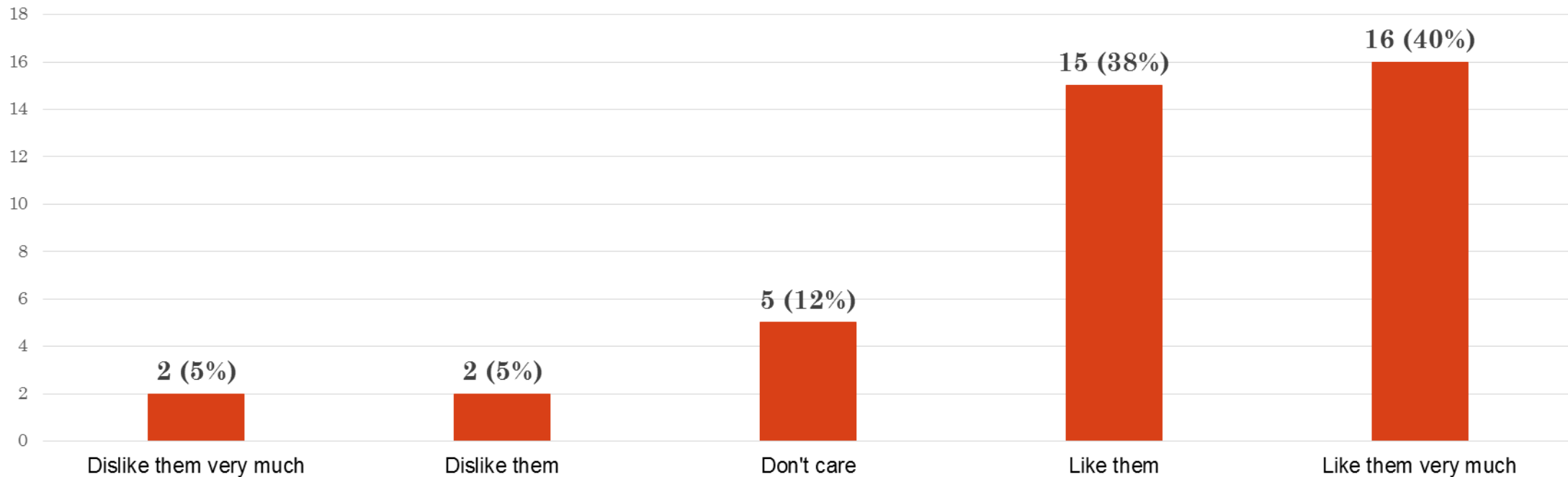
PLAN

Findings on Bridgwater Project

- Fastest selling neighbourhood in Winnipeg.
- VisitAble Housing is marketable and has a marketing value.
- Most stakeholders were very positive. Building professionals noted that their perception of VisitAble Housing had changed from being skeptical or resistant to positive since their involvement in this project.
- The most positive feedback came from the residents in the neighbourhoods.

Residents' Feedback on VisitAble Homes

How Do You Like the VisitAbility Features in Your Home?



Alt Text: A chart that shows about 78% of residents liked or very liked VisitAbility features in their homes

Findings on Bridgwater Project

➤ Benefits of VisitAble Housing

- Aging in place
- Ability to host families, friends, and guests who have mobility difficulties
- Daily convenience (e.g. moving heavy furniture, carrying shopping items, having children in strollers)
- Resale value

Findings on Bridgwater Project

- Very few negative feedback.
- Negative Feedback:
 - Additional costs – Reported additional costs associated with VisitAbility features varied from \$0 to \$10,000.
 - Construction issues – Only a few cases with flooding and water issues. However, builders say those issues are preventable with care design and construction.
 - Restrictions on basements – Depending on the depth of sewer line and design of the house, some VisitAble houses were built with lower basement and smaller basement windows.
 - Reduced living space – A large bathroom on the main floor may mean reduced space in kitchen or living room on the floor.

Testaments on VisitAble Housing

Parent of a son who has Cerebral Palsy:

“He uses a wheelchair to get around, but he always went to a regular school. Halloween! Devastating experience to go up to the bottom of somebody’s front steps and his friends were excellent, they would take his bag and go to the door for him. That’s not the same. I can picture a neighbourhood where he can go anywhere to visit his friends. The whole concept of visitability makes so much sense to me, it just makes sense!”



Testaments on VisitAble Housing

Homebuilder:

“We just built a house for a client a couple of years ago and now they have trouble going up the stairs. At that point in time, they had a choice between Visitable and non-Visitable. They didn’t want a Visitable lot because it costs more. They spent \$600,000-700,000 on this house and now they want to sell this house because it’s not functional for them. And wife had hip replacement and going up stairs is an inconvenience.”



Testaments on VisitAble Housing

Home Sales Person:

“Marketability of visitable homes is greater. It’s like marketing a 2 storey versus a bungalow. A bungalow goes out to 20 years old to 90 years old. A 2 storey, you have a little bit of a shorter market, 20 years old to 50 years old. Not many people want to walk up and down stairs. With Visitable housing you open up that market completely. It’s definitely been good.”







Sterling
SHOWHOME
Joe Jack
946-2740

















For More Information

Please visit:

<http://VisitAbleHousingCanada.com>

or

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Email: visitability@disabilitystudies.ca

The full report of the case study is available at:

<http://visitablehousingcanada.com/visitability-project/project-publications-and-resources/>