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Ministry of Economic Development and Trade 2007-2008 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.

Five key areas have been identified for the first accessibility standards: customer service, transportation, information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

The accessible customer service regulations were approved by the Lieutenant-Governor and will come into force on January 1, 2008. An initial proposed standard on accessible transportation has been developed by the Transportation Standards Development Committee. It was posted for public review on June 27, 2007, and will be available for public comment until September 28, 2007. The Standards Development Committee that will draft the proposed information and communications standard was established and began meeting in April 2007. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 fifth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. It highlights the achievements of the 2006-07 plan and outlines the commitments for 2007-08 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



Ontario remains on track to continued growth. Economists continue to predict good economic progress for the province in 2007 and even stronger growth in 2008.

Since we took office in October of 2003, our government's comprehensive strategies to strengthen key economic sectors and position Ontario as a leading competitor in the global knowledge economy has helped create 351,500 new jobs. We are working very aggressively to generate more 'made-in-Ontario' companies that remain here, create jobs here and compete in the international marketplace. We have also established a clear presence for Ontario in key global markets that are important to our exporters.

This year marks the second anniversary of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) – legislation that will require the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living.

My ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to improving accessibility by identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government and in our relationships with our stakeholders.

An example of this work in the past year was a major ministry-wide renovation project conducted by our service management and facilities branch that brought all common areas and corridors into

compliance with the Ontario Building Code and the Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities. You will find additional examples in our ministry plan.

We continue to work with ministry staff to ensure our province is fully accessible to all Ontarians.

The Honourable Sandra Pupatello
Minister of Economic Development and Trade

Report on Achievements 2005 - 2006

Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade successfully achieved and, in some cases, surpassed commitments outlined in its' 2006/07 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report on the commitments made to prevent *new* barriers and those made to address *existing* barriers.

Prevention of New Barriers:

Customer Service:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to ensure front line staff is knowledgeable and trained in assisting clients with disabilities.

Status

Completed

Action

The Ministry continues to encourage front line staff to complete the *Centre for Leadership and Learning's Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities* e-learning course, as part of their orientation and/or ongoing professional development.

Commitment

As a part of communication of controllership updates to all staff, the Ministry will provide information about accessibility and procurement practices.

Status

Deferred

Action

The Business Planning & Finance Branch determined information about *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements should be delivered directly to staff through procurement training, rather than through e-mail. This would give the Controller and the procurement staff an opportunity to reach a more targeted audience, stimulate more discussion on accessibility, and allow staff to ask more questions.

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to review and provide alternate formats where requested (e.g. Braille).

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Communications & Public Affairs Branch has continued its review of publication formats, and worked closely with clients and/or the public to ensure accessible formats were provided whenever requested.

Commitment

The Accessibility Planning Team will continue to consult with all program areas in developing new ideas and initiatives regarding accessibility.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Accessibility Planning Team consulted with various branches throughout the year - including Communications and Public Affairs, Human Resources, and Service Management & Facilities - to look at new ways of delivering services and designing and/or equipping our space to ensure full accessibility for staff and clients. It also helped identify some areas for improvement, such as the need for increased awareness and better education across the Ministry on how to plan an accessible event.

Commitment

In the coming year the Accessibility Planning Team will raise staff awareness regarding accessibility issues by attending Branch meetings.

Status

Deferred

Action

The Accessibility Planning Team elected to defer branch presentations to next year. Ministry staff was instead invited to attend an Accessibility Awareness Lunch and Learn in November 2006. Additionally, front line staff and managers were encouraged to avail themselves of various training opportunities throughout the year, including the Centre for Leadership and Learning's e-learning course on the Ontarians With Disabilities Act and the procurement training offered by the Ministry's Business Planning & Finance Branch.

Commitment

The Ministry of Economic Development & Trade and the Ministry of Small Business & Entrepreneurship are active members of the Customer Service – Standards Development Committee (CS-SDC). This broad stakeholder committee's role is to define service delivery, as well as the requisite measures, policies, classes and timetables to ensure an equitable and realistic staged implementation. The two ministries bring broad economic development and business perspectives to the committee discussions and provide advice on issues and queries.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Ministry of Economic Development & Trade and the Ministry of Small Business & Entrepreneurship participated on the CS-SDC and assisted in the successful development of the new Customer Service Standards. The ministries will continue to have a role in the development of the other standards - excluding Transportation – and will continue to ensure clients and stakeholders are also invited to participate in the process.

Employment:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to assess its employment policies and practices to ensure compliance and accommodation procedures are applied.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Accessibility Planning Team has two Human Resource Professionals among its members. These two individuals are

responsible for the ongoing evaluation of the Ministry's employment policies and practices and for ensuring compliance and accommodation.

Commitment

We will continue to review our accommodation and ergonomic practices with new and existing employees.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Frontline managers worked closely with the Human Resources and Service Management & Facilities branches to develop and implement workplace accommodations, including: ergonomic assessment, workstation adjustment, and the purchase and installation of ergonomic devices.

