



A Publication of Steven Winter Associates, Inc.

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SWA'S ACCESSIBLE PRODUCT GUIDE

Steven Winter Associates, Inc. is thrilled to announce the launch of the [Accessible Product Guide](#), an innovative online tool to help architects, builders, developers, and homeowners find products that enhance the accessibility and usability of spaces. The guide contains products for commercial, residential, and retail projects, among others. It features a wide range of categories from which to choose, including door hardware, drinking fountains, faucets, pools, ramps, lavatories, and more.



In some cases, products featured in the Accessible Product Guide satisfy requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act (FHA), and/or other accessibility laws and building codes; while other products simply help to improve access to and usability of spaces for a wide array of building occupants. The Accessible Product Guide can be used by practitioners across all sectors of design including residential, retail, and commercial; and, will offer solutions for those following Universal Design, Sustainable Design, and Inclusive Design strategies, among others. Note that in all cases, any product's compliance with any applicable law and/or code must be verified on a case-by-case basis.

"Past experience has shown that it can be difficult for our clients to locate products that meet compliance with federal laws, state and local buildings codes, or Universal Design principles," said Peter Stratton, Senior VP, Director, Accessibility Compliance and Consulting. "SWA's Accessible Product Guide will help to address this challenge by connecting individual users and project teams with products that are not only accessible, but also contemporary, elegant, and sleek."

The guide currently features eleven vendors, including: Access-Able Designs, Inc., Accurate Lock and Hardware, American Standard, Aqua Creek Products, Bobrick, Elkay, Hafele, Niagara Conservation, Safepath Products, TOTO, and Trending Accessibility. The interactive platform is free to the public; and allows users to sign up, track interests, review products, and inquire about products directly from vendor sites.

In the coming months, SWA will begin to expand the guide by recruiting additional vendors, increasing the number and scope of products, and building the site's user base. Vendors who are interested in featuring products should email product-guide@swinter.com for participating options.

EVENTS

- Thursday, October 13th
New York, NY
[DISABILITY LAW FORUM](#)
- Thursday, November 3rd
Richmond, VA
Architecture Exchange East— AIA Virginia
1pm: ["DESIGNING FOR HEALTH & ACCESSIBILITY"](#)
3pm: ["AN ARCHITECT'S GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY"](#)
- Want to read more SWA Access? [Subscribe](#) or click [here](#) to access archived issues.
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AGING IN PLACE GUIDE FOR NYC

On September 15, 2016, the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter and the New York City Department for the Aging launched the, [Aging in Place Guide for Building Owners: Recommended Age-Friendly Residential Building Upgrades](#). SWA's Harold Bravo, Senior Accessibility Consultant, served on the Advisory Committee as a representative of SWA and the AIA New York Design for Aging Committee.

The Aging in Place Guide for Building Owners is a unique tool that provides recommendations for modifications that building owners can perform to enable residents to stay in place as they age. The "Aging-in-Place" movement, as it is commonly known, has a growing pool of research behind it that reveals that seniors prefer the independence and freedom of remaining in their homes as they age as opposed to relocating once a home becomes difficult to navigate.

The guide offers upgrade recommendations for alterations to multifamily residential buildings, two-family houses, and apartments; as well as the entry, exterior, and common areas of buildings. The recommendations range in size and scope, including some easily performed tasks such as incorporating plants to beautify the environment and boost residents' mood and wellbeing; to more involved alterations that require professional services, such as the installation of exterior and interior entry doors with dual-height peepholes. The guide's recommendations go above and beyond basic accessibility features and include comprehensive design strategies that will contribute to the overall wellbeing of seniors, including wayfinding strategies, lighting, safety, and communication features, among others.

The guide encourages building owners to make the recommended modifications in order to meet the rapidly-growing demand for senior housing in New York City. According to the guide, nearly 1.4 million adults age 60 and over live in New York City, a number projected to increase by 40.7% over the next 24 years to almost 2 million people in 2040. In addition, the guide suggests that building owners may see a positive return on investment considering that many of the recommendations are rooted in Universal Design concepts which will not only be suitable for seniors, but will benefit all residents.

