MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

2007-2008 Accessibility Plan



ISSN #1708-4350

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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

Abbreviations used in this report:

- ADO Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
- AODA Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- APS accessible pedestrian signal
- CHS Canadian Hearing Society
- CSD Corporate Services Division, Ministry of Transportation
- EA/RTW Employment Accommodation and Return to Work
- HRCs Human Resources Consultants
- MTO Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
- OBRB Ontario Bus Replacement Program
- ODA Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- OHRC Ontario Human Rights Commission
- **OPS Ontario Public Service**
- ORC Ontario Realty Corporation
- PIN Private Issuing Network (privately-owned licensing offices)
- RFP Request for proposals (tendering of a contract)
- RUS Road User Safety, Ministry of Transportation
- TDC Young Drivers of Canada
- TTY Teletypewriter

Message from the Minister



Honourable Donna Cansfield

Dear fellow Ontarians:

This province is committed to improving accessibility for people with disabilities, under the umbrella of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005* (AODA).

Accessibility for all Ontarians is equally important to the Ministry of Transportation. Specifically, we are proud and pleased to say that we are committed to improving accessibility and have continued to work toward accessibility of public transportation

services throughout the province for the past 5 years. We've had some notable accomplishments this year.

In 2007, the new Ontario Bus Replacement Program will provide \$50 million to municipalities for both conventional and specialized transit buses for persons with disabilities. All replacement buses purchased with this funding must be fully accessible.

Our involvement in testing new technologies on Ontario roads is a long-term commitment. In October 2006, the province began a five-year pilot project to evaluate the use of the environmentally friendly Segway device on roads, sidewalks and paths. We hope this will lead to expanding mobility options for persons with disabilities.

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.

I hope you enjoy reading our plan. We are continually looking for ways to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, whether they are staff, members of the public or ministry stakeholders. We continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers by working together within our ministry, across government and in our stakeholder relationships.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Donna Cansfield Minister of Transportation

Report on Achievements

2006 - 2007 Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) is pleased to report that it has acted on its commitments from the 2006-2007 Accessibility Plan. Below you will find an outline of our achievements.

Our successes demonstrate MTO's strong support of both the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Along with the act, our ministry is dedicated to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to MTO services throughout the province.

Customer service

Commitment: Ensure that all staff members who provide services to the public have received training on serving customers with disabilities.

Status: In progress

Action: A number of training activities have been completed that will improve the service we provide to customers with disabilities:

- A module on ODA/AODA awareness was included as part of the Driver Improvement Counsellor and Scheduler Training curriculum to provide an overview about serving customers with disabilities. This module was presented to MTO issuing office administrators, coordinators, driver improvement counsellors and scheduling clerks across the province.
- A sub-group committee to address this specific commitment was set up. Members of this committee, as well as other employees, tested and provided their views about the "May I help you?" e-module developed by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO). The action plan to meet this commitment has been finalized and approved by senior management. We have chosen groups of employees to receive the online training and possible in-class training. We asked staff how and when they would like to receive the training.
- We are promoting the newly released "May I help you?" e-module through information sessions to MTO management teams.
- Employees who serve the public have been given advice and tools on how to serve customers with disabilities.

Timeframe: During February and March 2007, the ODA/AODA module was delivered to 56 employees, including supervisors, scheduling clerks and driver improvement counsellors. The action plan was completed in January 2007. Customer service accessibility tools were distributed to over 500 employees in December 2006 and January 2007.

Rationale: The release of the "May I help you?" e-module online training was delayed which postponed the timing of training.

Commitment: Enhance ODA/AODA knowledge of issuing office administrators.

Status: Complete

Action: The Customer Service Training for the Private Issuing Network (PIN) curriculum included a module on ODA/AODA awareness. This module gave an overview on how to serve customers with disabilities.

Timeframe: Issuing office administrators from across the province received training between December 2006 and January 2007.

Commitment: Continue to facilitate discussions with the working group to find a suitable solution for appropriate driver education services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Status: Ongoing

Action: MTO participated in meetings with various parties during this reporting period, and possible solutions are being explored. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) is gathering costing information from Young Drivers of Canada (YDC) and the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) is involved in possibilities for pilot projects. MTO committed to ensure that its Beginner Driver Education program policies can meet the needs of a pilot project.

