

## CARRIE ANTON AND RON WICKMAN

00;00;01;00 - 00;00;26;20

Karen Brown

Welcome to Real life Renos the podcast. On this episode, we welcome back Ron Wickman. And today our special guest is Carrie Anton. Carrie is a speaker consult and accessibility specialist project management professional, and she currently chairs the Accessibility Standards Canada Built Environment Technical Standards Committee, who? And let's not leave out that Carrie is a Paralympic gold medalist in the sport of Goalball.

00;00;26;22 - 00;00;55;00

Karen Brown

Never seen Goalball? You should check it out. You will be on the edge of your seat. Onto our conversation. Welcome everyone to Real Life Renos : The Podcast and of course, we are thrilled to welcome back Ron Wickman. Our viewers and listeners will be familiar with his face and voice. We are especially honored to have with us today Carrie Anton, who is a Paralympic gold medal winner from the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, Australia.

00;00;55;02 - 00;00;57;22

Karen Brown

Welcome Carrie.

00;00;57;25 - 00;00;59;24

Carrie Anton

Thank you. Thank you so much for having me.

00;00;59;27 - 00;01;17;29

Karen Brown

It's our pleasure. It's our pleasure. Can you tell us a little bit about Goalball, which is your sport? Because I have watched it. I know Ron has watched it, but it has really only recently come into my field of view. As I was watching the Paralympics this time around.

00;01;18;02 - 00;01;40;01

Carrie Anton

Right. Well, Goalball is a is a it's called the extreme sport for the blind. And so it's a three on three, played on a gym floor on the volleyball sized court. And the whole nine meter end zone is the goal. And and the goal stands about shoulder height. And you take this ball the size of a basketball feels like a basketball, but it's about 3 pounds.

00;01;40;04 - 00;02;02;16

Carrie Anton

And you just whip that back and forth and you use your body to block the ball from going in that goal behind the three of you, and everyone is blindfolded. So. So no one can see anything. You can just hear this ball that's coming at you that makes noise, jingles a little bit, and you hear the bouncing, and you need to just dive on the floor, block the ball, get up, throw it back and try to score on your opponent.

00;02;02;18 - 00;02;25;07

Carrie Anton

It's a fantastic sport. You know, communication is important. Athleticism to get up, get down to throw really hard. Like, I think I watched the Paris Games and there were women throwing at 64km an hour. So that is less than 0.75 of a second reaction time. But by the time your opponent throws it and you have to hit the floor to block the ball.

00;02;25;10 - 00;02;44;08

Carrie Anton

So fantastic sport, I love it. I found it when I was 18, 19 years old and was selected to the national team, when I was almost 20 something. Yep. And that peaked as an athlete when I was 30 at the Paralympic Games in 2000.

00;02;44;11 - 00;02;47;10

Karen Brown

And do you still play in any capacity?

00;02;47;12 - 00;03;10;17

Carrie Anton

I don't play in any capacity, but I do play other, sports that have been adapted for people who have sight loss, including blind hockey, tandem cycling, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, you know, rowing, dragon boating. So I've done many different sports, but not at a competitive level. Just for recreation and pleasure. Yeah.

00;03;10;19 - 00;03;12;18

Karen Brown

Once an athlete, always an athlete.

00;03;12;20 - 00;03;22;25

Carrie Anton

Yeah. For sure. You can't take the competition out of me, that's for sure. It's not like I don't try hard, but Goalball is truly my my sport where I excelled. Yeah.

00;03;22;27 - 00;03;25;26

Karen Brown

And where do you keep your gold medal?

00;03;25;29 - 00;03;39;21

Carrie Anton

Just on a shelf over here. When it's not in a backpack at the door. It's Canada's medal and so, you know, often I take it to presentations and such to schools or to speaking engagements so people can see it.

00;03;39;27 - 00;03;51;27

Karen Brown

Yeah, right. The Paralympics have come a long, long way. At first, they weren't even televised, and now they are televised, and the audience is growing. Do you feel that as well?

00;03;51;29 - 00;04;12;13

Carrie Anton

I do, and we can tell by the audience that was just in Paris 2024. I mean, the stands were packed. Back in Sydney. They were packed as well with a lot of school kids. But, the stands for the

Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024, 24 years later, was just had huge attendance, and broke a lot of records.

00;04;12;13 - 00;04;27;20

Carrie Anton

So I think it's growing in popularity and awareness and also attention by the media, because the media is really important to promote Paralympics and the Paralympic Games and Paralympic athletes. If people don't see Paralympians, they don't even know that it exists.

00;04;27;22 - 00;04;40;13

Karen Brown

So I noticed that there, on their return to Canada, people went out in large numbers to the airport to greet the Paralympians and welcome them home.

00;04;40;16 - 00;05;12;24

Carrie Anton

Yeah, Paralympians and Olympians are getting the same recognition. This year's the first year that Canadian US Paralympic athletes will get the same dollar value award than the Aussie Olympians, which is huge. You know, it's 20,000, 15,000, 10,000, I believe. And Paralympians used to get, you know, five, three and two right, for, for medals. So, much more equality, much more equity in the whole sport system for Canada and the world.

