

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND RECREATION

*2004-2005
Accessibility Plan*



Ontario

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Introduction

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 policies, practices, programs, services and buildings more accessible to people with disabilities. The plans must be made available to the public.

This document is the second annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. This plan highlights achievements from the 2003-04 plan and outlines new commitments to ensure that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

Ministries across government are increasing awareness of accessibility and integrating accessibility into daily business practices in a number of areas, including staff training, public information, facilities, and program and service delivery processes.

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

A Message from the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism and Recreation



As Minister of Tourism and Recreation for the Province of Ontario, I present to you my ministry's 2004-05 Accessibility Plan.

The McGuinty government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians of all abilities enjoy a high quality of life in strong communities. As a government, we are working hard to deliver positive changes in our province that will make Ontario a healthier and even more prosperous place in which to live. We want to work together with Ontarians with disabilities to institute measures that will allow them to fully participate in our society and in the important goal of building a stronger province. This fall, our government will introduce important new changes to make the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* a more effective legislative framework for people with disabilities.

The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation has been working on meeting its targets and has made several improvements within the ministry that are highlighted in this year's plan. Our 2004-05 plan also commits us to making further improvements in the coming year, and demonstrates my ministry's support for the government's efforts to make Ontario's communities vibrant and accessible to people of all abilities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Bradley". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim Bradley
Minister

Report on Achievements of 2003-2004 Planning Commitments

Commitment: Operational plans will document how planned activities will take into account the potential effect of those activities on people with disabilities.

Status: Completed—Accessibility was identified as a corporate priority and incorporated into the ministry's 2003-04 operational planning exercise.

Commitment: 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).

Status: Ongoing

Action and Timeframe: The ministry Accessibility Planning Team will be maintained in 2004/05 and onward. The ministry actively encourages staff with disabilities to volunteer to serve on the team.

Rationale: Staff anticipate that having person(s) with disabilities serving on the ministry Accessibility Planning Team will improve the quality of the Ministry's ODA plans and activities. Having an outside stakeholder representation on the team has proven difficult to organize and the ministry does not anticipate pursuing this alternative in 2004/05 and beyond.

Commitment: 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.

Status:	Ongoing
Action and Timeframe:	Accessibility Planning Team members are asked to keep their division/ branch/ units informed about accessibility issues and to set up a process to get input from staff on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities and report back.
Rationale:	MTR values the input of staff in meeting its ODA commitments.
Commitment:	The ministry will continue to have its Web content in accessible formats.
Status:	Ongoing
Action and Timeframe:	The ministry works with both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible. This work will continue in 2004/05. The ministry's tourism marketing agency the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) has ensured that the content on its recently re-launched website is accessible to persons with disabilities.
Rationale:	As technology and standards change, the ministry will continue to ensure it maintains an accessible website.
Commitment:	The ministry will continue to work closely with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested.
Status:	Ongoing
Action	

and Timeframe: During 2004/05 and on an ongoing basis ministry will handle all requests for materials in alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Rationale: By working closely with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested the ministry will be able to handle all requests for materials in alternate formats in an efficient and timely manner.

Commitment: The ministry will initiate an accessibility audit of its public/common spaces. For example, building lobbies, elevators, meeting rooms, kitchens, photocopy rooms, lunch rooms, hallways and stairwells, parking areas, signage, and other way-finding mechanisms. The audit will identify barriers to people with disabilities and provide direction in terms of priorities and timelines for barrier removal.

Status: In Progress
Audit Completed at Regional Offices.

The ministry checking with ORC to ensure that an accessibility audit of ministry offices at 900 Bay Street is current and audit has been updated to reflect accessibility improvements.

As part of major post-flood repairs at Fort William Historical Park (FWHP), 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.)

Actions taken by FWHP, to comply with ODA requirements, in 2003-04, include:

- Automatic door openers have been installed in the administration building to improve accessibility;
- 150 per cent increase in the number of wheelchairs available for use by mobility-challenged patrons;
- A new telephone system which allows for future alternate telephones to incorporate accessible services;
- Washrooms are now fully accessible;

- Counters, signage, exhibits and display rack now have modified customer service heights to improve accessibility.

Commitment: As part of new managers' orientation, managers will complete the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* training.

Status: Completed

Commitment: The ministry is reviewing the acts and regulations for which it is responsible.

