

Ministry of Tourism and Recreation 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

In 2001, there were an estimated 1.5 million people in Ontario with self-disclosed disabilities. This number is expected to increase as the population ages.

In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed into law. Its purpose is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province.

One of the requirements under the ODA is that Ontario government

ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities, and public transportation organizations develop annual accessibility plans to make programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

In the Speech from the Throne, delivered on November 20, 2003, the Ontario Government confirmed its commitment to working with Ontarians with disabilities on meaningful legislation that will allow them to fully participate in building a stronger province.

This document is the first annual accessibility plan for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. The plan describes improvements to accessibility that the ministry has made to date and its commitments for the balance of the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

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Report on Achievements

Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (MTR)

- The ministry established the Accessibility Planning Team with a wide ministry representation to get staff input and comments.
- The ministry's Accessibility Planning Team has partnered with the Ministry of Culture to identify synergies, and to undertake joint initiatives to champion the increased accessibility awareness of its staff and key industry partners.
- The ministry, in partnership with Publications Ontario, has developed procedures to provide its publications in accessible formats, upon request.
- Ministry managers and supervisors have already completed training in fulfilling the Government's obligations to accommodate the accessibility needs of its employees and job applicants who have disabilities.

MTR Attractions

Huronian Historical Parks

- Implemented a program for people who are visually impaired including a rope guided walk and educational component.
- Added washrooms for people with disabilities and upgraded stalls in existing washrooms.
- Installed ramps; and
- Revised website in order to make it accessible (i.e. able to use key strokes instead of mouse) font sizes and colour can be changed (for persons with a visual impairment); removal of animation and replaced with text description.

Fort William Historical Park

As part of major repairs at the Fort, particular attention was given to ensuring that buildings are barrier- free and meet the accommodation needs of people with disabilities (e.g. doors, telephones, ramps, washroom facilities, counters, signage, exhibit and rack's designs).

MTR - Tourism Agencies Unit

Participated in the ODA consultations.

Ergonomics consultants were brought in to assist with employee accommodation needs; and, In providing capital funding to its agencies and attractions, the ministry has prioritized health and safety, and enhanced accessibility needs.

Sport, Culture and Tourism Partnership Secretariat (SCTP)

The program ensures that SCTP projects funded by the province and the federal government are accessible in compliance with legislation. Such compliance is ensured through the following provisions in the SCTP Funding Agreement:

[Article XIV, Paragraph 63] Covenants, representations and warranties. (c) It has or will apply for all permits, approvals, licenses which are required in order to carry out the Project including, but not limited to, any approvals lawfully required under the Planning Act (Ontario), the Building Code Act (Ontario), the Highway Traffic Act (Ontario), the Public Transportation and Highway

Improvement Act (Ontario), the Bridges Act (Ontario) and the Environmental Laws;

Some examples of current SCTP projects that address access for people with disabilities are: Municipal Marina Improvements in the Township of St. Joseph, Recreation Infrastructure Enhancements project in The Township of Alfred and Plantagenet, and Barrier Free Access to Public Buildings project in Atikokan.

MTR-Tourism Branch

The Tourism Branch commissioned a special report on the “Impacts of the Aging” population as part of the Travel Activities and Motivation Surveys (TAMS). This special report provides insights into the changing needs of the travellers and vital information to guide tourism development in Ontario.

MTR – Sport and Recreation Branch (Sport Unit)

In 1997, a grant structure was put into place to assist Sport for Disabled Ontario (SDO) in the pursuit of an integration/inclusion study and a Sport Consultant was assigned to represent the Ministry.

In 1999 terms of reference for a research study with the ministry and SDO was signed and an action plan created. The 2000 Ontario Winter Games and the 2000 Ontario Summer Games were the first set of Ontario Games to have integrated athletes with disabilities. (Two years ahead of the action plan schedule).

Team Ontario filled their complement for both athletes with a disability and special Olympians at the 2001 Canada Summer Games (swimming) and 2003 Canada Winter Games (wheelchair basketball and figure skating).

The 2004 Ontario Winter and Summer Games have been allocated funds to expand events for athletes with disabilities – wheelchair basketball and tennis. New events being planned for the 2006 program include sledge hockey, goal ball power lifting, skiing, golf, lawn bowling, wrestling and judo.

There are currently 17 provincial sport organizations (PSOs) offering programs for athletes with a disability. Ontario filled their Team Ontario

complement for athletes with a disability and Special Olympians at the 2001 Canada Summer Games (swimming) and 2003 Canada Winter Games (figure skating and wheelchair basketball).

MTR Sport and Recreation Branch (Recreation Unit)

Recreation Development Disability Grants 2000-2002 gave Sport Alliance of Ontario (SAO) a \$30,000 grant for a project that will help Ontarians become more physically active by preparing the groundwork for an Active Living Resource Centre for people with disabilities. The project will develop a five-year business plan for the development launch and long-term sustainability of an Active Living Resource Centre for Ontarians with a disability.

MTR- Corporate Communications Branch

The MTR Internet site was made accessible to people with disabilities as of December 31, 2002. In addition, procedures were developed to provide Ministry publications (e.g. studies and reports) in alternate formats through Publications Ontario, upon request.

MTR- Ontario Travel Information Centres (OTICs)

Quality service and customer satisfaction is the primary objective of the OTIC's. This includes the assurance that buildings are barrier-free and can effectively service needs of all visitors accessing the services. Achievements to date include:

- Staff of the OTICs have renewed their commitment to ensuring quality service to all clientele, as well as enhancing their knowledge on best practices for the provision of services to visitors with disabilities.
- Successfully implemented a staff training program (for permanent staff and seasonal staff) and ensured that the Travel Counselling binder included most current information on the "Ontarians With Disabilities Act" as well as reviewed the "Accessability/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool (note: this is part of our on going training component).
- Facilitated new partnerships with regional tourism industry members to gather information/resources to determine what

“accessible” services/facilities are available to effectively communicate and promote to clients with disabilities.