00;05;12;26 - 00;05;19;19

Carrie Anton

And it feels so great when you come out of the, the gates in the, at the airport and people are cheering you on and red and white. Yeah.

00;05;19;21 - 00;05;25;18

Karen Brown

I'll bet, I'll bet. What would you like to see for the future of the games?

00;05;25;20 - 00;05;46;03

Carrie Anton

I'd love to see more equity. You know, and I don't want to have a downer on a games that was very, very successful, especially for Canada, getting the most medals ever. And but I do want to see more equity. You know, we didn't have Celine Dion at the Paralympic opening ceremonies nor Lady Gaga, right? One singer that I thought I could tell.

00;05;46;03 - 00;06;16;16

Carrie Anton

So there was a few things that were just kind of like, off, right. So I think there needs to be more focus on the Paralympic athletes, during the Olympics, but also, during the Paralympic Games. Right. Commercials were the same. So it's funny, we want equality. We want sameness, but we also want to ensure that people understand, the sacrifice and what people with disabilities go through, because first they have to work with the disability in their life and then they become an elite athlete.

00;06;16;18 - 00;06;26;01

Carrie Anton

All right. So there's a bit more struggle there in my opinion. But so so we want equity but not equality. If that makes sense. Right.

00;06;26;04 - 00;06;48;03

Karen Brown

Absolutely. Well I mean, reaching that level in a sport is not easy without a disability. So add the disability into it. Are there particular sports that you'd like to see included in the Paralympics that aren't anymore? Or that aren't yet?

00;06;48;06 - 00;07;07;29

Carrie Anton

Gosh, you know, there's always new sports, joining like we can see in the Winter games. There was more, snowboard sports and I'm sorry, I don't have all the right names for what they are. I just think they're really cool. But they're, you know, they're skateboarding, is done now by many people with disabilities, including people with sight loss.

00;07;08;02 - 00;07;29;03

Carrie Anton

There's just so many unique things that are going on. Of course, we're going to see things like, adapted as sport evolves. Like, I don't know how we can adapt pickleball, but I know we've adapted tennis. So there's, there's blind tennis. There's also, of course, blind football we know is there? But there's other, just other neat things that are coming on.

00;07;29;06 - 00;07;53;20

Carrie Anton

Why why can't a person who's blind or, breakdowns. Right. So tons of things, tons of things that could be there. But I don't have any specifics. I can just see the sport evolving. And the tough thing about joining the Paralympic Games is that you have to have so many countries that have developed the sport in their country before you can actually get to be a sport at the Paralympic Games.

00;07;53;20 - 00;08;04;20

Carrie Anton

It's quite a rigorous, regime or like a whole bunch of red paperwork to go through, right? Right. To be to become a sport at the Olympics or Paralympics.

00;08;04;22 - 00;08;24;14

Karen Brown

Right. And since your gold medal win, you haven't been slacking. You've had a lot on your plate. You have been a speaker. You are a speaker still. You are a consultant to various sports. You've been busy.

00;08;24;17 - 00;08;43;12

Carrie Anton

I like to be busy. I think that's part of it. Right? It's always striving for more, for better, for, and that's what I do. So I sit on a variety of boards. I even run for federal Senate. So that was that was for Albert in the federal Senate, for Alberta. There were two seats that were open.

00;08;43;15 - 00;08;56;03

Carrie Anton

And I sit as Chair of the Accessible Standards Canada Built Environment Standard for federally regulated entities. So gotta keep busy. Yeah, plus a day job.

00;08;56;05 - 00;09;12;18

Karen Brown

Yeah, plus your day job. Right. Well, let's talk about your your Chair with the Accessibility Standards Group, because that puts you in a bit of an activist position, doesn't it? It's not easy to bring in new standards either.

00;09;12;21 - 00;09;32;00

Carrie Anton

It's not I, you know, I've learned a lot about bringing in standards and what standards, how they need to be written. How, you know, how you need to consult and, you know, talk about stakeholders. I'm also a project management professional. So I get all those things. But putting it in play, to ensure that we have voices is really key.

00;09;32;00 - 00;09;42;17

Carrie Anton

And, I've learned a lot about how standards are written and also how many standards are actually quite dated. So it's been a it's been a fantastic experience for me personally and professionally. Yeah.

00;09;42;20 - 00;10;01;23

Karen Brown

Right now, Ron, you certainly know better than a lot of people how dated some of the standards are. Of course, with your lived experience with your father being in a wheelchair, you know what 100% perfection would look like, but you're not always allowed to get there.

00;10;01;25 - 00;10;41;06

Ron Wickman

Yeah, that's that's right. It one thing I can say, about generally standards, and building codes and so on is they still are primarily based on, physical disabilities, mobility issues. And, more

importantly, in a, I would say, a negative way, they're primarily based on people who use manual wheelchairs. So, so really, codes came into existence, largely, due to people that were injured, during, during World War two.

