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Proposed Integrated Accessibility Regulation

On May 31, 2010, the Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur announced the development of an Integrated Accessibility Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ("AODA"). The proposed regulation coordinates requirements of the proposed Employment, Transportation, Information and Communications Standards. The proposed Integrated Regulation also contains compliance details regarding financial penalties and designation of a tribunal to hear appeals made under the AODA. The public review period ends October 16, 2010. The proposed Integrated Regulation can be viewed at:

<http://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=4142&language=en>

Facts & Stats

FACTS AND STATS

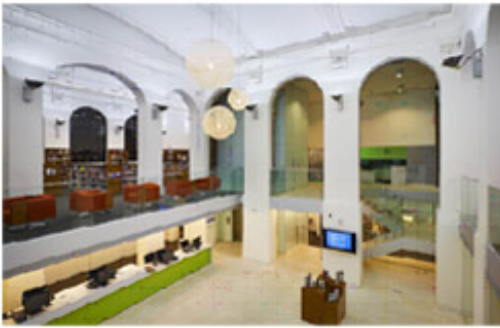
1.85million	or one in seven people in Ontario have a disability.
40%	of Canadians over the age of 65 report having some form of disability.
70%	of all persons with disabilities report needing support with daily activities.
1.03million	Ontarians with disabilities can work.
1.5million	adult Canadians report having some form of vision loss and over a million report some form of hearing loss - not corrected by vision care or hearing aids.
57%	of adults with disabilities require some type of aid or device.
One in five	Ontarians will be 65 older by 2025.

Creating Access (Contributed by Darren Newton - ORC Strategic Asset Management)

Designing and building an entrance to a building is no easy task. Creating universal access to historic landmark buildings presents even greater challenges. However, as three recently completed 'surgical interventions' show, entrances can not only create universal access, they can serve as opportunities to transform the overall use of a building, and even our common understanding of what it means to be accessible.

1. Art Gallery of Ontario.

It is often said that architecture is about subtlety. This is no doubt true of Frank Gehry's recently completed AGO transformation. As one approaches the building along Dundas St. West, there is a slow transition towards the entrance area through to the main lobby inside. To mark the journey toward a series of brilliantly designed moments within the building, Gehry inserted a serpentine-like ramp, designed to accommodate a range of mobility devices. The ramp is flanked by a set of stairs rising to the main ticketing area where people begin their journey into the galleries. What is perhaps more striking than the masterfully re-worked logic of the building is how the serpentine ramp is used to set the stage for the visitor experience. In one brilliant move, Gehry transcends the



Bloor Gladstone Library, Source; RDH Architects Inc., (2009)



Entering the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Source; AGO, (2008)



Accessible entrance, Whitney Block Source: ORC, (2010)



issue of accessibility as we commonly think of it by creating an entrance that everyone wants to partake in.

2. Bloor Gladstone Library.

In the west-end of Toronto near Bloor and Dufferin Streets stands a little known city branch library, also known as the Bloor Gladstone Library. RDH Architects Inc., in association with Shoalts & Zaback and ERA Architects, were commissioned to renovate and restore the existing heritage library, as well as doubling its size in order to meet current standards for a District Library. This is part of the Toronto Public Library's Strategic Plan to get people in the door, making what happens at the door incredibly important.

The old entrance stairs leading from street level to the second storey were removed and instead of 'fighting' the building to enter it, all visitors, regardless of ability, now flow into the new lower level entrance with ease. A much smaller set of stairs leads from Bloor Street to the new entrance and is flanked by two gradual ramps. All three access routes bring visitors to the same front door. The underlying design principle is the same as the AGO. Everyone begins their experience of a building through the same entrance. In this case, the removal of the existing historical entrance was surgical in nature. No more was removed from the existing façade than was necessary. Heavy stone and masonry is contrasted with light glass and steel detailing, resulting in a fully accessible, modern entrance that is truly eloquent.

3. Whitney Block.

Constructed in 1927, the Whitney Block in downtown Toronto was the first office building designed specifically for Ontario civil servants. Built in the modern gothic style, it was one of the tallest buildings in Toronto, symbolizing the importance of government. What is typical of many historic institutional buildings similar to the Whitney Block is their relationship to the ground. As with the AGO and the Bloor Gladstone Library (prior to renovation), one has to climb at least a half storey to enter the building. This of course hinders access to those who are differently abled.

Acting on behalf of the property owner, Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) met the challenge of creating an accessible entrance head on. The property is recognized by the Provincial Government as a significant heritage building. As such, opportunities to 'intervene' by cutting a new entrance into the façade were limited. ORC worked with L.E. Glazer Architect Ltd. to identify possible solutions. Ultimately an existing lower level entrance was identified as the most suitable location to improve access. After detailed planning and design, a new accessible entrance was built, connecting the main walk near the existing entrance to the renovated lower level entrance via a new ramp. The new entrance includes a beautiful new historically-styled elevator, allowing visitors from the lower level to meet visitors arriving from the historic entrance in the same lobby area inside.

As a matter of planning and design principle, all visitors should be afforded the opportunity to enter a building in the same way. Often however, historical preservation concerns need to be balanced with providing universal access. The entrance solution at the Whitney Block strikes a balance between these concerns. It also gives visitors a new perspective of the building. Descending along the ramp towards the new entrance offers a new appreciation of its historic façade and perhaps a more interesting entrance experience than the older historic entrance. A subtle feature, but architecture is often about subtlety.



Keith Noronha (ORC Professional Services) at
Accessibility Expo 2010
Source: K. Noronha, (2010)

We look forward to hearing your questions and
comments. Please contact us at:

accessibility@ontariorealty.ca

Sincerely,
Accessibility Team
Ontario Realty Corporation

For a text version of this newsletter please click [here](#). Alternative
formats can be made available upon request.

ORC Participates in Accessibility Expo 2010 (Contributed by Keith Noronha, ORC Professional Services)

On June 16, 2010, the Ministry of Government Services, OPS Diversity Office hosted this year's **Accessibility Expo 2010 "Minds Matter,"** that offered participants a very tangible way of understanding the significance of accessibility, not only in the workplace, but in all areas of life. ORC participated as an exhibitor and shared information on the work it is undertaking to enhance accessibility in the Provincial real estate portfolio.

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