Action and Timeframe: A framework has been developed to guide the review of ministry acts and regulations. This framework will be used to review all ministry acts and regulations during 2004/05. This review will be fully complete by March 31/05.

Rationale: Internal organizational issues prevented completion in 2003/04.

Commitment: Will implement new guidelines to ensure consideration of accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA.

Status: In Progress

Action and Timeframe: The ministry is taking accessibility issues into account when procuring goods and services. For example in 2003/04, ergonomics specialists were consulted to assist with employee accommodation needs in the workplace.

Changes to the current process for employee accommodation will allow new staff to request technology accessibility or accommodation needs via

an electronic form. This form will be posted on the ministry's Intranet site and available to all employees. Ongoing.

Rationale:

As a general practice, ministry staff consider accessibility issues when obtaining goods and services for the ministry. With the Government's recent release of formal procurement guidelines, ministry processes will be formalized in 2004-05 and communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Commitment:

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.

Status:

In Progress

***Action
and Timeframe:***

During 2004/05 Huronia Historical Park and Fort William Historical Park will ensure that new employees receive the most current information on the ODA through various existing resources/materials such as the "Accessability/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool.

Balance of MTR staff already has access to most current information on the ODA (e.g. "Accessability/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool). Ministry wide orientation website for all staff will include an ODA component and links to ODA website.

Rationale:

2003/04 organizational and resource issues prevented completion in 2003/04 at Huronia Historical Park and Fort William Historical Park.

Commitment:

The Ministry will review the eligibility, criteria, terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities.

Status:

In Progress

***Action
and Timeframe:***

As a condition of funding, all programs must comply with all requirements under the law, including accessibility provisions of the ODA. Applicants for assistance through the Sports, Culture and Tourism Partnerships Program (SCTP) are required to comply with the ODA. In providing capital funding to its agencies and attractions, the ministry has prioritized health and safety, and enhanced accessibility needs.

The Canada Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF) requires that as a condition of funding proponents must comply with all requirements under the law, including ODA accessibility provisions.

No review has been undertaken on Tourism Revitalization Program criteria.

The ministry has provided significant funding for sport and recreation for persons with disabilities, including:

- \$445,000 for Games funding to the City of London to host the 2004 Ontario Winter and 2004 Ontario Summer Games for able-bodied athletes and athletes with a physical disability.
- \$25,000 for the Sport Alliance of Ontario to support the 2004 Ontario Paralympic Championships, which will be hosted in Toronto on July 23 & 24, 2004.
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation provided Paralympics Ontario with a grant of \$47,100 over seven months to support the 2004 Ontario Paralympic Championships.

- Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre also received funding through the Recreation Development Fund (2003) to create and update videos that detail the types of physical activities and sports available to children and youth with disabilities, as well as document the variety of adaptive equipment available for disabled children/youth to participate in sport and recreation.

The Tourism Revitalization Program was established as a fixed duration (2 year) program to respond immediately in a crisis situation (SARS). TRP will be sunset on March 31/05. No review of the TRP will be undertaken. Should the TRP be extended or renewed, a review of eligibility, criteria, terms and conditions of contracts will be undertaken.

Commitment:

Review, in consultation with Management Board Secretariat, if there is an approved list of interpreters and signers for use at government-sponsored meetings and events.

Status:

Ongoing

***Action
and Timeframe:***

An up-to-date list of interpreters is maintained by the Communications Branch.

Rationale:

The list of interpreters will be maintained by the Communications Branch. All invitations to ministry-sponsored meetings and events will include a request for guests' accommodation needs.

Commitment:

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.

Status:

In Progress

***Action
and Timeframe:***

A letter was sent out in early 2003 to all agencies, informing them of the act. Currently, only MTR attractions (Huron Historical Parks and Fort William Historical Park) are required to comply with the ODA. Other MTR agencies are excluded, until new regulation is developed to define agencies that fall under ODA.

Rationale:

Waiting for defining regulations to the ODA.

Commitment:

The ministry will incorporate any or all accessibility initiatives requiring funding allocation into the business planning process.

Status:

Completed

Commitment:

The ministry will use websites to promote the availability of ministry publications in alternate formats through Publications Ontario.

Status:

Ongoing in 2004-2005.

***Action
and Timeframe:***

The ministry currently handles all requests for publications in alternative formats in a timely manner. All publications as well as the web pages they are posted on will indicate the availability of alternative formats.