00:10:41:08 - 00:11:05:28

Ron Wickman

And, all of a sudden we had we had larger populations of people who were using manual chairs. And in the 50s and 60s, everybody had the exact same wheelchair. So it was a little easier to come up with, sort of standard dimensions because it was all based on one wheelchair. In concept that hasn't really changed, to 2025.

00:11:05:28 - 00:11:43:09

Ron Wickman

That's primarily still how we think about the code. And of course, we all know now. Well, most of us should should know that, people come in many different sizes and shapes and, and, there's so many types of wheelchairs, especially if you did watch the Paralympics, you see just the, the vast variety of wheelchairs that are being used and, and certainly, modern medicine and, and, so on has allowed people to survive, more horrific injuries that, they now use power wheelchairs.

00:11:43:09 - 00:12:27:16

Ron Wickman

They, they are quadriplegic. And, all of all of that is still catching up to, to current standards and codes and, and certainly that's something that I'm sure Carrie could comment on as well, working with the, Canadian Standards Association. We do we are taking that to account. Good example of that is the National Building Code, which for so many years, probably since the start of, of codes used, 1500 millimeters, turning, circle as, as the, Guide to space, special needs that's been actually bumped up to 1700 millimeters.

00:12:27:19 - 00:12:51:24

Ron Wickman

And if I'm not mistaken, the Canadian standards actually is somewhere around 21 or 2200 mm that there that they're



recommending. So it definitely is. It's it's definitely changing, but it's, it's always slow to, to get adopted and, and for those of us working in the field, I think we, we're a little bit ahead of the game.

00;12;51;24 - 00;13;13;01

Ron Wickman

So we're generally trying to convince our are like me as an architect, myself as an architect, trying to convince my clients to actually not think of minimum standards, but think of of what things might look like 20 years from now or 30 years from now and, and anticipate that, we need more. We need more space for people to use wheelchairs.

00;13;13;03 - 00;13;34;08

Ron Wickman

And we need to consider the needs of people with low vision and who are blind, and people who are, hard of hearing and, and deaf. So, so all of those things, very few of us actually have the as designers have that skill set to, to really talk about it in a sort of in depth, in depth way.

00;13;34;10 - 00;13;56;04

Karen Brown

Right. Carrie, I assume you concur with, some of the things that Ron has said, if not all of them. Can you talk to us a little bit about how standards are brought into being or changed to begin with? Because I think a lot of us really don't understand the process and the hurdles that you have to overcome.

00;13;56;06 - 00;14;19;18

Carrie Anton

Well, I can only speak from what we've done with the built environment standard for federally regulated buildings. And so we started with a seed document, and some standards start with just the stakeholder group. That would be the technical committee, and they just start from scratch. Whereas we wanted to do an environmental scan to see what is out there in different countries across Canada.

00;14;19;20 - 00;14;45;15

Carrie Anton

Where could we be, improving and just adding on and making the standard better? Rather than just starting from scratch? So the first part is starting with the environmental scan, what's available, what's going on in different places, and then you go through a bunch of review of, of the current standards and then creating them. And so the seed document stage and that whole beginning part took a long, long time.

00:14:45:18 - 00:15:05:07

Carrie Anton

And then we, moving forward after we sort of made the adjustments and edits and added lots of things to the built environment standard, and it goes to public review. And then that's where the the public gets to comment on different pieces of the standard. And we received over 800 comments from the public when we went to our phase one review.

00:15:05:10 - 00:15:26:08

Carrie Anton

And then we are now in the process of phase two, which is, taking into consideration those suggestions, if we didn't make them in phase one and then going through and re adjusting and editing and, adding diagrams and a whole bunch of things that weren't in phase one, which we knew, but it has to be a very phased approach.

00:15:26:08 - 00:15:47:20

Carrie Anton

We can't rush into an accessibility standard because we're going to miss something if we do that. And I think in a lot of cases, there's a lot of different committees. You know, for the national Building Code for CSA, there's so many different people having their, comments and their contributions that this particular standard with Accessibility Standards Canada, we want to make sure that we hit it all.

00:15:47:20 - 00:16:04:26

Carrie Anton

And so we're heading into phase two. We're making the adjustments. We're going to have public review again and then take that to the CEO, who then presents it to the Prime Minister, hopefully become legislation. And that's that's going to be, you know, two years from now, the whole planning process. So it does take a while.

00;16;04;28 - 00;16;11;07

Karen Brown

How often our standards reviewed in this sort of fashion.

00;16;11;10 - 00;16;27;06

Carrie Anton

Right. Can probably corroborate with what this is. But like the national building code wasn't until last year wasn't, done like since 2015. And then before that it was 2007. So it could be decades between.

00;16;27;08 - 00;16;44;22

Karen Brown

Right. And that's a lot of change that can happen in that many years. Right? When you did your environmental scan, dare I ask where Canada sat in terms of forward thinking in the world?

