

## Municipal Obligations

### A Guide to Municipal Accessibility Planning under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*

August 2002

This guide is provided for information purposes only, and does not constitute legal advice.

The official legal text of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* is available at: [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32_e.htm)

If you have questions about how the legal requirements of the ODA may apply to your specific circumstances, please consult your legal adviser.

This "How to" guide is not a "one-size fits all" document. It is a living guide and we welcome your comments and ideas on how to make the guide better. Please send your suggestions to:

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario  
Ministry of Community and Social Services  
777 Bay Street, Suite 601, Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J4  
Tel: 416-326-0207; Toll-free: 1-888-520-5828  
TTY: 416-326-0148; Toll-free: 1-888-335-6611  
Fax: 416-314-7307  
E-mail: [accessibility@css.gov.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@css.gov.on.ca)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Municipal Obligations to plan for accessibility](#)
  - [ODA Requirements](#)
3. [Benefits of Accessibility Planning](#)
  - [Outcomes of Accessibility Planning](#)
  - [Your organization will be able to draw from a larger pool of skilled employees](#)
  - [Your organization will tap new markets](#)
  - [Services, policies, procedures and practices will meet the needs of more people](#)
4. [Joint Accessibility Plans](#)
  - [Examples of Joint plans](#)
5. [Steps in Creating an Accessibility Plan](#)

- i. [Establish an AAC or Consultation Process](#)
  - ii. [Create an Accessibility Working Group](#)
  - iii. [Consult with Potential Partners for Joint Plans](#)
  - iv. [Review Past Initiatives](#)
  - v. [Conduct an Operational Review](#)
  - vi. [Review Decision-making Practices](#)
  - vii. [Determine How to Address Barriers](#)
  - viii. [Develop a Draft Accessibility Plan](#)
  - ix. [Consult with AAC or People with Disabilities](#)
  - x. [Amend Plan](#)
  - xi. [Obtain Council Approval and Make Public](#)
6. [Accessibility Plan Template](#)
  7. [Monitoring Progress](#)
  8. [Annual Accessibility Plans](#)
  9. [Appendices](#)
    - [Accessibility Planning Checklist](#)
    - [Disability Barriers](#)
    - [Disability Types](#)

## 1. Introduction

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. According to Statistics Canada, about 1.5 million Ontarians have disabilities - about 13.5% of the population. Disability tends to increase with age. In two decades it is estimated that 20% of the population will have disabilities. Enhancing the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and contribute to the community will have positive effects on future prosperity in Ontario.

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities through identification, removal and prevention of barriers to participation in the life of the province. The full text of the ODA is available at:  
[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32_e.htm)

Improving accessibility is a shared responsibility. The ODA requires that the provincial and municipal governments and key broader public sector organizations review their policies, programs and services through the development of annual accessibility plans.

Municipal governments play a crucial role in the planning and development of our communities: in their streets, parks, public transit, libraries, social housing, ambulance services, public buildings and elections. Responsibilities, which include enforcing the barrier-free access requirements of the Ontario Building Code and implementing key accessibility considerations under the ODA, are crucial to realizing a vision of local communities that improve accessibility and mobility for their residents.

Many municipalities are already demonstrating leadership in working with people with disabilities and supportive community stakeholders to create innovative approaches and solutions for accessible communities. Accessibility initiatives already exist in many communities:

- many communities have AACs
- many parks and recreation departments provide programs and services to people with disabilities
- many libraries serve people who have low vision or difficulty reading print books
- many building departments make sure that curbs are cut in high traffic areas
- many communities have programs which serve vulnerable groups such as people with developmental disabilities and psychiatric problems

The ODA builds on relationships and practices which currently exist among councillors, city planners, builders and community groups to make municipalities across Ontario more accessible to people with disabilities.

The new legislative requirements set out standards that all municipalities must follow to ensure that existing barriers for people with disabilities are removed over time and that no new barriers are created.

Under the ODA, all municipalities must prepare and make public all accessibility plans. Municipalities with populations of over 10,000 must appoint an accessibility advisory committee (AAC) to help them prepare the plan.

This guide has been prepared by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to assist municipalities in meeting their planning obligations under the ODA, 2001. More general information on accessibility planning is available online:

[www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/planning\\_information.htm](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/planning/planning_information.htm)

For more information on how to establish accessibility advisory committees and consult with people with disabilities please refer to the 'How to' Guide to Establishing a Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

## **2. Municipal obligations to plan for accessibility**

The ODA mandates the provincial government, the broader public sector (e.g. municipal governments, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities and public transportation providers) to develop annual accessibility plans and make them public.

Accessibility plans are intended to address existing barriers to people with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being established. All municipalities, regardless of their

size, are required to prepare annual accessibility plans as part of their regular planning process. Some may choose to tie their plans into the annual budget process.

Municipalities will not have to identify or remove all barriers all at once, however. They will have the flexibility to identify their own priorities. The plans can be as short as one page - or longer - depending on the issues identified by the community.