Rationale:

By working to ensure that all publications as well as the web pages they are posted on indicate the availability of material in alternative formats the ministry will enhance the availability information for persons with disabilities.

Commitment:

The ministry will create a partnership with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat in order to receive information on trends and, prepare and respond to the increase in

aging population as it pertains to accessibility planning.

Status:

Deferred to 2004-2005.

***Action
and Timeframe:***

Organizational and resources issues will be resolved and commitment will be fulfilled by March 31, 2005.

Rationale:

2003/04 organizational and resource issues prevented completion in 2003/04.

Commitment:

The ministry will plan, manage, and implement an "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).

Status:

In Progress

***Action
and Timeframe:***

This initiative is being undertaken at the corporate level to ensure consistency. Existing forms are being reviewed to determine how they can be reworked to function as an on-line form to address accommodation, technology and accessibility requirements.

An accessible online form is being developed to allow new staff to indicate an accessibility or accommodation need in relation to technology. This will mean software/hardware will be available to them on their first day of work. As well, a technical support specialist will be available to troubleshoot, test and support these needs.

The ministry proposes to fulfill the intent of the awareness and education component of this commitment by incorporating ODA information exchange opportunities into MTR's regular "all staff" meetings (see 2004/2005 Commitments).

Rationale:

2003/04 organizational and resource issues prevented completion in 2003/04.

Commitment:

The ministry will deliver an 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.

Status:

In Progress

***Action
and Timeframe:***

The timing, format, location and final content of information session is currently being revised. The commitment will be fulfilled by incorporating ODA information exchange opportunities into MTR's regular "all staff" meetings (see 2004/2005 Commitments).

Rationale:

Organizational and resource issues prevented completion in 2003/04.

Commitments and Strategies for 2004-2005

Legislative Requirements

- Commitment:*** The ministry will commit to maintaining the Accessibility Planning Team
- Action:*** An executive lead will be appointed to ensure that the Planning Team meets on a monthly basis.
- Accessibility planning will be added to the Ministry Executive Committee activity-tracking tool (Initiatives Tracking Record) to ensure that ministry management are informed of planning ODA commitments and progress.
- Timeframe:*** Beginning in 2004-05 and ongoing
- Commitment:*** The ministry will encourage all staff to provide input on the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to people with disabilities on an ongoing basis.
- Action:*** Accessibility Planning Team members will be asked to keep their division/ branch/ units informed about accessibility issues and to set up a process to get input from staff on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities, and report back.
- Timeframe:*** 2004-2005
- Commitment:*** The ministry will ensure that new managers understand the ministry's ODA obligations.

Action:	As part of all new managers orientation, managers will complete the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 training.
Timeframe:	2004-2005 and ongoing.
Commitment:	Provide the public with TTY access to the ministry.
Action:	The ministry will explore options for the establishment of TTY access to the ministry (including sharing of TTY services among multiple ministries) and establish a project plan to ensure installation of TTY facilities in the ministry by the end of the fiscal year.
Timeframe:	2004-2005
Commitment:	Keep staff up-to-date on ministry accessibility plans and implementation progress.
Action:	Create an ODA section on the ministry intranet that would include ministry accessibility plans, reports on implementation, resources, related links and a feedback form that will allow staff to anonymously identify possible barriers and make suggestions for removing barriers.
Timeframe:	Fiscal year 2004-2005 and ongoing
Commitment:	All ministry financial, program and policy planning processes will take into account the potential effect of ministry activities on people with disabilities.
Action:	Accessibility will continue to be considered in the 2005-06 and future years' policy, program and results –based planning processes.
Timeframe:	2005-2006 and future years.

Commitment:

The ministry will continue to work to make public/common spaces accessible at all ministry offices as opportunities arise. Ministry will check with ORC to ensure that an accessibility audit of 900 Bay Street is current and audit has been updated to reflect accessibility improvements as part of its commitment to initiate an accessibility audit of its public/common spaces.

A particular opportunity exists at the Fort William Historical Park as the facility continues to restore itself following recent flooding.

Action:

The ministry will take advantage of available opportunities to make public/common spaces accessible at all Ministry offices.

