

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

2005-2006 Accessibility Plan



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Introduction

The recent passage of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 marks a new era of accessibility in Ontario. This legislation will make Ontario one of the world leaders in improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

While the government is moving forward to implement the new legislation, there will be a transition period during which government and parts of the broader public sector will continue to have planning and other 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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 ensure real and effective change.

This document is the third annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Tourism. It highlights achievements of the 2004-05 plan and outlines commitments for 2005-06 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 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 Minister of Tourism



The Government of Ontario is moving forward to implement the new Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, building on past progress and accomplishments, laying the foundation for accessibility standards and ensuring that real and effective changes take place.

Our ministry understands and appreciates that people with disabilities enjoy travelling in our beautiful province, and that provincially owned attractions need to be accessible to people of all abilities so that they can have a wonderful vacation experience. Our provincial attractions, Fort William Historical Park and Huronia Historical Park, have been

working to improve accessibility for visitors with disabilities, while maintaining the historic features of these important sites.

My ministry will build on its achievements by continuing to implement initiatives that support the government's efforts and commitment to make Ontario an inclusive and accessible province, where people of all abilities have the chance to fully participate and achieve their potential.

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 flourish at the end.

Jim Bradley
Minister

Report on Achievements of 2004-2005 Planning Commitments

The Ministry of Tourism (formerly the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation) was successful in achieving planned commitments outlined in its 2004-05 accessibility plan. The following section provides a status report on the ministry's achievements.

Commitment:

- The ministry will commit to maintaining the Accessibility Planning Team

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- An executive lead was appointed and chaired regular meetings of the Ministry of Tourism Accessibility Planning Committee.
- Commitments made in the 2004-05 Accessibility Plan were reviewed and tracked on a regular basis to ensure goals and deadlines were met.
- Accessibility Planning was added as a regular agenda item to the Ministry Executive Committee meetings. This ensured that ministry management were well-informed of planning commitments and progress.

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.

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- Accessibility Planning Team members made presentations to their colleagues on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 ("ODA"), accessibility issues, and barrier identification to their colleagues. These sessions were held across the ministry. Ministry staff were encouraged to identify barriers and bring them to the attention of their managers or directors.
- Huronia Historical Parks created and presented a specific power point presentation on accessibility, relating to their site, their issues and future plans/actions.

Commitment:

- The ministry will ensure that new managers understand the ministry's ODA obligations.

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- A training component on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 was added to the orientation program for all new managers. In addition, current managers were provided with the same training. To date, 27 managers have taken the training.

Commitment:

- Provide the public with TTY access to the ministry.

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- A TTY line was established for incoming calls to the Ministry of Tourism. Details are available on the ministry website.
- TTY service is also available for the "Ontario Travel" information phone line.
- Fort William Historical Park provides a TTY phone for visitors to make outgoing calls.

Commitment:

- Keep staff up-to-date on ministry accessibility plans and implementation progress.

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- An Accessibility section was created on the ministry intranet that includes ministry accessibility plans, reports on implementation, resources, related links and ministry contacts.

Commitment:

- All ministry financial, program and policy planning processes will take into account the potential effect of ministry activities on people with disabilities.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- Accessibility will continue to be considered in the 2005-06 and future years' policy, program and results –based planning processes.

Commitment:

- The ministry will continue to work to make public/common spaces accessible at all ministry offices as opportunities arise. Ministry will check with Ontario Realty Corporation 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.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- Accessibility audits of all accommodations occupied by the ministry in the Greater Toronto Area have been completed and are under review to determine what actions are necessary.
- Fort William Historical Park:
 - o In 2004/05 Fort William Historical Park introduced a new visitor wagon, pulled by a team of horses, which includes easy access for mobility-challenged persons.
 - o The number of wheelchairs available for the use of patrons with mobility impairment was increased by five units.
 - o Walkway and roadway surfaces within the park were improved by providing hard surfaces to enhance accessibility for mobility-challenged persons.
 - o Three automatic door openers were installed in the Park's public and work areas.
 - o As part of ongoing flood mitigation projects, a commitment/decision has been made that all new facilities will be designed and built to address accessibility issues.
 - o Completed development of a new accessible website.
- Huronia Historical Park
 - o Completed accessibility audit of both modern structures and the historic site at Ste. Marie among the Hurons.
 - o Installed wheelchair access to the gravesite of St. Jean de Brebeuf
 - o Purchased wheelchairs, to be used on the historic site

