

MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT & MINES

*2006-2007
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.

The first two standards that are currently being developed cover the areas of transportation and customer service. On June 13, the first anniversary of the passage of the AODA, the government announced the development of three new standards that will address information and communications, the built environment, and employment.

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 These obligations will remain in effect until they are repealed and replaced by standards under the new act.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 fourth annual accessibility plan developed by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. It highlights the achievements of the 2005-06 plan and outlines the commitments for 2006-07 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.

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the fourth annual plan to improve access to Ministry of Northern Development and Mines programs, services and employment opportunities.

This year marks the first anniversary of the landmark *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* – legislation that is fostering the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in key areas of daily living. To commemorate this milestone, three new accessibility standards, to be developed were recently announced. These include communications and information, the built environment and employment. This is in addition to two standards currently being developed, which address customer service and transportation issues.

MNDM is committed to improving accessibility through identifying, removing and preventing barriers. We are working within our ministry, across government and with our stakeholders in key areas of customer service, employment, communications and information, and the built environment.

MNDM continues to explore opportunities to better meet the needs of people with disabilities who engage our staff or seek access to our facilities. We continue to educate staff on accessibility issues. As well, we continue to observe barrier-free design guidelines through the planning phases of our new ServiceOntario locations. Examples of this work is provided in this report.

I encourage you to share any comments or concerns using the contact information located at the end of this document.

Sincerely,

Honourable Rick Bartolucci

Report on Achievements

2005 – 2006

Completed Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing planned commitments outlined in its 2005-2006 accessibility plan. This section provides a status report.

Commitment: Ensure general awareness and compliance to the implementation of the Management Board Procurement Guidelines.

Status: Complete

Action: Through the ministry public folders and the ministry newsletter staff have received information regarding the documentation of purchases over \$5,000 and to have regard for accessibility for all procurement.

Timeframe: October 2005

Commitment: Ensure clients and staff receive accessible service.

Status: Complete

Action: Between October 2005 and August 2006, several articles were posted in the ministry newsletter and on electronic public folders regarding on-line training modules and general awareness. Included was a standard paragraph identifying accessibility needs and requirements for staff use when advertising for ministry events.

Timeframe: October 2005 – August 2006

Commitment: Continue to provide accessibility training opportunities and awareness to staff in order to ensure all internal/external services are provided in an accessible format. For example, ensure all internal staff meetings and external events are accessible and provide accessible formats of materials.

Status: Complete

Action: Through the ministry's public folders and newsletters, staff were made aware of the on-line training modules available on the MCI intranet site for 'Planning for Accessible Events 101' and "May I Help You – Welcoming Customers With Disabilities".

Timeframe: October 2005

Commitment: Continue to have regard for accessibility in the hiring and accommodation of employees.

Status: Complete

Action: All new managers and supervisors in the ministry were advised of the mandatory training via the manager's orientation checklist.

Timeframe: October 2005 – August 2006

Commitment: Ensure that external ministry presentations are done in accessible format when required.

Status: Complete

Action: Instructions and templates were posted on the ministry intranet site and in the ministry newsletter to guide staff on how to make a presentation in an accessible format.

Timeframe: October 2005

Commitment: Continue to provide guidance to all ministry staff on procedures for responding to requests for publications in alternate formats and include the instructions on ministry Internet and intranet sites.

Status: Complete

Action: Details regarding alternate formats were posted on the home page of the ministry intranet and articles providing information about the availability of alternate formats were posted in the ministry newsletter.

Timeframe: October 2005

Commitment: Ministry staff will consider accessibility when replacing signage in buildings.

Status: Complete

Action: Worked with the Ontario Realty Corporation in regards to signage in Government of Ontario buildings and to ensure that signs that were replaced met accessible format and height requirements.

Timeframe: October 2005 – August 2006

Commitment: Continue to ensure all future third party lease renewals include provisions to ensure sites are barrier-free.

Status: Complete

Action: Lease renewals are continuously reviewed to ensure they meet *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* requirements.

Timeframe: October 2005 – August 2006

Commitment: Conduct internal review of the *Northern Services Boards Act*, the *Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act*, and the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* to ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities, as well as to identify any programs established in law that may have an impact on people with disabilities.