00;16;44;24 - 00;17;12;20

Carrie Anton

Pretty well, in my opinion. It was not as forward thinking as I thought it would be. There were a lot of user guides out there, but there weren't a lot of actual standards. And so each municipality might make their user guide. Ontario had a good base, and, and and such. But as Ron indicated, I mean, some of the, the terminology and the measurements were just antiquated for like a manual wheelchair, which is not the case now.

00;17;12;20 - 00;17;26;26

Carrie Anton

So what we're trying to do is be innovative and evidence based now to create an informed standard and, and make sure that as many Canadians as possible are represented in it and see themselves benefiting from it.

00;17;26;28 - 00;17;43;10

Karen Brown

Right, right. And what would you like to see happen? What what perhaps won't be able to be accomplished with this review that you would like to see down the road in the next review?

00;17;43;12 - 00;18;04;10

Carrie Anton

That's a really interesting question because we're we're just in starting phase two. Everything is possible, in my opinion. And as chair of the committee, you know, I really try to, to make sure that people are thinking outside the box and thinking of the future. Considering the industry, considering research, considering what research needs to be done, to find the information that we need.

00;18;04;10 - 00;18;19;09

Carrie Anton

So, we're, we're doing parking. We're adding we added that to phase two. In so many other areas. So I don't think we're at a stage right now to say, what can't we do in this phase? It's what are we going to do in this phase?

00;18;19;11 - 00;18;20;16

Karen Brown

Right.

00;18;20;18 - 00;18;21;16

Carrie Anton

Yeah.

00;18;21;18 - 00;18;46;23

Karen Brown

That's fair, that's fair. Ron, let's have you weigh in on this. If if the world were perfect from your perspective, is there a standard or two that you could speak to that may not hit the mark with the current review? I mean, you must know of something that needs to be extended far beyond what will logically be considered.

00;18;46;26 - 00;18;52;06

Ron Wickman

Yeah. I yeah, my I have a lot of I have a lot of thoughts.

00;18;52;06 - 00;18;54;14

Karen Brown

So, I knew you would.

00;18;54;17 - 00;19;19;26

Ron Wickman

I, I, I've been, sort of making a few notes here as Carrie has been talking. So I just want to backtrack a little bit. And just comments on the environmental scan issue. One of the things that I've had the, benefit of being able to participate in is, a project that's, coming out of Hong Kong.

00;19;19;26 - 00;19;49;21

Ron Wickman

So, a group in Hong Kong has been tasked with updating their accessibility standards from, I believe it's 2008. And so they're there. So rather than traveling all over the world, to, see for themselves, they've, they've asked, experts from different parts of the world to, participate in feeding them with information about what's happening in their countries.

00;19;49;24 - 00;20;35;06

Ron Wickman

So what I've been able to see in the last year and a little bit here now is, is what is happening, around the world and, every, every country has a, has a slightly different, focus and certainly different attitudes towards, towards the issues of standards and, and persons with disabilities. Canada. I it's fair to say Canada is, is at the higher end of, of public attitudes and, and certainly the desire to make, the built environment more accessible for people with disabilities.

00;20;35;09 - 00;21;09;29

Ron Wickman

Part of the problem with that is there's just not enough critical mass of understanding. So there's the, there's not enough people out there that have the expertise to feed, the politicians and other

decision makers with the information that they need to help, help guide their thinking. That's that's one part of it. The, the just general attitudes of, of, the way our society sees, our citizens, just every citizen.

00;21;10;01 - 00;21;37;16

Ron Wickman

And then the other thing that's always made it hard in this world, of disability and improvements to the built environment is it costs money, especially when you talk about making things wheelchair accessible. Just takes more space. You have to, you know, upgrade a building with washroom upgrades and adding ramps and so on. It costs money. And, that's where you get a lot of pushback from from people.

00;21;37;16 - 00;21;56;11

Ron Wickman

It's like, well, if it's going to cost so much more money, maybe we shouldn't do it that, that, that kind of thing. So certainly in Hong Kong, they, they look, they look at us in Canada and just go, well, you guys are just so huge, just such a big country. You can just build really big things and have lots of space.

00;21;56;11 - 00;22;29;10

Ron Wickman

And, you know, they're the average size of, of a dwelling in Hong Kong is 44m<sup>2</sup>. So the 400ft<sup>2</sup> and they, they just they kind of said, like it's going to be really hard to make bathrooms bigger. Given that, the size of our, our average dwellings are so small, so they, they have to be much more innovative in the way that they create space and use space and such, such a dense, part of the world.

00;22;29;13 - 00;22;54;12

Ron Wickman

One of the things that I, certainly I've learned over the years is different countries have a different focus. So when it comes to people with low vision and people are blind, by far Japan is the leader in that area. And they have a long history of, of really, focusing on especially wayfinding. Wayfinding for, for people with low vision.

00;22;54;12 - 00;23;16;11

Ron Wickman

So, tactile, tactile, warning, indicators are everywhere in the built environment, both indoors and outdoors. So, a lot of people in Canada would find it odd to see some kind of tactile path leading to a set of stairs because you would think, well, what can somebody in a wheelchair do that, a set of stairs.