Commitment:

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

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The ministry reviewed 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
- No issues have been identified for the ministry to address

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- Review of all ministry sport and recreation grant programs was completed. Also, the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation reviewed its grants programs. No issues were identified. The Tourism Revitalization Program was not extended into 2005-2006.

Commitment:

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

Status: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- As part of its normal daily business operations, the ministry considers accessibility in the procurement process that is specific to this ministry.

Commitment:

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

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The ministry Communications Branch is responsible for ensuring 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.
- The Communications Branch maintains an up-to-date list of interpreter/signer resources for ministry-planned events.

Commitment:

- The ministry will continue to provide its web content in accessible formats.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The ministry continues to use both internal and external resources to ensure that its public website is accessible.

Commitment:

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

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The ministry continues to work with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternate formats as requested.

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.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The ministry continues its commitment to Accessibility Awareness and Education by making information and update sessions a regular component of ministry all staff days.
- A recent (Spring 2005) ministry all staff day included an information session led by the Canadian Mental Health Association on mental health issues in the workplace.

Commitment:

- The ministry will review the employee orientation guide to ensure new employees receive the most current information on the ODA through existing resources/materials such as the “Accessibility/Accessibilité” CD Rom training tool.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- During 2004/05, Huronia Historical Park and Fort William Historical Park provided all new employees with information on the ODA through various existing resources/materials such as the “Accessibility/Accessibilité” CD ROM training tool.

- Balance of MTR staff already has access to most current information on the ODA (e.g. “Accessibility/Accessibilité” CD ROM training tool).
- Ministry-wide orientation website for all staff was updated to include a link to the ODA website.
- Huronia Historical Parks provided ODA training to all summer students, which included mock exercises for various disabilities.

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: Completed

Action and Timeframe:

- Consultations completed.

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.

Status: Active

Action and Timeframe:

- The Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat made a presentation on trends to senior management
- Information is available on the ministry website on the implications of changing demographics, including an aging population, for tourism planning.

Commitments and Strategies for 2005-2006

This section represents the Ministry of Tourism's plan. It outlines ongoing programs and services and new initiatives that the ministry will undertake to support the government's efforts to make Ontario's communities vibrant and accessible to people of all abilities.

Customer Service

Commitment:

- To collect data on the importance of accessibility in travel planning.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism will include a question on the importance of accessibility in travel planning in the Travel Activities and Motivational Survey (TAMS) being carried out in Canada and the United States.

Timeframe:

- Data collection will be carried out in the fall and winter of 2005-06.

Commitment:

- To ensure tourism industry interests are represented in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's process of developing standards under the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Action:

- To respond to initiatives of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and to engage tourism industry participation on the development of standards.

Timeframe:

- As determined by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Commitment:

- To ensure that all financial, program and policy planning processes and efforts move toward accessibility and take into account the potential effect of ministry activities on people with disabilities.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism will continue to ensure that accessibility planning is considered in the 2005-06 policy, program and results-based planning processes.

- The ministry will raise awareness of staff regarding new procurement guidelines.

Timeframe:

- Will continue as appropriate during 2005-06.

Commitment:

- To provide signer or interpreter services as required at all ministry-planned events and ensure that these events are held in accessible locations.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism's Communication Branch will maintain a list of registered sign language interpreter service providers, and all meetings and events convened by the ministry will include a request for guests' accommodation needs in meeting invitations.

Timeframe:

- Will continue as appropriate during 2005-06.

