



Legislative Assembly of Ontario

2004-2005 Accessibility Plan

THE SPEAKER, HON. ALVIN CURLING

ISSN 1710-5625

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 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 for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario¹. It highlights achievements of the 2003-04 plan and outlines commitments for 2004-05 so that no new barriers are created and existing ones are removed over time.

The Legislative Assembly intends to build on its achievements by continuing to make the Legislative Precinct inclusive and accessible.

¹ As required under the *Legislative Assembly Act*, the Speakers' has responsibility for the Legislative Assembly building at Queen's Park.

Reports on Achievements of Year One Planning Commitments

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| 1. | Commitment | Creation of a working group to identify disability issues and barriers within the Assembly. |
| | Status | Complete. Representatives on the working group come from all divisions within the Assembly. This is an active group with assigned responsibilities. The working group is accountable to Senior Management. |
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| 2. | Commitment | Identification of remaining barriers. |
| | Status | Once work is ongoing on commitments for year two, activities to date will be reviewed with Assembly staff and input sought on additional work that needs to be done. See below. |
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| 3. | Commitment | Develop written guidelines for the purchase of equipment and services for the Assembly to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered when specific goods and services are purchased. |
| | Status | Accessibility considered in the selection and design of a new library system, and in the design of a new administrative services system. Other work carried forward to year two. See below. |
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| 4. | Commitment | Develop written guidelines and / or policies to accommodate those with physical disabilities to attend off-site committee hearings. |
| | Status | Completed. To be posted in Assembly's intranet site. |
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| 5. | Commitment | Ensure that all new content developed for the Assembly's website will be accessible. |
| | Status | Ongoing with research on needs and preferences of people with disabilities being included in upcoming market research on redesigning the Assembly's Internet site. Research will include demand for information in plain language by people with low literacy, |

intellectual or learning disabilities. Carried forward to year two. See below.

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| 6. | Commitment | Continue to work with Publications Ontario to ensure that the Assembly's official publications are made available in alternative formats upon request. |
| | Status | Ongoing. Journals Branch will continue to respond to requests for alternative formats. |
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| 7. | Commitment | Expand accessibility training to include all staff of the Office of the Assembly. |
| | Status | Carried forward to year two. Focus now placed on training of supervisors and managers. See below. |
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| 8. | Commitment | Install a family washroom in the public area of the Assembly and upgrade female/male public washroom areas. |
| | Status | Work to begin January 2005 for completion by March 31, 2005. |
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| 9. | Commitment | Provide ASL interpreters for special events in the Chamber, e.g. the Speech from the Throne, budget, special visits, etc. (This would assist those who are viewing the event via television or from the floor of the Chamber). |
| | Status | Ongoing. Timetable based on holding of special events. See below. |
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| 10. | Commitment | Install a television set with closed captioning in the Speaker's Gallery. |
| | Status | Carried forward to year two. Feasibility study being conducted that will include costing options. See below. |
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| 11. | Commitment | Improve signage and other navigational aids to highlight paths of travel for people with disabilities to all public areas in the Legislative Building. |
| | Status | Proposal being prepared that will take into consideration security issues and user needs regarding development of a map showing key accessibility features of the Legislative Building such as elevators, handicapped |

parking, and ramps. Improved illumination completed for North Parking Lot.

12.	Commitment	Post international symbols of accessibility on the Assembly website to indicate accessibility and availability of alternate formats and TTY equipment. Similar symbols should be included in notices of both on and off-site committee meetings.
	Status	Carried forward to year two. Accessibility symbols will be added as part of the upcoming design of the Assembly website. See below.