00;23;16;11 - 00;23;46;27

Ron Wickman

But they're not designed for people in wheelchairs that are designed for people who use canes and people with, with low vision. So they're they're everywhere. And, maybe Japan isn't so great when it comes to making things better for people in wheelchairs. I know my colleagues in Malaysia said they look to Vancouver as the sort of the gold standard in Canada in general, but, specifically in Vancouver was was talked about.

00;23;46;27 - 00;24;14;03

Ron Wickman

So Malaysia looks to our code and our standards to help guide theirs. Ireland and most of England, they do a lot of research and they, they, they have some pretty, pretty good standards. Again, especially when it comes to people with low vision, and issues around wayfinding, much more than we do here in Canada.

00;24;14;06 - 00;24;33;22

Ron Wickman

United States is, I mean, we that's who we generally look to Canada. We look to what's happening in the States and the research that they do. And the Americans with Disabilities Act. And we we tend to adopt what they come up with. If I had my way, I would I would look more to the rest of the world and what they're doing.

00;24;33;25 - 00;25;01;07

Ron Wickman

In different parts of the world, Scandinavia is at quite a high standard for, for their built environment. Most of northern Europe

really is, Australia is great. And that has a lot to do with the, the 2000 Paralympics that really raise people's awareness, towards, towards accessibility. So, so every country is, is, you know, really trying hard.

00;25;01;07 - 00;25;13;23

Ron Wickman

But I think we all face the same problem in that, a lot of times it just comes down to political will and money and that people tend to shut down when it costs money.

00;25;13;25 - 00;25;29;04

Karen Brown

Right now, can we get carried away in on that? Because, Carrie, in addition to your business experience, you are a very well-traveled individual. So what do you feel we have to learn from other countries and their experiences with accessibility?

00;25;29;06 - 00;26;01;02

Carrie Anton

So I definitely echo what Ron has said, that wayfinding and the needs of people with sight loss needs to be considered more of around the world. I've seen it in Australia, in, Sweden, in London, and in Spain as well. They have a large population, with ANSI there and the World Blind Union. So those needs of wayfinding and the right path and high contrast and visual markers as well as tactile markers is really key.

00;26;01;06 - 00;26;12;05

Carrie Anton

So I appreciate listening to the stories that Ron says, because he seems to be a lot more traveled where I don't go. And that could be. So thank you. Ron for that. Yeah.

00;26;12;08 - 00;26;35;14

Karen Brown

Ron and I were having a conversation, just recently with, a mutual colleague, who suffers from sight loss as well. And she was talking about some kind of channel. Now, Ron, was this in Asia or in Europe? Some kind of channel that her cane could follow? But it



presented, although it was a good thing and led her where she needed to go.

00;26;35;16 - 00;26;44;10

Karen Brown

The problem it presented was that now she didn't have any protection against what might be directly in front of her. Are you familiar with that, Carrie?

00;26;44;12 - 00;27;06;19

Carrie Anton

I totally am. I have seen that in Athens, and it's also in Asia. But in Athens I had someone grabbing my cane, putting it in the track and the channel, and he's showing me, like, you know, physically where this was. And I was like, I don't want to go in the gutter. What are you doing? And, because I didn't I wasn't aware of what that was at all.

00;27;06;19 - 00;27;28;21

Carrie Anton

So, but yeah, I found that right in, in central Athens. So it helped me get around. And there was no garbage bins, posts, trees, people, benches. Nothing was in the way I could just travel safely. But then again, encountering these other things like what else was in, like, this gutter like channel, right? Yeah.

00;27;28;23 - 00;27;52;25

Ron Wickman

Right. If I can, if I, if I can just, comment on that too, because I this is something that I was hoping that Kerry could talk a little bit more about as well. From from somebody who uses those, tactile warning, tiles. So, so they become a big part of, of our, national building code.

00;27;52;28 - 00;28;22;15

Ron Wickman

And we, we are talking about them a lot. More here in, in Canada and where you, where generally in, for Canadians, where you would see the, the tactile warning surface indicators are at curb cuts, curb ramps. So there are those yellow tiles. They have what

they call truncated domes and their bumps basically. So if you are using a cane, you'll hit those bumps.

00;28;22;15 - 00;28;55;12

Ron Wickman

And that'll tell you, that you're, you're at the corner, or that something, something is ahead of you that you have to pay attention to. And then there's, there's tiles that that aren't bumps. They're like rectangles. So they create this channel, as we've been talking about, that you can get your cane into and then you it guides you, essentially to a point where you'd hit the tiles with the bumps and that would tell you that you have to stop or turn, 90 degrees one way or the other.

00;28;55;14 - 00;29;00;11

Ron Wickman

So, somebody the other day, I was talking to they called them TWISIs

00;29;00;18 - 00;29;03;27

Carrie Anton

Yes. The tactile indicator sign.

