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2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In June 2005, the Ontario government took a strong stand on accessibility when it passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) into law.

The AODA lays out a comprehensive road map to make Ontario accessible to all people through the development, implementation and enforcement of new, mandatory accessibility standards for some of the most important aspects of people's lives.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

While the government is moving forward to implement the AODA, there will be a transition period where government and the broader public sector will continue to meet their obligations under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA). These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.

Under the ODA, Ontario government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are required to develop annual accessibility plans to make policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. These plans must be made available to the public. Accessibility planning efforts to date have developed a strong foundation for the development of accessibility standards that will mean real and effective change.

This document is the fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-2006 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-2007 so that no new barriers are created and, over time, existing ones are removed.

This ministry intends to build on its achievements by implementing initiatives that support the government's commitment to continue to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province where people of all abilities have a chance to fully achieve their potential.

Message from the Minister



As we celebrate the first anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), I'm pleased to present the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Plan for 2006-2007. My ministry is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers in the workplace.



This is the ministry's fourth annual accessibility plan. It showcases some of our achievements and highlights our continued commitment to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with us, regardless of whether they are staff, members of the general public or ministry stakeholders.

Here at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we have demonstrated leadership in improving accessibility by educating our staff and ensuring that our public consultations and meetings are accessible. Our City of Toronto and Building Code consultations in 2005-2006 met accessibility requirements, both at public meetings and online, providing all Ontarians an equal opportunity and a voice in issues that affect their everyday lives.

As well, we continue to work within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

The new 2006 Building Code includes over 700 technical changes including increased accessibility requirements for buildings. Building practitioners, including building officials and designers, must pass examinations to evaluate their knowledge of the Building Code, including accessibility requirements.

Our objective is to ensure that people with disabilities are able to: have easy access to ministry information; participate in our policy consultations; and obtain the services of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to send them using the contact information at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

The Honourable John Gerretsen
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Report on Achievements

2005 - 2006 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing, planned commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Commitment

The ministry will continue the review of potential regulatory amendments to the Building Code that would enhance barrier-free access to buildings.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry has actively consulted on the Building Code, including accessibility issues. MMAH is working with the Accessibility Directorate in making amendments to the Building Code that would enhance barrier-free access to buildings.

The [new edition of the Building Code](#) was released on June 28, 2006. Most of the requirements, including enhanced barrier-free provisions, will take effect December 31, 2006.

MMAH is also working with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario on the establishment of a Built Environment Standards Development Committee, as part of the AODA process. It is anticipated that the committee will develop further provisions to support barrier-free access to buildings. The ministry will continue to review barrier-free access requirements through the Committee process in Winter 2007.

Commitment

Provide training and examine building practitioners on the barrier-free provisions of the Building Code.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The Building Code requires building practitioners, including building officials and designers, to pass examinations that

evaluate their knowledge of the Building Code within their area of practice, including barrier-free access provisions. The ministry has developed training aids targeted at helping building practitioners prepare for these examinations. Courses are available through ministry delivery agents and contain specific content on barrier-free requirements.

Commitment

Review new and existing policies to identify potential barriers to people with disabilities.

Status

Achieved.

Action and Timeframe

The following policy was reviewed in 2005-2006:

Role of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in municipal planning.

Rationale

Bill 51, The Proposed Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006, was introduced on December 12, 2005.

OMB Reform is part of a broader [Planning Reform initiative](#). Significant changes are proposed to both the land use planning appeal process and the Planning Act through Bill 51 to provide more planning tools to municipalities (e.g. urban design), municipal accountability on planning matters and to make the OMB more accessible to the public.

Commitment

Review new and existing acts and regulations to identify potential barriers to people with disabilities.

Status

Achieved.

Action and Timeframe

The following acts and regulations were reviewed in 2005-2006:

- Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Act, 2006
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- City of Toronto Act, 2006
- City of Ottawa Act, 1999

Commitment

Review the Planning for Barrier Free Development Guide for compatibility with the newly enacted Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Status

Ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The review commenced in September, 2005 and is ongoing. The review is expected to be complete by March 2007 to take into account government action on Bill 51.

Commitment

Ensure that Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals are considered from the perspective of those with disabilities.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action

The ministry reviews all MMAH Cabinet and Management Board submissions and operating proposals for accessibility considerations.

Commitment

Encourage understanding and sensitivity to accessibility issues within the ministry.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry continues to encourage understanding and sensitivity to accessibility issues through information sessions. In July 2005, a Lunch and Learn session was held where attendees heard from representatives from the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario and from an individual who spoke of his own experience living with schizophrenia and depression. In addition, during the year, two top stories were published on the intranet home page to raise awareness of accessibility issues: one introducing and explaining the ministry's accessibility plan, and a second announcing the new "Accessibility at MMAH" pages on the intranet. Information about the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and employment accommodation are also included in the ministry's online employee orientation materials.