Commitment:

- To ensure that the Ministry of Tourism's website is accessible.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch will continue to ensure that its website content is available in accessible formats. In addition, the Fort William Historical Park will launch a new website with content that is available in accessible formats.

Timeframe:

- Will continue as appropriate during 2005-06.

Employment

Commitment:

- To appoint an executive lead and maintain a *Tourism Accessibility Team* with representation from each branch of the ministry.

Action:

- The *Tourism Accessibility Team* will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Ministry of Tourism's 2005-2006 Accessibility Plan and reporting results.

Timeframe:

- Throughout the duration of the Ministry of Tourism's 2005-2006 Accessibility Plan, the Tourism Accessibility Team will meet monthly to review the plan and

address any issues, and will be responsible for coordinating quarterly updates to senior management.

Commitment:

- To build awareness amongst Ministry of Tourism employees about programs and services available to staff and to ensure that ministry staff are sensitized to the needs and concerns of peoples with disabilities.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism will organize an information session or presentation at one ministry staff day and maintain an accessibility information portal on the ministry intranet website. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism's Human Resources Branch will ensure that all managers are aware of the ministry's plan, programs and services and new employees receive information regarding programs and services that are available to them.
- The Ministry of Tourism will also work with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat to ensure that ministry staff and its agencies are sensitized to the needs and concerns of seniors travelling in Ontario and the challenges posed by a rapidly aging population.

Timeframe:

- Will continue as appropriate during 2005-06.

Commitment:

- To encourage Ministry of Tourism staff to provide on-going input on the identification, prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism will provide a forum on its intranet website for staff to provide suggestions, comments or request further information about the meaning of disability and accessibility, Accessibility for Ontarian with Disabilities Act, 2005, and available programs and services.

Timeframe:

- Throughout the duration of the Ministry of Tourism's 2005-06 Accessibility Plan.

Commitment:

- To increase accessibility in the workplace for ministry employees.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism's Human Resources Branch will add a clause to "Offer of Employment" letters asking employees to notify their managers if they have accessibility needs.

Timeframe:

- To be instituted by the end of 2005.

Communications and Information

Commitment:

- Partner with Publications Ontario to provide ministry publications in alternative formats as requested.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch will address all requests for publications and ministry materials in alternative formats in an efficient and timely manner. In addition, ministry branches will be encouraged to promote that Ministry of Tourism publications are available in alternative formats.

Timeframe:

- Will continue as appropriate during 2005-06.

Built Environment

Commitment:

- As opportunities arise, to increase accessibility of Ministry of Tourism offices across the province.

Action:

- For Toronto office space, the ministry will consult with Ontario Realty Corporation and building management on the feasibility and the legal and financial responsibility of addressing barriers in common and public areas. The ministry will also work with Ontario Realty Corporation and Profac to provide recommendations and cost estimates for removing remaining barriers from program spaces.
- Fort William Historical Park will obtain the services of an independent consultant to provide cost estimates for removing barriers from the Park facilities.
- Huronia Historical Parks will begin construction on upgrades to the historical site and facilities as recommended in the 2004-2005 site assessment for the removal of barriers.

Timeframe:

- Throughout the duration of the Ministry of Tourism's 2005-06 Accessibility Plan.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment:

- To consider accessibility, including the identification and removal of barriers when reviewing existing acts or regulations or when drafting new ones.

Action:

- The Ministry of Tourism will review the Innkeepers Act and the Hotel Registration of Guests Act, and any other act or statute which the ministry reviews or proposes in the up-coming year, for accessibility including barrier identification and removal.

Timeframe:

- As acts or regulations are reviewed throughout the duration of the 2005-2006 Accessibility Plan.

For More Information

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

Please contact:

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

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web site at: <http://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.

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

Publications Ontario

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In Ottawa, call (613) 238-3630 or toll-free: 1-800-268-8758

TTY Service: 1-800-268-7095

Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN 1715-5282