Status: Complete

Action: The ministry's Legal Services Branch completed a review of the *Northern Services Boards Act*, the *Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act*, and the *Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act* and found no outstanding accessibility issues.

Timeframe: June 2006

Ongoing Accessibility Improvement Initiatives

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines was successful in achieving, and in some cases, surpassing its commitments described in the accessibility plans issued before 2005-2006. This section provides a status report on ongoing ministry commitments

Commitment: Assess the level of knowledge of accessibility issues among staff.

Status: In Progress

Action: Surveyed was completed in May 2006 with results will be analysed to assess level of knowledge of accessibility issues in 2006-07.

Timeframe: Complete by June 2007

Rationale: Survey results from external consultant will be available in October 2006.

Commitment: Ensure that the ministry's Internet and intranet sites are accessible and test all new site content to ensure usability by people with disabilities.

Status: Complete and Ongoing

Action: Continued to monitor ministry Internet and intranet sites for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliance, ensure that all web staff are trained in the areas of *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliance for web design, ensure new sites abide to accessibility policies and that all new software is *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliant.

Timeframe: Throughout the year from October 2005 to July 2006

Rationale: Continued commitment

Commitment: The Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group will continue to consult with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario on the implementation of the Ministry Accessibility Plan and on the preparation of the 2006-07 plan, as required under Sec. 10 of *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Status: Complete and Ongoing

Action: The Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group Lead continued to consult with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in an effort to keep the working group current on *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* standings. The working group continued to plan, monitor, evaluate and report on progress in enhancing and improving accessibility to people with disabilities and continued assigned tasks. In an effort to ensure sustained efforts, three members were replaced.

Timeframe: Throughout the year from October 2005 to July 2006

Rationale: Continued ministry commitment into next planning year.

Commitment: Ensure ministry buildings and facilities are accessible for people with disabilities.

Status: Complete and Ongoing

Action: Three building audits were completed in reception and public areas of 159 Cedar Street, the Willet Green Miller Centre, Ramsey Lake Road and 199 Larch in Sudbury in 2005.

Timeframe: September 2005

Rationale: Follow-up to inform Ontario Realty Corporation of audit findings to occur in 2006-07 plan.

Commitment: In collaboration with the other tenants in the Whitney Block Users Committee, develop and prioritize the removal of barriers with Ontario Realty Corporation, the building's owner.

Status: Complete and ongoing

Action: To improve accessibility in the entrance areas of the Whitney Block, handrails were installed in the north and south vestibules in 2005. In addition, signage was installed in spring 2006 at the underground entrance from the Queen's Park subway station leading to the Whitney Block to indicate an alternative entrance for individuals unable to use the stairs.

Timeframe: October 2005 to May 2006

Rationale: Review of the historically significant Whitney Block constitutes a multi-phased undertaking across several years.

Commitment: Continue to have regard for accessibility in government-funded capital programs in accordance with Barrier-Free Guidelines.

Status: Ongoing

Action: The review of capital projects will continue, as required, taking into account the Ontario Realty Corporation Barrier-Free Design Guidelines.

Timeframe: Throughout the year from October 2005 to July 2006

Rationale: Ongoing commitment

Commitments — Measures to Prevent New Barriers

In the coming years, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines 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

- The ministry will provide training to ServiceOntario/Government Information Centre staff to increase awareness of accessibility issues.

Employment

- We will continue to provide training on accommodating employees and job applicants who have disabilities to all new managers.

Communications and information

- The ministry will review survey results and identify areas that require improved staff awareness and address these areas.

Built environment

- The ministry will continue to inform Ontario Realty Corporation on audit findings for facilities that house Ministry of Northern Development and Mines staff.
- The ministry will have regard for requirements under the Barrier-Free Guidelines for government funded capital projects.

Acts and regulations

- The ministry will continue to consider acts or regulations for a barrier review analysis as part of the regular planning cycle.

2006-07 Commitments — Barriers to be Addressed

In the coming year, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines commits to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities. This section summarizes these commitments.