Timeframe: The Road User Safety Division (RUS) took part in an inter-ministry meeting on October 12, 2006 to determine next steps. On November 23, 2006, an OHRC pre-briefing meeting (MTO staff) was held to discuss options and best approach. On November 27, 2006, MTO met with OHRC to discuss progress and challenges. On April 10, 2007, a meeting took place with MTO, OHRC, CHS and YDC to discuss tangible solutions.

Commitment: Work with the landlord to provide light indicators to facilitate the safe evacuation of people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the Downsview

complex.

Status: In progress

Action: MTO set aside funds to hire a consultant to review possible solutions and will use the St. Catharines office as a test site.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Rationale: Project scope was reviewed with both the Corporate Services Division and the Building Management Team. A number of potential solutions have since been explored: the outcome of this project is in negotiation.

Employment

Commitment: Address knowledge gap with regard to the new Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy (EA/RTW) with the management group and human resources professionals.

Status: Complete

Action: The following steps were taken:

- The operating policy and supporting materials were widely communicated to all staff by the Deputy Minister. The message conveyed the importance of an inclusive workplace as well as this ministry's commitment to meeting the government's goals under both the ODA and the AODA.
- We revised the language and wording we use during the recruitment process so it is consistent with the language used in the new operating policy, and provided it to our human resources employees in May 2005.
- We shared information and provided guidance about the new policy and support materials that deal with health reassignment with our human resources professionals.
- A number of human resources consultants came to workshops on accommodating employees or potential employees with a learning disability.

Timeframe: The Deputy Minister announced the new EA/RTW Operating Policy to all MTO staff on March 22, 2007. The Standard *Language Used in the Recruitment Process* tool was revised and re-distributed to the human resources professionals in the summer of 2007. Human resources consultants participated in a workshop on learning disabilities in winter 2007.

Commitment: Develop a practical accommodation guide for managers to assist them when recruiting. **Status:** Complete **Action:** The guide was developed for distribution to ministry managers and human resources professionals.

Timeframe: The guide was distributed in summer 2007.

Communications and Information

Commitment: Develop an accessibility communication strategy. Senior management will distribute communication products as identified under the communication strategy.

Status: Complete

Action: An accessible communication strategy was developed and approved by senior management. As a first step, presentations were delivered to several management committees across the province. As a result, we improved knowledge and understanding of ODA/AODA legislative requirements.

Timeframe: The communication strategy was approved in January 2007. Presentations to various management committees were made during the summer of 2007.

Built Environment

Commitment: Continue to work with Ontario municipalities to assist in improving and renewing their municipal transit systems and assessing whether their transit vehicle management plans are consistent with the requirements as set out in ODA.

Status: Complete

Action: Under the new Ontario Bus Replacement Program (OBRP), MTO will provide a total of \$50 million to Ontario municipalities towards municipal replacement buses in calendar year 2007. The OBRP will provide funding for both conventional and specialized transit buses for persons with disabilities. All replacement buses purchased under the OBRP must be fully accessible.

Timeframe: During the last week of November 2006, municipalities received notice of their 2007 funding under the OBRP.

Commitment: Work closely with building management during construction to re-shape the front yard of the MTO St. Catharines building to resolve insufficient accessible parking spaces.

Status: Deferred

Action: The request to city council has been referred back to the city services for review.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Rationale: The City of St. Catharines is considering changing the current oneway street to two-way, which is affecting the entire plan.

Commitment: Work closely with building management to retrofit the front entrance of the St. Catharines building to allow for easier access by people with disabilities.

Status: In progress

Action: Two sets of external doors were upgraded to improve access to the building. Work is completed for the King Street and Carlisle Street entrances. Work for the St. Paul Street entrance started in June 2007 with a completion date in December 2007.

Timeframe: Work for the King Street and Carlisle Street entrances was completed May 2007.

Rationale: Two additional entrances were added to this renovation plan thus increasing the magnitude of this project.

