

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

*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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 Tourism. 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.

Greetings from the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism



I am pleased to present the 2007 Ministry of Tourism Accessibility Plan.

Under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, all public sector organizations are required to have an annual accessibility plan and to make it available to the public. This is the fifth year in which plans have been written and are being implemented by organizations, such as ours, across the province.

This year marks the second anniversary of the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, which will require the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living. 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. The committees developing the accessible built environment and accessible employment standards have been selected and will begin meeting in the fall of 2007.

The Ministry of Tourism is building on the success of our previous four plans and continuing to look for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with our ministry, whether they are staff, members of the general public or ministry stakeholders. My ministry is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers, working together within our ministry, across government ministries and agencies and in our relationships with our stakeholders.

We continue to work to better educate staff on accessibility issues. Examples of this work in the past year include the creation and dissemination of a report

profiling visitors for whom accessible travel is important. More examples are provided in the pages that follow. If you have any comments or questions about this accessibility plan, you may wish to contact Sheila Larmer, Chair of the ministry's Accessibility Planning Team, at (416) 326-9326.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Bradley
Minister

Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Tourism was successful in achieving, and in some cases, exceeding, planned commitments outlined in its 2006-2007 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Commitment:

Produce a report from the Travel Activities and Motivations survey (TAMS) relating to a profile of visitors for whom accessible travel is important, and disseminate the report to stakeholders.

Status

Completed.

Action

The ministry produced a report from the Travel Activities and Motivations survey (TAMS) profiling visitors for whom accessible travel is important, and disseminated the report to stakeholders.

Timeframe

The report was posted on the ministry's website in July 2007.

Commitment

The ministry's attraction, Fort William Historical Park and Huronia Historical Parks, will have a standing policy to provide free admission to the attendants of people with disabilities (with no identification required for either party).

Status

Ongoing.

Action

Fort William Historical Park and Huronia Historical Parks maintain their standing policy regarding attendant admissions.

Timeframe

Continuing.

Commitment

The ministry's attraction, Fort William Historical Park, will provide accessible services at its event "Rock the Fort", including site access, transportation and accessible admission policies.

Status

Completed.

Action

Fort William Historical Park provided accessible services at "Rock the Fort", including site access, transportation, and accessible admission policies.

Timeframe

During the 2006 "Rock the Fort" event, June 16-18, 2006.

Commitment

Currently, the government is not permitted to make alterations to public or common spaces in leased accommodations, which are the responsibility of the landlords. The ministry will work with Ontario Realty Corporation and ProFac to find ways to work with landlords to make required improvements, if any, to the public or common space of the buildings occupied by the ministry.

Searches for new office space, if any, will consider the accessibility features of potential offices.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The ministry identified potential accessibility upgrades for Queen's Park offices. Telephones in lobbies for two floors occupied by the ministry were replaced with phones with adjustable volume controls.

A doorbell to a ministry office was lowered to a more accessible height

Timeframe

The work was completed in July 2007.

Commitment

As part of its ongoing program of upgrades, Huronia Historical Parks will create an additional three parking spaces and replace two exterior doors with automatic push-button openers at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. As well, an original historic building at Discovery Harbour will have ramps, better lighting and accessible washrooms added this year.

Status

Completed.

Action

Huronia Historical Parks created three additional parking spaces and replaced two exterior doors with automatic push button openers at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. At Discovery Harbour, ramps, better lighting and accessible washrooms were added this year.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan.

Commitment

Fort William Historical Park will modify the quantity, size, surface, vertical posts and pavement markings of parking spaces at the Visitor Centre and Administration Building. Further, modifications will be made to some public washrooms, exterior doors, ramps and signage in order to increase accessibility.

Status

In Progress.

Action

Fort William Historical Park modified the quantity, size, surface, vertical posts and pavement markings of parking spaces at the Visitor Centre and Administration Building.

Timeframe

Throughout the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Rationale

Fort William experienced severe flooding in 2006. In order to align flood repairs, including planned modifications to its public washrooms, exterior doors, ramps and signage, with park operations, these repairs will be postponed until fiscal 2008-09.

Commitment

Organize an information session at a ministry staff day in order to increase staff awareness of accessibility related issues.

Status

Completed.

Action

A profile of travellers for whom accessibility is important was presented at a ministry all staff day where 150 ministry staff attended.

Timeframe

During the ministry's all staff day, on June 26, 2007.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Tourism was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing, its commitments described in the accessibility plans it issued before 2006 - 2007. This section provides a status report.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The ministry participated on the Customer Service Standards Development Committee, engaging tourism industry participation in a dialogue on the development of standards and providing regular feedback to stakeholders. The ministry also participated in interministerial working groups for the Built Environment and Information and Communications standards.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The Ministry of Tourism continued to ensure that accessibility planning was considered in the 2006-07 policy, program and results-based planning process.