Customer Service

Barrier: Employees that provide information and services to clients at ServiceOntario/Government Information Centres do not have training in place on accessibility issues and how to better service clients.

Commitment:

- 1) Provide training to ServiceOntario/Government Information Centre staff to increase awareness of accessibility issues and how to better serve clients.

Responsibility: Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group

Timeline: Fall 2006

Barrier: *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliance of ministry's Internet site.

Commitment:

- 1) Continue with ministry process to ensure compliance with *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* before posting information on the ministry's Internet site.

Responsibility: Communications Services Branch

Timeline: Throughout planning year – October 2006 to August 2007

Barrier: New accessibility standards directed by the province need to be addressed by the ministry as they occur.

Commitment:

- 1) The Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group will continue to consult with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to address these new standards.

Responsibility: Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group

Timeline: Throughout planning year – October 2006 to August 2007

Employment Accommodation

Barrier: New managers and supervisors may not be aware of accessibility issues concerning staff and the availability of the employee accommodation fund.

Commitment:

- 1) All new managers and supervisors in the ministry will be advised of the mandatory accessibility training via the manager's orientation checklist.

Responsibility: Human Resources Branch

Timeline: Throughout planning year – October 2006 to August 2007

Barrier: *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliance of ministry's intranet site.

Commitment:

- 1) Continue with ministry process to ensure compliance with *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* before posting information on the ministry's intranet site.

Responsibility: Communications Services Branch

Timeline: Throughout planning year – October 2006 to August 2007

Communications and Information

Barrier: Staff awareness of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and its requirements.

Commitment:

- 1) Review the results of the accessibility survey, which was sent out in May 2006 to identify areas that require improved staff awareness.
- 2) Utilize the ministry newsletters to address the areas identified in the survey results.
- 3) Consider additional information campaigns as necessary to improve staff awareness.

Responsibility: Ministry Accessibility Plan Working Group/Communications Services Branch

Timeline: Staff survey results will be available in October 2006. Identifying areas the require staff awareness and working to improve on these areas will follow from November 2006 to August 2007.

Built Environment

Barrier: Architectural barriers were identified in the three buildings that were audited in 2005 (159 Cedar Street, 199 Larch Street, 933 Ramsey Lake Road all located in Sudbury).

Commitment:

- 1) Inform Ontario Realty Corporation of the results of the building audits done at 159 Cedar Street, 199 Larch Street and 933 Ramsey Lake Road (Sudbury) to encourage the Ontario Realty Corporation to address the barriers identified.

Responsibility: Controllership Office

Timeline: May 2007

Barrier: Existing barriers in buildings housing Ministry of Northern Development and Mines offices require attention on rebuilds.

Commitment:

- 1) Have regard for accessibility in government-funded capital programs in accordance with Barrier-Free Guidelines through new ServiceOntario Centres being built in New Liskeard, Sudbury and Red Lake.

Responsibility: Controllership Office

Timeline: Throughout planning year – October 2006 to August 2007

Barrier: Main public entrance and fire alarm system of the Whitney Block.

Commitment:

- 1) The Whitney Block Users Committee, working in cooperation with facilities management and the Ontario Realty Corporation, will continue to facilitate the implementation of any feasible infrastructure improvements to address accessibility issues. Visual/audible alarms are being installed and fire alarm pull stations are being lowered to a barrier-free height in compliance with Ontario Realty Corporation guidelines. Design options for entrance ramp are scheduled to be completed by March 2007.

Responsibility: Whitney Block User Committee

Timeline: March 2007

Acts and Regulations

Barrier: The *Ontario Mineral Exploration and Professional Geoscientist Acts* were drafted prior to the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and may not be *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliant.

Commitment:

- 1) Legal Services Branch will review the Acts to identify barriers and ensure the appropriate use of language with respect to people with disabilities.

Responsibility: Legal Services Branch

Timeline: June 2007

For More Information

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

Please phone:

General inquiry number: 705 564-7439

TTY number: 1 866 349-1388

1-800 number: 1 877 817-6636

E-mail: http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mndm/feedback_e.asp

Ministry website address: http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mndm/default_e.aspx

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility Ontario web portal at: www.mcscs.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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