00;29;04;00 - 00;29;28;18

Ron Wickman

Yeah. TWSI and, I think I think a lot of Canadians don't really understand what they are. And that's where where I was saying, like, they're everywhere in, in, in Japan now, I haven't been to Japan, but I just, I know people that have and I, I've done my research there because I was fascinated as to why it's it's like such a big deal there.

00;29;28;21 - 00;29;44;22

Ron Wickman

Well, it's but I also, I also sort. Sorry, Carrie, I just and this is where you can comment. I've always been curious as to what people who actually use canes, what they think of these, warning systems in these, these pathways that are created.

00;29;44;25 - 00;30;16;27

Carrie Anton

Well, definitely. There's they're very important. There's two different types of that. You say TWSIs. One is like the directional which points you in the direction. The other is the warning one, which is the bump and the dots that you see at subway stations and train stations and platforms and curves. And we don't see a lot of the directional ones, unless you're in a big square, or at least those are the things that we need to help people understand is we need these directional ones in a large open space.

00;30;16;29 - 00;30;36;28

Carrie Anton

But what what I've also seen is the shortcut. And so if you consider a curb and you have a crosswalk and you go one way and the other way, like basically 90 degrees, right? They put the TWISI, the warning TWISI all the way around that curb surface. And so that is not providing any directional support for someone.

00;30;37;01 - 00;30;57;29

Carrie Anton

And so what I've asked some people to do and some designers and developers is to break up that TWISI so that it actually is a bit of a directional, approach as well, so that someone knows what the crosswalk is, because otherwise I would just find that tactile warning TWISI that goes around the whole curb, the whole roundness of it.

00;30;58;07 - 00;31;21;02

Carrie Anton

And I would walk diagonally into traffic if I wasn't. We're kind of diagonally right. So we need to have the mix of both or use the ones that we are using, like warning, indicators better, right? Don't save the money and just put it around the whole curb because that doesn't help someone find where is the crosswalk. Right?

00;31;21;05 - 00;31;35;02

Karen Brown

Right. And all of this presumes people who are using canes. But that's just not always the case. Sometimes there is a dog guide, or there is some other kind of mechanism that they're using.

00;31;35;04 - 00;31;58;11

Carrie Anton

Exactly that. Let's take our audible signals, for example. Right. Here in the city that I live, there's a large print and it says press for audible signal A if someone needs the audible signal has no sight, they're not going to see that. Right. So how do they know where the post is? How do they know what to do that you have to hold it in before it clicks.

00;31;58;13 - 00;32;23;14

Carrie Anton

Just we can also do many different things, like in a in transit. Most cities have the train doors open when the train arrives or the bus door opens when the bus arrives. But for some strange reason, then the city that I live, you have to find the button again. So this is. It's also not just the standard, but it's also the implementation of it and the training and the technology that we're using.

00;32;23;17 - 00;32;38;18

Carrie Anton

And I don't want to, you know, beat up the city that I live in, but it's a great example of what and what not to do. And I know they're working on it. And they have an accessibility plan like many cities do. They have a users guide for more accessible, work. You know, places in the city.

00;32;38;23 - 00;32;41;24

Carrie Anton

But wow, sometimes it just missed the mark. Right?

00;32;41;26 - 00;32;52;17

Karen Brown

Right, right. And it shows how far we have to go. Ron, is there anything that you would like to talk about in this regard before we just do a little switch of the topics here?

00;32;52;19 - 00;33;27;01

Ron Wickman

Yeah, because I think what Carrie raised is, is in my mind, the big disconnect in, in all of this is we don't we don't actually ask the people who use these, these, features, how to use them or how best to use them. And so we have architects and, and urban planners and landscape architects and city planners, city staff, whatever, like all these people that are often, very much able bodied and and they don't they don't ask.

00:33;27;01 - 00:33;55;15

Ron Wickman

They just assume that they know better. Right? And, you really I couldn't I couldn't emphasize it enough that that we need to engage, people who actually use these features way more than we we do. And we just can never assume that we know we know better. Right? So that's always how I've been successful as a designer is I never think that I know better than the people who use the spaces.

00:33;55;15 - 00:34;15;12

Ron Wickman

And it doesn't matter whether I'm talking about somebody with a disability or not. I mean, if I have a client that I'm designing a house for, I, I don't I've never been asked to do, like a Ron Wickman special, like, just give us something that, you know, is your, your signature architecture. I'm like, I don't know what that is.

00:34;15;12 - 00:34;38;17

Ron Wickman

I design for you. I want it to be custom fit your lifestyle and and your attitudes and your beliefs. So I don't understand when designers just design for other designers. Or do they think they know better? You really have to engage, people who who use the space right? So when it comes to people with disabilities, you really have to ask those questions.

00:34;38;17 - 00:35;16;02

Ron Wickman

And one other thing I just wanted to point out was just, with these tactile markers and how, even, even some of the better countries, I think, and better cities, kind of get it wrong is, like Copenhagen is

considered, you know, sort of the great city in the world right now for for gay culture and accessibility and, and climate and, and they have this amazing bike system now that's taken, you know, about 20 years to, create this culture.