Commitment: An accessible pedestrian signal (APS) will be installed during the installation of a traffic signal on Highway 41 in Northbrook.

Status: Complete

Action: The APS was installed and tested and minor adjustments were done. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind offered an APS training session to local residents. The township reeve praised MTO for doing a 'fantastic job' and believes that this traffic control system will significantly impact on safety in Northbrook.

Timeframe: The project was completed in November 2006. A training session was scheduled on November 28, 2006 and an invitation to attend the training session was posted in several places, including local businesses, seniors' homes, doctors' offices and community service buildings as well as advertised in local newspapers.

Commitment: Distribute a barrier-free checklist to MTO managers. **Status:** Complete

Action: A barrier-free checklist for an office environment was developed and distributed to MTO managers and was posted on the ODA intranet site.

Timeframe: The barrier-free checklist was distributed and posted summer 2007.

Acts and Regulations, Policies and Directives

Commitment: Review and update the MTO Directive pertaining to Carpool Parking Facilities.

Status: Complete

Action: An inventory and audit of the MTO carpool lots was done. Highway Design Bulletin 2007-02 for Carpool Parking Facilities - Accessible Parking Spaces for Persons with Disabilities was widely distributed. It provides new design direction and specification on parking spaces for persons with disabilities for all new or expanded ministry carpool parking facilities in accordance with the *Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities*.

Timeframe: The carpool lots audit was conducted in the fall of 2006. The Highway Design Bulletin was issued and implemented spring of 2007.

Commitment: Develop a policy on accessibility at ministry Public Information Centre events as part of an ongoing update to the Class Environment Assessment process.

Status: Complete

Action: The policy was developed and communicated through the Environmental Coordinating Committee members who are the leads for providing support to all Public Information Centres. The policy is now ministry practice and it will be included in the Class Environment Assessment when it is next updated.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

Over the past few years, MTO has achieved a wide range of our accessibility goals. We continue to build on these achievements in order to create a fully inclusive society. This section provides a status report of ongoing initiatives and the many benefits.

Commitment: Support the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) in its efforts to meet requirements under AODA with respect to accessibility standards for customer service, employment, communications and information, built environment and transportation.

Status: Ongoing

Action: MTO supported ADO as follows:

- MTO continued to actively participate on the Assistant Deputy Ministers Implementation Committee.
- As the lead ministry on the Transportation Standards Development Committee, MTO provides a major contribution to the proposed transportation accessibility standards. In addition to actively participating in all scheduled committee meetings, the MTO representative liaised with program area experts, ensuring comments of time-sensitive materials for review are captured.
- MTO is active on the Built Environment Standard Development Interministerial Committee. As required, MTO provided coordinated comments on various documents.
- MTO provided coordinated feedback to:
 - the proposed customer service accessibility standard;
 - the employment related documents;
 - the information and communications related documents.
- MTO participated in various facets in developing the OPS accessibility leadership strategy.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: Add the MTO INFO General Inquiry teletypewriter (TTY) numbers to publications at reprint.

Status: Ongoing

Action: MTO INFO General Inquiry TTY numbers were added to publications at reprint.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: Provide guidance, assistance and direction as needed to service providers with respect to customer service.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Training on serving customers with disabilities was provided to 178 private issuers as well as 157 key employees, who provided positive feedback on the evaluation form. Some said the disability awareness portion of the training was the most valuable information they received.

Timeframe: Eleven training sessions were held between November 2006 and January 2007.

Commitment: Consider accessibility in the purchase of goods and services, including the maintenance of standard Request for Proposals (RFP) templates to reflect ODA obligations.

Status: Ongoing

Action: MTO was invited to provide feedback for an OPS RFP for supply, delivery and installation of systems furniture, case goods, tables and freestanding office furniture.

MTO considered accessibility issues during the purchasing process.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Employment

Commitment: Offer employment accommodation to current and prospective employees during all phases of the recruitment process.

Status: Ongoing

Action: The *Standard Language Used During the Recruitment Process* tool was revised to use the wording in the new Employment. Accommodation/Return to Work Operating Policy (EA/RTW) and redistributed to human resources professionals.