- Existing OTICS were assessed to determine their level of accessibility and to identify improvements that would contribute to ensuring barrier free access.
- As new centres are being constructed, particular attention will be given to ensuring that they are barrier free and can meet the needs of travelers with disabilities (e.g. doors, telephones, ramps, washroom facilities, counters, parking spots, picnic areas, publications, signage and rack designs).

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Commitments and Strategies for 2003-2004

As part of the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation established the “Accessibility Planning Working Group.”

The Accessibility Planning Team consulted with all parts of the ministry to report on accomplishments, brainstorm, propose actions to remove barriers through an “Awareness and Education Campaign” with various activities as follows:

- Accessibility information sessions and workshops;
- “Lunch and learn” group activities;
- Branch and regional services staff meetings;
- Accessibility Planning Team’s presentations; and,
- Use of the ministry’s intranet web site.

The ministry, through the Accessibility Planning Team and various activities, will get staff input on the identification of barriers on an on-going basis.

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Methods to be taken to prevent new barriers

- Operational plans will document how planned activities will take into account the potential effect of those activities on people with disabilities. As well, the ministry will develop a framework for reviewing acts and regulations.
- The ministry will commit to maintain the Accessibility Planning Team and ensure a position is created for a person with a disability (or as an alternative work with an outside stakeholder that represents persons with disabilities).
- The ministry, through the Accessibility Planning Team and various activities, will ensure that all staff provide input on the identification of barriers on an ongoing basis. The Ministry will continue to have its Web content in accessible formats.
- The ministry will continue to work closely with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested.
- As part of new managers orientation, managers will complete the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* training.

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Business areas to be reviewed

Acts & Regulations

Acts Review Process

Will establish the process for ministry Act review to ensure that it incorporates the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

Procurement

Will implement new guidelines to ensure consideration of accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA (when distributed by Management Board Secretariat)

Policies and Programs

Human Resources

Will review the employee orientation guide to ensure new employees receive the most current information on the ODA through various existing resources/materials such as the “Accessability/Accessibilité” CD ROM training tool.

Will review job descriptions to make sure that language and content respect individuals with disabilities and that accessibility awareness is incorporated as a fundamental requirement where deemed necessary (i.e. frontline workers, Web Co-ordinator).

Grant Programs

Will review the eligibility, criteria, terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities (note: SCTP Funding Agreement could serve as a model).

Practices and Services

Information Services

Will review if there is an approved list of interpreters and signers for use at government sponsored meetings and events or conferences.

Tourism Agencies

Agencies' ODA obligations

The Tourism Agencies Unit will continue working with the Accessibility Directorate and participate in the ODA consultations to develop the guidelines for the preparation of agency policies under s.16 of the ODA.

Actions to be taken

Business Planning

- Will incorporate any or all accessibility initiatives requiring funding allocation into the business planning process.

Communications

- Will use both Internet and Intranet websites to promote that government materials and publication are available in accessible formats through Publications Ontario and will provide the toll free number.

Partnerships

- Will create a partnership with the Seniors Secretariat in order to receive information on trends and, prepare and respond to the increase in aging population as it pertains to the Accessibility Planning.
- Will continue the partnership with the Accessibility Directorate and ensure that there is consistency and clarity of ODA messaging.
- Will partner with the Accessibility Directorate to share best practices, resources, existing materials and education tools to raise the general awareness of staff and key industry partners.
- Will continue the current partnership with Publications Ontario on providing government materials and publications in a variety of formats.

Awareness and Education

- Will plan, manage, and implement an overall “Awareness and Education Campaign” to increase the knowledge of staff on

accessibility issues and to share best practices for the provision of services to employees, clients, and stakeholders with disabilities. The campaign will be undertaken through various activities (information sessions and workshops, “lunch and learn” group activities, branch and regional staff meetings, accessibility Planning Team’s presentations, and the use of the Ministry’s intranet website).

- Will track and assess, through surveys, the overall ministry learning needs while measuring the level of awareness.
- Will report performance measures as part of the accessibility plans.
- Will encourage regional staff and front-line staff to promote accessibility by sharing best practises with regional industry partners.

Improved accessibility of facilities

- Will undertake an internal audit to review ministry facilities (washrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, workstations) to identify areas that do not meet accessibility requirements, and work with the Ontario Realty Corporation.

Improved accessibility in technology

- Will deliver information session to share tools, resources, best practices and guidelines about adaptive technologies and accessible website design to employees for use when preparing content for external and internal websites (as part of the “Awareness and Education Campaign”).

Tourism Agencies Unit

- The Tourism Agencies Unit, through the consultations led by the Accessibility Directorate, will communicate with its agencies to provide updates and status on the implications of the regulations being developed pertaining to agencies’ ODA obligations.

Procurement of goods and services

- Ministry program managers and supervisors will be given guidance on having regard to accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA. All staff with responsibility for procurement will receive the "Guidelines for Implementing the Procurement Provisions of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act," once distributed by MBS.

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For more information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: (416) 326-9326

1-800 number: 1-800-668-2746 (Ontario Travel Information)

E-mail: General_Info@mtr.gov.on.ca

Ministry Web site address: www.tourism.gov.on.ca

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship's Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility. 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](#)

880 Bay Street, Toronto, ON M7A 1N8. Tel: (416) 326-5300
Out of town customers except Ottawa call: 1-800-668-9938
In Ottawa, call (613) 238-3630 or toll-free 1-800-268-8758
TTY Service 1-800-268-7095

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