In 2004/05 Fort William Historical Park will introduce a new visitor wagon, to be pulled by a team of horses, which will include easy access for mobility-challenged persons. The number of wheelchairs available for the use of patrons with mobility impairment will be increased by up to 4 and 5 chairs. Walkway and roadway surfaces within the park will be improved by providing hard surfaces to enhance accessibility for mobility-challenged persons.

Between two and three automatic door openers will be installed in the Park's public and work areas.

As part of ongoing flood mitigation projects, all new facilities will be designed and built to meet Ontario Building Code and ODA specifications,

Completion of a new website to ODA standards.

Timeframe:

Fiscal year 2004-2005

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

The ministry will utilize its act and regulation review framework to guide the review of ministry acts and regulations with respect to accessibility issues.

Action:

The Tourism Policy, Sport and Recreation and Legal Branches will cooperate to undertake the review of appropriate acts and regulations.

The ministry will review the following acts and regulations:

- Community Recreation Centres Act
- Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre Corporation Act
- Ministry of Tourism and Recreation Act
- Niagara Parks Act
- St. Lawrence Parks Commission Act
- Ottawa Congress Centre Act

Other Ministry Acts and Regulations (e.g. Ontario Place Corporation Act, St. Clair Parkway Act and the Tourism Act) are not up for review in 2004/05.

Timeframe:

2004-2005

Policies***Commitment:***

Review eligibility criteria, terms and conditions of contracts for grant programs to incorporate accessibility for people with disabilities.

Action:

The ministry will request the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) to review its TEMP and IPPP grant programs and grant applications for accessibility barriers.

The Tourism Revitalization Program grant programs and grant applications for accessibility barriers will be reviewed if the TRP is extended beyond its current sunset date of March 31, 2005.

The ministry notes that persons with disabilities are a target group of the Active 2010 initiatives and all sport and recreation programs will be reviewed with an eye to ensuring that they are fully accessible.

Timeframe: 2004/2005

Commitment: The ministry will implement new guidelines to ensure consideration of accessibility in all procurement activities, as required under section 5 of the ODA.

Action: As part of its normal daily business operations, MTR will consider accessibility in the procurement process that is specific to this ministry and will implement the Procurement Guidelines. Formal processes and training will be communicated to staff to ensure compliance and consistency.

Timeframe: 2004/2005

Programs and Services

Commitment: Provide signer/interpreter services as required at all ministry-planned events and ensure that these events are held in accessible locations.

Action: Communications Branch will ensure that all ministry-planned events are held in accessible locations and that all invitations to ministry-planned events include a request for accommodation requirements of guests.

Communications Branch will maintain an up-to-date list of interpreter/signer resources for ministry-planned events.

Timeframe: Beginning in 2004-2005 and ongoing.

Commitment: The ministry will continue to provide its Web content in accessible formats.

Action: The ministry continues to work with both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing

Commitment: The ministry will continue to work closely with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested.

Action: The ministry continues to work with both internal and external resources to ensure that requests from the public for documents in alternate formats are responded to in an efficient and timely manner.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 and ongoing

Practices

Commitment: 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.

Action: The ministry will implement its ODA Awareness and Education Campaign by making ODA information and update sessions a regular component of ministry all staff days.

The next 2004/05 ministry all staff day will include an information session led by the Canadian Mental Health Association (or similar organization) to apprise MTR staff of challenges faced by colleagues and members of the public with mental health disabilities.

Timeframe: 2004/2005

Commitment: The ministry 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 "Accesibility/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool.

Action: During 2004/05 Huronia Historical Park and Fort William Historical Park will ensure that new employees receive the most current information on the ODA through various existing resources/materials such as the "Accesibility/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool.

Balance of MTR staff already has access to most current information on the ODA (e.g. "Accesibility/Accessibilité" CD ROM training tool). Ministry wide orientation website for all staff will include an ODA component and linkage to ODA website.

Timeframe: 2004-2005 organizational and resource issues prevented completion in 2003/04 at Huronia Historical Park and Fort William Historical Park.

Commitment: 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.

Action: During 2004/05, the Tourism Agencies Unit will participate in the consultations to develop guidelines for agency policies under s.16 of the ODA.

Timeframe: 2004-2005

Commitment: The ministry will create a partnership with the Ontario 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.

Action:

The ministry will create a partnership with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and meet with secretariat staff to exchange information.

Timeframe:

By March 3, 2005

For more information

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

Please phone:

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General inquiry number: 416 212-6754

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

Visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration'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:

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