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to ensure that applicants can e-mail or fax their applications directly to the Human Resources Branch, where they will be placed in the appropriate competition file.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Human Resources Branch will continue to offer applicants the option to hand-deliver, mail, fax or e-mail their resumes to the Ministry. These options are clearly indicated in all job postings.

Commitment

The Accessibility Planning Team will continue to have input from the Ministry's Human Resources Practitioners on the identification and prevention of employment barriers.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Two Human Resource Professionals are on the Accessibility Planning Team and are tasked with identifying potential employment barriers, and reviewing and recommending prevention and mitigation strategies.

Commitment

Future manager procurement training and/or learning programs will include information about barrier-free accessibility in procurement activities.

Status

Completed

Action

The Business Planning and Finance Branch held five training sessions in 2006/07 on Procurement. A total of 63 staff attended from the Ministry of Economic Development & Trade, Ministry of Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, Democratic Renewal Secretariat and Ministry of Finance. In these sessions, the requirements of the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* were discussed and attention was given to the new Ontarians With Disabilities Act Procurement Requirements Checklist. The Ministry is in the process of updating its training binder to include additional slides on this topic and will be adding the Procurement Checklist to the appendices.

Communications and Information:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to ensure all existing websites are fully accessible.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Communications & Public Affairs Branch continues to ensure all existing websites meet the criteria set out by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), also adopted by the Government of Ontario Web Committee.

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to review all new websites to ensure they meet accessibility in compliance with *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001*.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Communications & Public Affairs Branch has ensured all new Ministry affiliated websites meet the criteria set out by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), also adopted by the Government of Ontario Web Committee.

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to work with Publications Ontario in providing ministry publications in alternate formats, where requested by ministry clients and/or the general public.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Communications & Public Affairs Branch continues to work with Publications Ontario to provide alternate formats, whenever requested.

Built Environment:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to apply Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October, 2004, when assessing and renovating its premises.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities October, 2004 have been applied in the assessment and renovation of Ministry of Economic Development & Trade premises.

Acts and Regulations:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to review the *Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology Act, 1990*, Chapter M.27, to ensure appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities. As well, the Ministry will identify any ministry programs established in law that may impact on persons with disabilities.

Status

Ongoing

Action

In 2006 the *Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology Act, 1990*, was renamed the *Ministry of Economic Development and Trade Act*. Amendments to the Act were monitored to ensure issues of accessibility and/or barrier removal were considered as part of the overall amendment process.

Commitment

The Ministry will ensure that acts or regulations currently under review, or going forward, include accessibility and barrier removal

as part of the review process.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Ministry continued to support accessibility and barrier removal during the review and development of relevant acts or regulations.

Other Barriers:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to review its Accessibility Planning Team membership to ensure appropriate representation from line and corporate resources are fully sensitive to the Act and its requirements for clients, the public and employers.

Status

Ongoing

Action

Members are encouraged to regularly visit the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario website to check for updates, complete the Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities e-learning course offered by the Centre for Leadership and Learning (even as a 'refresher' each year), and attend and report back on events like the Accessibility Expo. To further enhance individual knowledge, a different member of the team is appointed as the Ministry Planning Lead each year. This individual has the opportunity to participate in accessibility planning sessions, develop the accessibility plan for the Ministry, and lead the Ministry through the approvals process. Membership is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure a good cross-section of representation and experience.

Barriers Addressed:

Customer Service:

Commitment

The Ministry will provide staff with a forum in which to increase their knowledge of accessibility and disability as well as provide an opportunity to answer questions and gain feedback.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Service Management & Facilities Branch, in conjunction with the Industry Division, delivered an Accessibility Awareness Lunch and Learn in November of 2006. Although turnout for the event was good, other formats are also being considered for 2007/08.

Employment:

Commitment

The Ministry commits to removing barriers to enable individual employees to achieve maximum functionality in the workplace.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Ministry continues to be proactive in the removal of barriers in the workplace and to making modifications that will ensure accessibility for all employees. Last year this included a Ministry-wide renovation that brought our common areas and corridors into compliance with the Ontario Building Code and "Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities" October 2004.

Communications and Information:

Commitment

The Ministry will establish a forum for staff to provide suggestions, comments or request further information about the meaning of disability and accessibility.

Status

Deferred

Action

Due to constrained resources and competing priorities, the Human Resources and Communications and Public Affairs branches elected to defer the intranet site and e-mail projects to 2007/08.

Built Environment:

Commitment

The Ministry will modify the Human Resources reception area to ensure it is fully accessible according to *Ontarians With Disabilities, 2001* requirements.

Status

Complete

Action

In 2006/07, the Human Resources reception area was modified to ensure accessibility. This involved replacing the existing single door with a knob handle, to an automated double door with wall-mounted push plates and a levered handle on the door.

Acts and Regulations:

Commitment

The Ministry will continue to review any revised and/or new acts or regulations to ensure compliance with the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001*.

Status

Ongoing

Action

The Ministry continued to monitor the revision/development of relevant acts or regulations to ensure compliance with the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001*.