Human resources professionals attended a workshop on people with learning disabilities and were given useful tools.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: Provide support, advice and assistance to managers on employment accommodation requests.

Action: Human resources professionals helped managers with employment accommodation requests as required. An orientation package for new managers is now available on the intranet site. This HR Tool Kit contains a section on ODA obligations including mandatory ODA training, links to both the ODA and AODA as well as employment accommodation obligations. Information sessions and guidance on the new policy and support materials related to health reassignment were shared with the human resources professionals.

Status: Ongoing

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: Monitor and report on ODA online mandatory training for new managers as per Section 8(3) of ODA, 2001.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Provided guidance, as required, to managers regarding the ODA online managers' training. The newly developed Orientation Package for Managers includes a section on ODA obligations including the mandatory ODA training. The Centre for Leadership and Learning, Ministry of Government Services and the MTO Human Resources Strategic Office provided data reports.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Communications and Information

Commitment: Monitor and assess ODA compliance of web-based resources to be posted on MTO's Internet site.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Communications Branch staff continued to provide advice and guidance on web content to MTO staff on ODA requirements. In addition, Corporate Services Division (CSD) is currently reviewing their intranet site to consider accessibility of information and communication. As well, CSD provided training to affected staff on the new accessible PDF documents guidelines and process.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: Follow World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines, Priorities I & II.

Status: Ongoing

Action: MTO follows the World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines, Priorities I & II and the Government of Ontario Public Web Standard issued by the Ministry of Government Services. Communications Branch staff attend the GO web committee meetings and workshops on an ongoing basis.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Built Environment

Commitment: Work closely with building management with respect to the requirements under the barrier-free access standards for Ontario government facilities.

Status: Ongoing

Action: New revised *"Standards for Barrier-Free Design of Ontario Government Facilities"* is available on the ODA intranet site. MTO continued to work closely with building management to meet requirements under the access design standards. We continued to work with regional business managers, PROFAC and Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) to ensure that upgrades and relocations meet the requirements.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Acts and Regulations

Commitment: We will continue working with key MTO staff with responsibilities in this area, as well as Legal Services Branch.

Status: Ongoing

Action: *The Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005* enables MTO to pilot-test new technologies on Ontario roads. Effective October 19, 2006, the Province of Ontario began a five-year pilot project to evaluate the use of the Segway device on roads, sidewalks and paths to expand mobility options for persons with disabilities, letter carriers and police officers.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Other Barriers

Commitment: We will continue to seek and welcome public ODA input and recommendations through various channels.

Status: Ongoing

Action: Numerous accessibility inquiries received through various channels, including the ODA email address which is available to the public, were addressed by knowledgeable staff members.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: We will continue to administer and implement commitments outlined under the MTO Accessibility Plan.

Status: Ongoing

Action: ODA Planning Team terms of reference reviewed, updated and posted on the ODA intranet site. MTO 2006/07 Accessibility Plan released as per prescribed timelines and posted on the MTO public site.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: We will continue to provide advice and consultation to program areas on ODA and AODA requirements.

Status: Ongoing

Action: ODA Planning Team members shared relevant ODA/AODA information with their senior management team. MTO continued to conduct research to increase knowledge on accessibility issues. An ODA/AODA presentation was delivered to Senior Driver Program coordinators. MTO continued to provide assistance to GO Transit in the development of their ODA plan. ODA intranet contains information, accessibility links and resources.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitment: We will continue to ensure that the emergency management and response plans include consideration for people with disabilities.

Status: Ongoing

Action: During the promotion of Emergency Preparedness Week, several "lunch-and-learn" sessions were given to staff in various locations. These presentations included information about accessibility. The Emergency Preparedness Guide developed jointly by Emergency Management Ontario

(EMO) and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) was posted on the ODA intranet site.

Timeframe: October 2006 to September 2007 reporting period.