00:35:16:04 - 00:35:39:02

Ron Wickman

Excuse me, a bikes. And one of the things I noticed when I was there last year in July is now they put all the bike racks where the, tactile warning indicator, wayfinding devices are. So now they now they just get interrupted by bike racks. So like, clearly a lot of people there don't even understand what these things, these things are.

00:35:39:02 - 00:35:42:02

Ron Wickman

And then the purpose of them. Right. So.

00:35:42:05 - 00:35:45:07

Karen Brown

Carrie is reacting quite strongly as you're talking.

00:35:45:09 - 00:36:04:29

Ron Wickman

Yeah. You really need I know you really need to educate people and make them understand, not just like install these, put these in, but, like, why are you actually doing it? And it'd be nice to have people, be nice to have people ask those questions when they're actually doing the work. Right, and saying, why are we doing this?

00:36:05:02 - 00:36:13:09

Ron Wickman

And then and then I'm more than happy to explain. I'm sure Carrie would be more than happy to explain. Yeah, they're they're here for this reason.

00:36:13:12 - 00:36:38:10

Karen Brown

So in terms of explaining things, if I can just switch topics a little bit there, there might be some explaining to be done in the next

couple of years because we have elections coming up, municipal, provincial, at least in Ontario, provincial. I'm not quite sure about Alberta, but also, federal. So there will be a lot of politicians that we can ask questions of through the process.

00:36:38:16 - 00:37:04:17

Karen Brown

Of course, municipally, that is the lowest level of politics. That is the closest to the people and probably where we can look to accessibility issues to be addressed more personally. But because health care, is in the provincial realm, then there are some good questions to be asked. Then what should we be looking for in terms of statements from our politicians, Carrie?

00:37:06:29 - 00:37:37:14

Carrie Anton

I would be looking for statements around accessibility, affordable housing, a lot of the similar things that, people without disabilities, look for, but it impacts people with disabilities more like housing, income, health, access to places and spaces because, people with disabilities are financially disadvantaged. Right. There's the transportation. There's not a lot of transportation.

00:37:37:14 - 00:38:15:04

Carrie Anton

There's possibly more medical that's required. So access to places is important. So I need my politicians, whether it's municipal, provincial or federal, to talk the language that I need to know that my needs and my value, I'm valued. My contribution to society is valued. And so I access equity, health care, assured income, right. And the disability tax credit, disability benefit, all these things, they need to actually say things to me that that mentioned those words and what it means to them, rather than just giving lip service and passing passing it on.

00:38:15:06 - 00:38:20:11

Karen Brown

Right. Ron, do you want to weigh in on that?

00:38:20:13 - 00:38:45:08

Ron Wickman

Yeah. I totally agree with Carrie. What I and, I think anybody that's heard me talk before, would be, would be familiar with the fact that my dad was a politician here in, in Edmonton and Alberta. So a city councilor for nine years, a Liberal MLA for 12. So I grew up around the, the politics of, of things.

00;38;45;08 - 00;39;17;12

Ron Wickman

And, and I do know that, somebody can make a big difference. If, if their voice is loud enough and, and they're persistent. So, that's where my dad was able to do is, is, convince people that these are important issues and something needs to be done. And, and I guess as I, am getting older and, thinking that I might not be here, while I'm on the other half of, I've lived 60 years, I'm not making another 60.

00;39;17;12 - 00;39;38;20

Ron Wickman

So I'm thinking to myself, like, I'd like to see people actually take action. And I think that's what Carrie is saying is, let's not just talk about it. Let's actually do things right. And I find too often it's too easy to say, well, yeah, we, we, you know, we'll do another study, we'll, we'll do it. We'll we'll find out what the needs are.

00;39;38;22 - 00;40;07;11

Ron Wickman

We know what the needs are. We know what to do. We just have to do it now. So that's that's what I'd be looking for. Is to make it a priority. And I think I think, our prime minister, our premier, our mayor, these, these individuals that are in power, the just by talking about it, to the media and making an issue, starts to get people going.

00;40;07;11 - 00;40;26;13

Ron Wickman

Oh, this is this is important. We need to do something and and then and then turn that into action. Right. So I, I just think it's one of those things that often throughout my life I've, I've seen it kind of



the ebb and flow of that being important and maybe less important, but it never seems to be like a high priority item.

00:40:26:13 - 00:40:54:06

Ron Wickman

We always have something else in, in our, in our world that, that we're focusing on, like the pandemic. Now we're dealing with climate change and fires in Alberta that are just, horrific at times. But here, again, you know, what happens when people had to exit Jasper quickly? Was there a plan for people who who were blind and don't drive or people who are elderly, people who were quadriplegic?