Commitment

Encourage awareness of accessibility issues and identify any potential barriers by soliciting staff input and ideas. Staff input and ideas will be used to identify new commitments for the 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry continues to encourage staff to provide input on removing accessibility barriers through the suggestion box on the "Accessibility at MMAH" pages of the intranet. "Accessibility at MMAH" was recognized by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario as a best practice, and is an accessible website.

Commitment

Where feasible, the ministry will include an electronic component to ministry consultations to allow citizens who may have difficulty attending public events to participate in ministry consultations.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

Achieved in the City of Toronto consultations in June 2005 and Building Code consultations in March 2006.

Commitment

Post the accessibility of venues in advertisements or promotional material for major public events.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

Information about accessibility for major public events was included in advertising for the major City of Toronto consultation in June 2005, and other public meetings.

Commitment

All public meetings and events will be fully accessible.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

Accommodations for persons with disabilities were made available on request for major public meetings, including the City of Toronto consultation in June 2005.

Commitment

Have a practice in place to provide alternate formats of publications.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry's customer assistance service coordinates requests for alternate formats through Publications Ontario.

Commitment

Ensure that all future internet content is accessible as required by the ODA.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

All internet content is accessible as required by the ODA.

Commitment

Include accessible website design principles through ongoing training for web publishers.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

Accessible website design principles were included in training for 44 ministry web publishers in 2005-2006.

Commitment

The ministry will promote staff's awareness of mandatory accessibility assessment for procurements \$5000 and over by internal staff intranet site and information sessions.

Status

Achieved.

Action and Timeframe

Five information sessions were conducted across the ministry in 2005-2006.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that an accessibility assessment for people with disabilities is conducted for all procurements \$5000 and over, regardless of procurement method, and the assessment is documented on file.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

This procedure has been incorporated as one of the mandatory requirements in ministry procurement policies.

Commitment

The Ontario Shared Services' generic training on the Ontarian with Disabilities Act (ODA) will be part of mandatory training for new managers and supervisors.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

Generic training on the ODA continues to be part of the mandatory training for new managers and reference to it is included in the Managers' Orientation checklist.

One hundred percent of managers have completed the training as of August 2005.

Commitment

The ministry will continue to meet employees' and job applicants' accommodation needs within Cabinet Office, Centre for Leadership and Human and Resource Management guidelines.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry continued to meet employees' and job applicants' accommodation needs as they were identified.

Commitment

Review staff development strategies and identify potential barriers to training opportunities for personnel with disabilities.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The ministry continued to work with personnel with disabilities to address training needs as they were identified.

Commitment

Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will be incorporated into all new construction and minor renovations.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action and Timeframe

The Barrier-Free Guidelines were incorporated into the new construction arising from space reduction and various minor renovations.

Commitment

The ministry will work with landlords of buildings leased by the ministry to ensure that all hallways are clearly lit and free of clutter and that lighting in targeted facilities provides optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees with visual impairments.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action

A survey of managers in leased buildings was done. Any outstanding issues were addressed to ensure hallways are clearly lit and free of clutter and that lighting in targeted facilities provides optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees with visual impairments.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure signage in ministry buildings is written in plain language, clearly posted, readable and at an appropriate height.

Status

Achieved.

Action

The ministry has worked with landlords to ensure that signage is written in plain language, clearly posted, readable and at an appropriate height.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that construction and office redesign in ministry buildings continues to be based on good ergonomic design.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action

All ministry renovation and office redesign has been based on good ergonomic design and individual assessments have been completed and implemented.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that capital grant program projects meet the accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Status

Achieved and commitment is ongoing.

Action

The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program projects are all Building Code compliant, and therefore meet the accessibility standards of the current Building Code.

Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers in 2006-2007

In the coming year, the ministry commits to assess its acts, regulations, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer service

Commitment

Where feasible, the ministry will include an electronic component to ministry consultations to allow citizens who may have difficulty attending public events to participate in ministry consultations.

Action

Where feasible, the ministry will continue to include ODA-compliant web pages to enable people with disabilities to contribute feedback online to ministry consultations.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will post the accessibility of venues in advertisements or promotional material for major public events and will ensure that all requests for accessibility are met for public meetings and events.

Action

Information about accessibility for major public events will continue to be included in advertising and/or on the internet. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will continue to be made available upon request.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will coordinate requests for publications in alternate formats.

Action

The ministry will continue to coordinate requests for publications in alternate formats through Publications Ontario.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure an assessment will be conducted and documented on file for all procurements greater than \$5000 to identify potential barriers and ensure equal access for people with disabilities.

Action

An accessibility assessment for procurements greater than \$5000 has been listed as one of the mandatory requirements in the ministry's procurement policies.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Employment

Commitment

The Centre for Leadership and Learning's generic training on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) will continue to be part of mandatory training for new managers.

Action

Managers will be reminded in the Manager's orientation guide to complete the mandatory Centre for Leadership and Learning's generic training on the ODA.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will continue to meet employees' and job applicants' accommodation needs within Cabinet Office, Centre for Leadership and Human and Resource Management guidelines.