#### *ODA Requirements*

The ODA requires that municipal accessibility plans (section 11(2)) address barriers in the municipalities' by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services in the following ways:

1. Report on the measures that the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
2. Describe the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for people with disabilities.
3. List the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers to people with disabilities.
4. Describe the measures the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.
5. Make the accessibility plan available to the public.

The ODA also imposes other obligations on municipalities either directly or through amendments to other Ontario statutes such as:

- **access must be considered:** when buying goods and services, and in planning and subdivision approval
- **business licenses:** municipalities may stipulate accessibility
- **new social housing:** ensure social housing includes a percentage of modified units
- **parking penalties:** municipal enforcement of increased fines for misuse of the Disabled Person Parking Permits and misuse of designated parking spaces established in municipal by-laws
- **improved access to municipal elections:** considering access when selecting locations for voting

Progress in meeting these obligations may be addressed in municipal accessibility plans.

### **3. Benefits of Annual Accessibility Planning**

Accessibility planning can help municipalities think strategically about barrier removal and prevention. The process enables municipalities to integrate planning for accessibility into other corporate, strategic and other business-related planning exercises.

Accessibility planning is an ideal way to tap new markets, attract and retain effective employees, improve service delivery, enhance customer service, and increase efficiency.

### *Outcomes of Accessibility Planning*

Consider these outcomes for municipalities that integrate accessibility planning into their regular business practices:

- Equal access is ensured for all citizens and their quality of life is improved;
- Barriers within your municipality are identified;
- Barrier-free design principles are incorporated into your planning and development process;
- A wider range of tourists and conferences/conventions are attracted to a municipality when accessibility is used as a marketing tool;
- Municipal workforces include and accommodate more people with disabilities;
- Increasing numbers of people with disabilities are planned for as the population ages;
- The risk of human rights complaints is limited

*Municipal accessibility planning enables your community to draw from a larger pool of skilled employees*

Accessibility planning will help municipalities recruit and retain more employees who have the skills to compete in the global marketplace. Du Pont compared employees with and without disabilities in terms of Safety, Attendance and Job Performance. In Safety, 97% of employees with disabilities were rated average or above average. In Attendance, 86% were rated average or above. In Performance of Job Duties, 90% were rated average or above. The Royal Bank of Canada has reported similar findings.

*Municipalities can tap into new markets*

The 15% to 20% of Canadians with disabilities have a combined disposable income of about \$25 billion per year. Most live on their own, eat in restaurants, go to movies, use products and services of all kinds and influence a huge secondary market of friends, family and service providers. The market is too large for municipalities to ignore.

*Services, policies, procedures and practices will meet the needs of more people*

Accessibility planning will help ensure that municipal services, policies, procedures and practices meet the needs of everyone - including staff and members of the public with disabilities.

## **4. Joint Accessibility Plans**

Flexibility has been built into the ODA (*Section 17*) to enable municipalities, school boards, community colleges, hospitals and public transportation providers to jointly prepare one plan.

The joint plan provision encourages co-operation between adjoining regions and reduction of potential duplication where complementary or similar activities are taking place. This type of co-operation is consistent with the themes of Smart Growth and many partnership initiatives currently underway in our communities.

Municipalities must produce an accessibility plan that is specific to their locale or participate in a joint plan arrangement. They may choose at any time forego participation in a joint plan provided they then create their own plan:

- where joint committees are established by two or more municipalities or partners, the committees should include representation from those areas and partners;
- each partner must approve the joint plan every year;
- each partner must implement its components of the plan;
- each partner must make the joint plan public.

District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSAB's) are local boards that deliver municipal services in Northern Ontario such as Ontario Works and social housing. DSSAB services are included in each member municipality's obligations under the ODA. Municipal accessibility plans must therefore include these services.

In the interests of efficiency and eliminating duplication, member municipalities of a DSSAB may agree to having the DSSAB prepare a joint accessibility plan with their input and approval that covers the delivery of services across the territory of the DSSAB.

Similarly, joint accessibility plans may allow a county to create an accessibility plan that is relevant to the county and all of the member municipalities.

The following examples have been prepared to demonstrate the potential for developing joint accessibility plans and these are coordinated with the examples of joint accessibility committees provided in the "How-to" Guide to Establishing a Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

#### Example 1:

A separated city maintains a permanent AAC, which provide services to the County and member municipalities. The city through agreement takes the lead on creating an accessibility plan that includes the county and local municipalities (many with less than 10,000 residents). All municipalities devote council members, staff members and resources to a co-ordinating committee to contribute their fair share of the work in creating the plan.

Although municipalities with populations of less than 10,000 are not required to establish an AAC, they can use the committee to consult with people with disabilities in developing their plan.

The plan reflects the issues identified by the participating partners. Where it makes sense, some activities such as accessibility audits are planned as joint activities to lower costs. The plan is approved by all partners and is made public by each of the participating municipalities.

Example 2:

A county maintains a permanent AAC that provides services to all local municipalities, including one city. The county has assumed the lead for creating one accessibility plan for itself and local municipalities. All municipalities devote council members, staff members and resources to a co-ordinating committee to contribute their fair share of the work in creating the plan.