00:40:54:06 - 00:41:23:23

Ron Wickman

What was the plan to get, those individuals out of Jasper very quickly? I don't think there was anything. And then how do we rebuild with, with, our seniors and people with disabilities in mind? So that's that's I sound like, a woodpecker on somebody's brain because I just keep talking about this. But that's what I'm looking for is, is somebody actually, like, do something, not just I don't need more standards and more codes.

00:41:23:23 - 00:41:29:13

Ron Wickman

I need, I need built, built things that that people actually use.

00:41:29:15 - 00:41:53:13

Karen Brown

Right? I feel like it's not uncommon for federal money that is transferred to the provinces to be tied to key performance indicators, and I don't know why they can't do that around accessibility. Would that, Carrie, is that something that is even possible?

00:41:53:16 - 00:42:18:19

Carrie Anton

Oh, any KPI is adjustable, right, and I think it's important to add it. Add them. If Alberta was to focus on accessibility, which, which is a provincial, item. So I just want to back up a little bit. When we

come out with a national standard, it doesn't mean it's going to be adopted. It has to be adopted by the province and the provincial building code.

00:42:18;21 - 00:42:43;06

Carrie Anton

Right. And so the provinces can make a difference by having measurements and having monitoring as well as punitive measures, if that's needed. A bit more of a stick. Right. Because we, we already have seen in accessibility and in the industry that the carrot doesn't always work. You appeal to people's emotions to, things that are just not, prioritized.

00:42:43;08 - 00:43:13;09

Carrie Anton

And so, definitely accessibility should be a priority for in Alberta, for example, like Ontario and so many provinces, I think eight out of ten provinces now have accessibility legislation. Why why what's what are the holdouts for the other provinces that don't like Alberta, where if you want to consult about something, you have to look at 20 different legislative acts to figure out housing and different pieces of it accessibility, guide dogs, etc..

00:43:13;09 - 00:43:43;26

Karen Brown

So, right, right. Perfect. Well, we could probably go on talking about many of these subjects for hours and hours. Carrie, you are so fascinating. Let me give the first, last word to you as our special guest today. Is there anything that you would like to leave our listeners with? That is so important for them? As elections are looming, as standards come up that they can comment on?

00:43:43;28 - 00:44:09;25

Carrie Anton

Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate the opportunity to to share my passion with you and with your public. And I think what's really important to me is, and I'd ask of everyone is to think of others and do other design. And while we're thinking of our own needs, that's all I can say is just give everybody, a bit

more thought when we do our design, our development of our buildings and our spaces.

00:44:09;27 - 00:44:14;28

Karen Brown

Right. Ron how about you? What would you like to say as the last word?

00:44:15;00 - 00:44:48;06

Ron Wickman

I actually, want to circle back to where we started, Paralympics. And this is like, on a real positive note to, I remember trying to access, film footage and news about the 2000, Paralympics, and I remember, I finally discovered it. It was on CBC at midnight every night for five minutes, and they showed highlights in five minutes.

00:44:48;09 - 00:45:09;24

Ron Wickman

And that was it. That's all I got. So I saw, you know, some things in swimming and other sports and what an amazing, couple of weeks we just had, my TV was on all the time. I work at home, so it was just always on, and I could just always see all the events and all the activities, going on.

00:45:09;26 - 00:45:41;24

Ron Wickman

The coverage is just immense now compared to what, you know, what it once was. So we really have from that perspective, we really made some progress. And, just to say, the highlight for me and the Paralympics is watching the 100 meter, dash, by people who, who have low vision are blind. And I just can't believe that two people, because you're, you're like, literally tied to somebody as the as the athlete.

00:45:42;01 - 00:46:08;14

Ron Wickman

So that person beside you has to run in sync with you and they can't cross the line before you. And it was a photo finish and you could see the two, guide runners telling the athletes to, like, stick

out their chests just right at the last second to get the not even last second, not just last snap or whatever to get that edge right.

00:46:08:14 - 00:46:27:20

Ron Wickman

And it was just a fraction of, of a second. That was the difference between the Greek runner and the Greek runner runner won. But what an amazing race. And just I can't believe it's hard enough to run on your own that fast, but to do it with somebody else, like running beside you, it just it's it's astounding.

00:46:27:20 - 00:46:54:03

Ron Wickman

And I just, I think, you know, people that watch the Olympics and then, neglected to watch the Paralympics really, really missed out on just some, amazing athletes. So it's not special anymore. It's just really good athletes that that do tremendous things, and train really hard and deserve every bit of credit that they get for being good athletes, not good athletes who also have disabilities.

00:46:54:03 - 00:46:57:00

Ron Wickman

They're just good athletes. Period.

00:46:57:03 - 00:47:16:29

Karen Brown

That is that's a really wonderful place to end this podcast. So many thanks to Carrie Anton for joining us today. It's been such an honor to have you on and to talk with you. And of course, Ron, as always, my thanks to you. To our listeners. Thank you very much again for joining us for this episode of Real Life.

00:47:16:29 - 00:47:29:12

Karen Brown

Renos : The Podcast, and we look forward to having you again.

00:47:29:15 - 00:47:32:05

Unknown