Timeframe

Continuing.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

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

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch continued to ensure that its website content is available in accessible formats.

Timeframe

Ongoing.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The *Tourism Accessibility Team* was made responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Ministry of Tourism's 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and reporting results.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan, and continuing.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The Ministry of Tourism's Communications Branch addressed all requests for publications and ministry materials in alternative formats in an efficient and timely manner. In addition, ministry branches promoted the fact that Ministry of Tourism publications are available in accessible formats.

Timeframe

As requests arose throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan.

Commitment

Maintain an accessibility portal on the intranet site to give staff easy access to the ministry's Accessibility Plan and information.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The Ministry maintained an accessibility portal on its intranet site. The site included a link to the ministry's Accessibility Plan, as well as to other information about accessibility.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

Through the Human Resources Branch:

- Ensure all managers are aware of the ministry's plan, programs and services.
- Ensure new employees receive information regarding programs and services that are available to them to assist with accessibility.
- Insert a clause into offers of employment, requesting information on an individual's accessibility needs.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

A list of recommended training (including ODA and Injury, Illness and Employment Accommodation training) for new managers was developed and posted on the Human Resources intranet site.

The staff orientation website is reviewed and updated as necessary.

A standard clause asking employees to notify their managers if they have accessibility needs was inserted into offer of employment letters.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

Encourage staff to continue to provide input on the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

A link on the ministry's intranet site encourages Ministry staff to provide input on the identification, prevention and removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

Monitoring of Toronto office space is on-going for unforeseen and new barriers.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The ministry identified potential accessibility upgrades to Queen's Park complex offices.

Telephones in lobbies for two floors occupied by the ministry were replaced with phones with adjustable volume controls.

A doorbell to a ministry office was lowered to a more accessible height.

Timeframe

The work was completed in July 2007.

Commitment

Continue to review existing acts or regulations to identify and remove barriers.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

In 2006-07, the ministry reviewed the following legislation and regulations: Regulation 1037 (under the *Tourism Act*), *Ministry of Tourism and Recreation Act*, and the *St. Clair Parks Commission Act*.

No barriers were found.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

Take accessibility issues into consideration when drafting new legislation or regulations.

Status

Ongoing.

Action

In 2006-07, the ministry drafted an amendment to Regulation 1037 under the *Tourism Act*. The ministry found no accessibility concerns related to this amendment.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitment

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

Status

Ongoing.

Action

The Ministry of Tourism continued to ensure that accessibility planning was considered in the 2006-07 policy, program and results-based planning processes.

Documents on the ministry's intranet site, such as *Ministry Financial Delegation of Authority*, remind ministry staff of their obligations regarding the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and provide links to other documents providing information and best practices.

Timeframe

Throughout the duration of the 2006-07 Accessibility Plan and ongoing.

Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

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

- Continue to ensure tourism industry interests are represented in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's process of developing standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Continue to ensure that ministry events provide for accessibility needs by ensuring that signer or interpreter services are provided as required, and that events are held in accessible locations.

Employment

- Appoint an executive lead and maintain a Tourism Accessibility Team with representation from each branch of the ministry.
- Maintain an accessibility portal on the intranet site to give staff easy access to the ministry's Accessibility Plan and information.
- Through the Human Resources Branch:
 - o ensure all managers are aware of the ministry's plan, programs and services.
 - o ensure new employees receive information regarding programs and services that are available to them to assist with accessibility.
 - o insert a clause into offers of employment, requesting information on an individual's accessibility needs.
- Encourage staff to continue to provide input on the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers for people with disabilities.

Communications and information

- Maintain a relationship with Publications Ontario to ensure that publications are available in accessible formats.
- Maintain the accessibility of the ministry's website.

Built environment

- Monitoring of Toronto office space is on-going for unforeseen and new barriers.

Acts and regulations

- Continue to review existing acts or regulations to identify and remove barriers.
- Take accessibility issues into consideration when drafting new legislation or regulations.

Other barriers

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

Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed

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

Customer service

Barrier

Signage may present information in a format that is not suitable for people with visual impairments.

Commitment

All ministry office phone lists at office entrances will be presented in a font and manner that is accessible to staff and customers with visual impairments.

Responsibility

Individual program areas and regional offices.

Timeline

Spring 2008.

Built environment

Barrier

Ministry offices may not meet new accessibility guidelines expected to be released by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC).

Commitment

When the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) releases new accessibility guidelines, ministry office space will be reviewed for accessibility per the new guidelines.

Responsibility

Facilities, Information and Records Management.

Timeline

Once the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) releases the new guidelines, throughout the duration of the 2007-08 Accessibility Plan.

For More Information

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

Please phone:

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

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

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.

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

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