Action

The ministry will continue to meet employees' and job applicants' accommodation needs when they are identified, and will encourage all applicants who are selected for an interview to self-identify their accommodation needs as part of the interview process.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will review staff development strategies and identify potential barriers to training opportunities for personnel with disabilities.

Action

The ministry will continue to work with individuals as training needs are identified.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Communications and information

Commitment

The ministry will continue to encourage awareness of, and sensitivity to, accessibility issues and identify any potential barriers by soliciting staff input and ideas.

Action

The ministry will host a lunch and learn session on accessibility issues, providing updated information on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, and the standards development process. Staff input and ideas will be encouraged and used to identify new commitments for the 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will continue to update the Accessibility at MMAH pages on the intranet.

Action

The ministry will continue to work with the Accessibility Working Group to update the Accessibility at MMAH intranet pages to feature the most up-to-date information on accessibility issues, including information on the AODA and the standards development process.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that all future internet content is accessible as required by the ODA.

Action

All internet content will continue to be accessible as required by the ODA.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will include accessible website design principles through ongoing training for web publishers.

Action

Accessible website design principles will continue to be included in training for intranet and internet publishers.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Built environment

Commitment

The ministry will support the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Action

The ministry will continue to participate in the development of the transportation accessibility standard through sitting on the transportation standards development committee and will also continue to participate on the inter-ministerial committee for the Customer Service Standards Development Committee. In addition, the ministry has begun work with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario on the built environment accessibility standards development process, for which MMAH will be the lead ministry.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will provide training on enhanced barrier-free access provisions as part of the implementation of the 2006 Building Code.

Action

The 2006 Building Code includes a range of barrier-free access requirements that come into effect December 31, 2006. Public information sessions on the 2006 Code, including barrier-free access requirements will be held in August and September, 2006.

Timeframe

Fall 2006.

Commitment

Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will be incorporated into all new construction and minor renovations.

Action

Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Design Guidelines will continue to be incorporated into all new construction and minor renovations.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will work with landlords of buildings leased by the ministry to ensure that targeted facilities provide optimal safety and convenience for visitors and employees.

Action

The ministry will continue to work with landlords and staff to identify and remove accessibility barriers.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will work with the Ontario Realty Corporation to assess signage requirements in ministry buildings to ensure conformity to the new Building Code requirements coming into effect on December 31, 2006.

Action

The ministry will review the requirements of the Building Code and prepare a report outlining any requirements for signage change.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that construction and office redesign in ministry buildings continues to be based on good ergonomic design and in compliance with the Building Code.

Action

The ministry will continue to work together with individuals to ensure that their workspaces are based on good ergonomic design and are devoid of any accessibility barriers.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that capital grant program projects meet the accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Action

The ministry will ensure that the Affordable Housing Program meets the accessibility standards of the Building Code.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Acts and regulations

Commitment

The ministry will review new and existing acts and regulations to identify potential barriers to people with disabilities.

Action

The following acts and regulations will be reviewed in 2006-2007:

- Planning Act
- Municipal Act
- Municipal Elections Act, as part of the standard review that is conducted after each Municipal election.
- Regulations related to the City of Toronto Act and the Municipal Act

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will continue to review the Planning for Barrier-Free Development Guide for compatibility with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Action

Complete the review and where necessary, update the Planning for Barrier-Free Development Guide to reflect enactment of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and to take into account government action

on Bill 51.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The ministry will review new and existing policies and programs to identify potential barriers to people with disabilities.

Action

The following program will be reviewed in 2006-2007:

Affordable Housing Program.

Timeframe

March 2007.

Commitment

The Ministry will ensure that Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals are considered from the perspective of those with disabilities.

Action

Ministry staff evaluate all Cabinet submissions, Management Board submissions and operating proposals which impact the MMAH mandate. If a ministry submission or proposal has ODA considerations, the ministry submits the submission or proposal to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario for review.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitments — Barriers to Be Addressed 2006-2007

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Employment accommodation

Barrier

Identification of accessibility needs of individuals who have been invited to attend an interview for a position with the ministry.

Commitment

The ministry will ensure that all applicants who have been selected for an interview for a position in the ministry are asked if they require any accommodation for the interview.

Responsibility

Organizational Effectiveness Branch.

Timeline

March 2007.

Built environment

Barrier

Difficulty finding the contact telephone numbers from the staff telephone lists located by the elevators on each floor.

Commitment

Create a standard format for staff telephone lists which specifies where they are to be located in lobby areas and how they should be set out (i.e. type and size of font etc.).

Responsibility

Corporate Planning Branch.

Timeline

March 2007.

For More Information

Questions or comments about the ministry's accessibility plan are always welcome.

General inquiry number: 416-585-7041

TTY number: 416-585-6991

1-800 number: 1-866-220-2290

E-mail: oda@mah.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.mah.gov.on.ca

Visit the [Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal](#). The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

Alternate formats of this document are available free upon request from:

[Publications Ontario](#)

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