Commitments and Strategies for Year Two

1.	Commitment	Develop written guidelines for the purchase of equipment and services for the Assembly to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are considered when specific goods and services are purchased.
	Status	Carried over from year one.
	Action	Written guidelines will be developed for the purchase of equipment and services for the Assembly and where applicable, the specifications in the procurement document will clearly articulate all the accessibility requirements for immediate acquisition or provide for the acquisition of goods and services to meet accessibility requirements should there be a determination that accessible goods or services will be needed in the future.
	Timeframe	June 2005
2.	Commitment	Ensure that all content developed for the Assembly's website is accessible.
	Status	Replaces previous commitments to make new content accessible and to develop plain language content.
	Action	Web Management Team will include research on needs and preferences of people with disabilities in upcoming market research, in preparation for redesigning the Assembly's Internet site. Research will include demand for information in plain language by people with low literacy, intellectual or learning disabilities.
	Timeframe	Market research to be completed by March 31, 2005. Note: Extent and timing of introduction of plain language content depends on outcome of market research
3.	Commitment	Expand accessibility training to include supervisors and managers of the Office of the Assembly.
	Status	Replaces previous training commitments which were limited to staff in frequent contact with the public.
	Action	Human Resources Branch will develop a training plan. Staff will be asked to provide

	Timetable	input into the training plan and identify areas and individuals to be included. March 2005
4.	Commitment	Install a family washroom in the public area of the Assembly and upgrade female/male public washroom areas.
	Status	Carried over from 2003/2004
	Action	Precinct Properties is overseeing the planning and installation.
	Timetable	To begin January 2005 for completion by March 31, 2005
5.	Commitment	Provide ASL interpreters for special events in the Chamber, e.g. the Speech from the Throne, budget, special visits, etc. (This would assist those who are viewing the event via television or from the floor of the Chamber).
	Status	Ongoing
	Action	Responsibilities for arranging for interpreters at needed special events to be clarified.
	Timetable	March 2005
6.	Commitment	Install a television set with closed captioning in the Speaker's Gallery.
	Status	Carried over from 2003/2004
	Action	Prepare a feasibility study with costing options being undertaken for closed captioned TV and other technologies. The study will be prepared in consultation with Broadcast and Recording Branch and Hansard Branch.
	Timetable	January 2005
7.	Commitment	Improve signage and other navigational aids to highlight paths of travel for people with disabilities to all public areas in the Legislative Building.
	Status	Combines previous commitments to develop a map and signage for paths of travel within the public areas of the Legislative Building.
	Action	Proposal for signage improvements that will incorporate recognized standards for signs and input from people with disabilities being prepared. Analyze security issues and user needs regarding development of a map showing key accessibility features of the Legislative

	Timetable	Building such as elevators, handicapped parking, and ramps. Signage proposal to be completed by December 31, 2004. Analysis of map issues to begin after security planning meetings (currently underway) are complete.
8.	Commitment	Post international symbols of accessibility on the Assembly website to indicate accessibility and availability of alternate formats and TTY equipment. Similar symbols should be included in notices of both on and off-site committee meetings.
	Status	Carried over from 2003/2004
	Action	Web Management Team will add accessibility symbols as part of upcoming redesign.
	Timetable	Implementation of redesigned site is planned for 2005/2006.
9.	Commitment	Increase Accessibility Committee's knowledge of assistive technologies.
	Status	New
	Action	Visit local resource centres such as the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto and the Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre.
	Timetable	November 2005
10.	Commitment	Redesign of Chamber lobbies (Government and Opposition) to improve accessibility for those who work in them.
	Status	New
	Action	Complete construction
	Timetable	Work to be completed by March 31, 2005
11.	Commitment	Publicize Assembly accessibility on the Assembly's Internet site.
	Status	New
	Action	Publish a web page describing features and services available to visitors to the Legislative Building and users of Assembly publications and other services.
	Timetable	January 2005
12.	Commitment	Publicize accessibility of the Legislative Building in <i>Access Guide Canada</i> website.

Status	New
Action	Investigate whether a suitable category exists for the Legislative Building. If so, write up and submit an entry.
Timetable	January 2005

13.	Commitment	Create awareness of Accessibility Committee by publicizing its activities within the Assembly.
	Status	New
	Action	Publish committee mandate, membership, minutes, reports, resource material on the Assembly intranet.
	Timetable	November 2005

14.	Commitment	Identification of remaining barriers.
	Status	New
	Action	Once work underway on commitments for year two, activities to date will be reviewed with Assembly staff and input sought on additional work that needs to be done.
	Timetable	March 2005

For more information on the Legislative Assembly's Accessibility Plan, please contact:

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