Commitments – Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming year, the Ministry of Transportation will implement many new accessibility commitments and initiatives. Senior executives are ambassadors for the ODA/AODA, taking every opportunity to educate vendors and suppliers to ensure that their products and services meet accessibility requirements. We will also build on our previous successes and continue to work towards achieving full accessibility. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer Service

MTO is highly committed to providing excellent customer service to all the people of Ontario. To prevent customer service barriers we will continue to:

- Support the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in its efforts to meet requirements under AODA with respect to the customer service standards.
- Seek and welcome public ODA input and recommendations through various channels.

Employment

This ministry will build on achievements of past years. We will be diligent in preventing employment barriers by continuing to:

- Support the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in its efforts to meet requirements under AODA with respect to the employment standards.
- Offer employment accommodation to current and prospective employees during all phases of the recruitment process.

Communications and Information

MTO made significant progress in this area. We will strive continually to remove and prevent barriers in communications and information processing. To achieve this we will continue to:

- Support the ADO in meeting requirements under the AODA with respect to the communications and information standards.
- Follow World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines, Priorities I & II.
- Assess whether new materials posted on the ministry Internet site meet the requirements of ODA, section 6.
- Continue to provide advice and guidance to MTO web developers on ODA requirements.
- Attend on an ongoing basis the inter-ministerial GO web committee meetings and workshops.
- Follow revised web standards for intranets reflecting accessibility development guidelines, when distributed by the Ministry of Government Services.

Built Environment

MTO has achieved great success in removing and preventing barriers in the built environment. Furthering our success in this area is vital and we will continue to:

- Support the ADO in meeting requirements under AODA with respect to the built environment customer service standards.
- Work closely with building management with respect to the requirements under the barrier-free access standards for Ontario government facilities.

Acts and Regulations

• We will continue working with key MTO staff with responsibilities in this area, as well as Legal Services Branch.

Other Barriers

- We will continue to support the ADO in meeting requirements under ODA and AODA including the work of the Transportation Standard Development Committee.
- We will continue to administer and implement commitments outlined under the MTO Accessibility Plan.
- We will continue to provide advice and consultation to program areas on ODA and AODA requirements.

• We will continue to support and work with the OPS Leadership Strategy Team on the development and implementation of the OPS accessibility strategy.

Commitments — Barriers to Be Addressed

The Ministry of Transportation is committed to addressing barriers for people with disabilities, using many practical, effective measures. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer Service

Barrier: Not all key employees who provide customer service to the public received the Serving Customers with Disabilities training.

Commitment: Ensure that employees who provide services to the public have received training on serving customers with disabilities.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Division will coordinate this initiative in collaboration with other divisions.

Timeline: September 2008

Employment

Barrier: Not all managers are knowledgeable about accessibility issues when interviewing candidates with disabilities.

Commitment: Enhance managers' knowledge level of accessibility issues related to the competitive process.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Division in cooperation with other divisions.

Timeline: September 2008.

Communications and Information

Barrier: It is unknown if staff responsible for managing various MTO intranet sites have sufficient accessibility knowledge related to information and communication.

Commitment: Assess knowledge level of staff responsible for creating and

maintaining intranet sites.

Responsibility: Corporate Services Division in collaboration with other divisions.

Timeline: September 2008.

Built Environment

Barrier: Accessibility to municipal transit systems.

Commitment: Continue to work with Ontario municipalities and the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority to assist in improving and renewing their municipal transit systems.

Responsibility: Policy and Planning Division.

Timeline: Ongoing

Acts and Regulations

Barrier: MTO does not have a formal policy addressing accessible public meetings.

Commitment: Formalize current policy on accessibility at ministry Public Information Centre events by including it in the Class Environment Assessment when it is next updated.

Responsibility: Policy and Planning Division.

Timeline: Multi-year plan given that the review process includes participation of other ministries.

For more information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: GTA 416-235-4686

TTY number: 1-866-471-8929

1-800 number: 1-800-268-4686

E-mail: oda@mto.gov.on.ca

Ministry website address: www.mto.gov.ca

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: <u>www.mcss.gov.on.ca/accessibility/index.html</u>. The site promotes accessibility and provides information and resources on how to make Ontario a barrier-free province.

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Queen's Printer for Ontario

ISSN #1708-4350

Ce document est disponible en français.