Commitments for 2007/2008: Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In 2007/2008, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade 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:

- Frontline staff will be encouraged to access the “*May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities*” e-learning module, posted on the Centre for Leadership and Learning and Learning website, as part of their orientation/training.
- The importance of planning accessible meetings will be actively promoted and planning resources will be posted to the Ministry’s intranet site.
- Each division will review its programs and services on an ongoing basis to ensure they are accessible to clients and the public.
- TTY access will continue to be offered in the reception areas for Human Resources and Communications and Public Affairs; any new staff will be trained on how to operate the equipment.
- Alternate formats will continue to be offered, whenever

requested.

Employment Accommodation:

- Facilities, policies and practices will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to identify and remove (or prevent) barriers to employment and ensure every employee is able to achieve their full potential.
- Accommodating staff for a broad range of disabilities will continue to be a priority.

Communications and Information:

- Information on the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* and related accessibility programs and services will be included in new employee orientation manuals.
- All staff – not just managers – will be encouraged to access the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Maximizing the Contribution of Employees with Disabilities* e-learning module on the Centre for Leadership and Learning and Learning website.
- The importance of using the correct terminology when communicating with or discussing persons with disabilities will be actively promoted and the “*Talk About Disabilities - Use the Right Word*” guide (from the Ministry of Community and Social Service) will be posted to our intranet site.
- The visibility of the Ministry’s accessibility plans will be raised through a modification of our Internet site.

Built Environment:

- All newly built or renovated spaces will meet or exceed Ontario Building Code and “*Standards for Barrier-free Design of Ontario Government Facilities*” October 2004.
- All workspaces will be designed and equipped to accommodate employees with a wide range of disabilities and/or functional limitations.

Acts and Regulations:

- The impact, if any, of new or amended acts or Regulations on our facilities, policies, programs, practices and services will be tracked and reported on throughout the year.

Commitments for 2007/2008: Measures to Address Barriers

The Ministry of Economic Development & Trade commits to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities in the coming year. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer Service:

Barrier

Some staff may not be aware of the importance of making meetings and events accessible, or may not understand what is required to do this.

Commitment

To ensure all meetings and events are accessible for staff, clients and the public.

Responsibility

Service Management & Facilities will work together with Communications and Public Affairs to ensure our staff have access

to information and resources on planning accessible meetings and understand this is an OPS priority.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

Employment Accommodation:

Barrier

New staff and managers may not be aware of accessibility issues in the workplace.

Commitment

To increase staff awareness about the *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* and accessibility issues in general.

Responsibility

Service Management & Facilities will work with Communications and Public Affairs to develop a new web page on the intranet site to promote accessibility awareness. Additionally, they will work with Human Resources to develop an information package to be added to new employee orientation manuals.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

Communication and Information:

Barrier

Information on accessible procurement is discussed in key financial documents on the Ministry's intranet site, but this information is difficult to locate and the referenced material cannot be accessed from within the main document.

Commitment

To ensure staff is aware of *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements on accessible procurement and is using the Ontarians With Disabilities Procurement Requirements Checklist as guideline.

Responsibility

Business Planning and Finance will work with Communications and Public Affairs to ensure the guidelines and checklist have more prominence on the intranet site and that all referenced materials are "hot linked" to ensure staff will be able to access them quickly and easily.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

Built Environment:

Barrier

Some of the Ministry's regional offices may not be accessible.

Commitment

To ensure, where feasible, that all Ministry locations are accessible to staff, clients and the public.

Responsibility

Service Management & Facilities will audit the Ministry's regional offices, within their jurisdiction, to determine accessibility and make recommendations.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

Acts and Regulations:

Barrier

The impact of new legislative or regulatory changes on our business and employment practices may not be fully considered or understood because there is no formal process for tracking and reporting on these changes.

Commitment

To remain current in our knowledge of accessibility-related legislation, regulations, standards, and best practices and effectively apply those to our business and employment practices.

Responsibility

The Ministry's Legal Department will establish a method and schedule for tracking and reporting on these changes, to ensure all divisions within the Ministry remain current in their knowledge and application of accessibility-related legislation, regulations, standards and best practices.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

Other:

Barrier

Ensuring information about *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* and the annual accessibility planning process survives staff turnover and redeployment.

Commitment

To ensure staff is aware of *Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001* requirements, the importance of accessibility planning as part of the annual business cycle, and provides meaningful input into the process and the plan.

Responsibility

The Accessibility Planning Team will do more outreach in 2007/08 to ensure staff are aware of the work the Ministry is doing and understands they have representation on the Team. Additionally, the Team will prepare quarterly reports for presentation to senior management in an effort to keep them apprised of Ministry accessibility planning as part of the annual business planning cycle.

Timeframe

Ongoing for 2007/08

For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: (416) 325-6666

TTY number: (416) 325-4402

1-800 number: 1-866-668-4249

E-mail: info@edt.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.ontariocanada.com

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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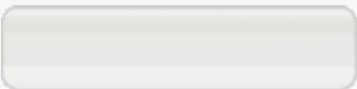
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