To find out more about SWA's role in this exciting project or other Aging-in-Place initiatives, please email hbravo@swinter.com.



WAYFINDING: AN INTERVIEW WITH KATIE OSBORN

Katie Osborn, Principal and Chief Designer of Via Collective and expert wayfinding strategist, took some time out of her busy schedule to connect with SWA's Victoria Lanteigne on the importance of wayfinding and to debunk the myth that wayfinding is just signage!

**VL: Can you define wayfinding?**

KO: At a basic level, wayfinding is utilizing tools and cues to help people navigate seamlessly from point A to point B. However, wayfinding strategies are complex and can include signage, maps, architectural features, lighting, floor patterns, customer service representatives, digital apps, and more. Proper wayfinding will enhance a visitor's experience based on the sense of ease with which they can access all points, elements, and features of a space.

VL : What is the link between wayfinding and Universal Design?

KO: Universal Design aims to improve the built environment for all users. That is exactly what we are striving to do with wayfinding strategies. Successful wayfinding offers a wide range of options that are comfortable and intuitive for everyone. Furthermore, a huge element of wayfinding is personal choice in how you get to point B, which allows for a lot of flexibility – a key component of Universal Design.

VL: Why is wayfinding important for people with disabilities?

KO: Oftentimes people with disabilities experience an added level of anxiety or fear that they won't be able to safely navigate their environment. Wayfinding is all about meeting users where they are at, rather than targeting the 'average user'. Proper wayfinding enables people of varying abilities to connect with their own preferred way of navigating spaces, allowing them to feel more confident and comfortable – and, hopefully, enhance their user experience.

VL: What is the best approach to incorporate wayfinding strategies into a project?

KO: Wayfinding needs to begin as early as possible, preferably in the schematic design stage. Often different groups own different parts of the process. For instance, facilities own the signs, marketing owns the customer experience, operations owns the database and IT owns the functionality of the technology. It takes a multidisciplinary approach so we need everyone on board: marketing, developers, architects, management, operations, IT departments, etc. We always say that the customer experience belongs to everyone!

VL: If you could tell architects one thing about wayfinding, what would it be?

KO: Well, sometimes architects are resistant to wayfinding because they don't want to compromise the integrity of their design – I get that. But the fact of the matter is that architecture is a key element of wayfinding, such as proper lighting, open sightlines, vertical circulation paths, etc. The more intuitive your design, the less wayfinding you'll need.

VL: How do you know when you've successfully incorporated a sufficient amount of wayfinding elements into a project?

KO: Well, [laughs] I always say that if I did my job well; no one knows I did my job. Wayfinding should be seamless, easy, and usable without the user even realizing it.

TECH NOTES

Roll-in showers are convenient for many who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids. They are often found in a certain number of accessible hotel rooms and in dwelling units where a building code includes scoping for roll-in showers. When SWA reviews plans, we often see the required turning space overlapping with the roll-in shower area;

so that when making a turn, a person using a wheelchair must negotiate part of the shower to complete the turn. Under ANSI 2003, the turning space can negotiate over a compliant level change. Unlike ANSI 2003, Section 302.2 of the 2010 ADA Standards and ANSI 2009 do not permit level changes within the floor surface of a turning space. In this case, a compliant threshold cannot separate the roll-in shower from the rest of the bathroom. The transition must be smooth and uninterrupted. Under ANSI 2003, the turning space can negotiate over a compliant level change, which means the turning space is permitted to negotiate over a compliant threshold separating the roll-in shower from the rest of the bathroom.



Q&A CORNER

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Q: Do the Fair Housing Act's (FHA) design and construction requirements apply to alterations to existing projects?

A: No. The FHA's design and construction requirements only apply to new construction of buildings built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991. Therefore, renovations to existing buildings are not required to comply with the FHA's design and construction requirements. However, if an addition of four or more dwelling units is built as an extension to an existing building, then the addition in this case is considered new construction under the Act and must meet the FHA's design requirements. If a public or common use space is part of the addition of at least four dwelling units, then the new public and common spaces are also subject to the FHA's design and construction requirements. If an addition to an existing building includes new public and common areas, but not dwelling units, then the addition is not subject to the FHA's design and construction requirements.