Through discussions with the school board and hospital it makes sense for the county plan to include sections dedicated to the new local school sites, school expansions and the new hospital expansion. The school board and hospital contribute the staff time and information necessary for these components and ensure that they complete individual plans that cover the other obligations related to their organizations.

The plan reflects the issues identified by the participating partners. Where it makes sense, some activities such as accessibility audits are planned as joint activities to lower costs. The plan is approved by all partners and is made public by each of the participating organizations.

Example 3:

A regional government maintains a permanent AAC that provides services to the regional government, the member townships, cities and an integrated public transit organization that serves the entire region. All municipalities devote council members, staff members and resources to a co-ordinating committee to contribute their fair share of the work in creating the plan.

The regional government co-ordinates the development and maintenance of a joint accessibility plan utilized by all of the municipalities and the transit organization.

The plan reflects the issues identified by the participating partners. Where it makes sense, some activities such as accessibility audits are planned as joint activities to lower costs. The plan is approved by all partners and is made public by each of the participating municipalities.

Example 4:

A DSSAB administers services in an area that includes a small city of over 10,000 residents and municipalities that have less than 10,000 residents. The DSSAB maintains an AAC for its own purposes and also provides advisory services to the city. The municipalities with less than 10,000 residents also use the AAC as their mechanism to consult with people with disabilities and pay a fair share of the costs.

As directed by its member municipalities, the DSSAB co-ordinates the development and maintenance of a district wide joint accessibility plan that covers the services specific to the DSSAB as a service provided to its member municipalities. The member municipalities use the DSSAB plan as a component of their separate accessibility plans.

## 5. Steps in Creating a Municipal Accessibility Plan

The following outlines the series of steps a municipality may undertake in developing an accessibility plan. The same steps could apply to the development of a joint plan.

- i. Establish an AAC, partner in a joint accessibility committee or establish a consultation process with people with disabilities.
- ii. Create an accessibility planning working group.
- iii. Consult with potential partners regarding the possibility of developing a joint plan.
- iv. Review history of initiatives to identify, remove and prevent barriers within your municipality.
- v. Conduct an operational review to identify barriers that need to be addressed.
- vi. Review decision-making practices to identify practices that may create future barriers.
- vii. Determine how to address known barriers and how to address the potential of future barriers.
- viii. Develop a draft plan including targets and a monitoring process.
- ix. Consult with the AAC or people with disabilities on the content of the plan.
- x. Amend the plan based on AAC recommendations.
- xi. Obtain Council approval and make the plan public

In the following pages we explain how these steps can help municipalities develop an effective plan. A plan template is also provided to assist municipalities in organizing the information collected into a planning document.

### **i) Establish an AAC or Consultation Process**

Municipalities with over 10,000 residents should establish an AAC prior to creating accessibility plans to enable them to provide input into the plans at an early stage. The supplementary guide on establishing an AAC recommends that a department, key staff or working group of staff and council be created to coordinate the development of the Committee.

Many people with disabilities are actively involved with disability organizations in their community. Some examples of these organizations include the local chapters of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind; Easter Seals Association; Canadian Mental Health Association; Canadian Hearing Society, and the Ontario Association for Community Living. As well, consumer organizations such as independent living centres and injured workers associations can be used to identify people with disabilities.

Municipalities are encouraged to contact these and other organizations to identify individuals who have expertise and credibility in disability issues.

### **ii) Create an Accessibility Working Group**

Depending upon the size and scope of the municipality, a working group of senior staff should be identified to help coordinate the preparation of a plan in conjunction with the AAC. The working group should be led by a senior staff such as the Chief Administrative Officer, who is responsible for submitting the plan for council approval.

Since the operations, policies and practices of the municipality must be reviewed each department should be prepared to collect the information necessary to complete the plan. Consideration should be given to each department having a representative on the working group.

Some examples of municipal departments that could have representation are:

- Clerk
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Systems
- Engineering
- Public Works
- Roads
- Planning
- Legal
- Libraries
- Building-Property Management
- Social Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Police Services
- Agriculture

Ideally, smaller municipalities should develop a small co-ordinating group responsible for the plan development that includes some people with disabilities.

### **iii) Consult with Potential Partners for Joint Plans**

Municipalities may want to explore the possibility of developing a joint plan with other municipalities or agencies. It is appropriate that this take place as early as possible in the plan development process. In particular if municipalities are sharing an AAC, a joint plan should be considered. This will ensure that efforts are not duplicated or work will not

have to be redone. It is recommended that plan development work only commence once the potential partnership is affirmed and the parameters of the partnership are defined.

At this stage in the plan development, municipalities may find it beneficial to consult with other agencies and boards where there are cross- jurisdictional issues. For example, if a municipality is contributing to the costs of a hospital expansion, the municipality under the ODA should ensure that the expansion has received consideration for accessibility. Likewise, the hospital should do the same. Therefore, the two organizations should coordinate this activity upfront so that only one accessibility review occurs and is reported once in either of the accessibility plans and referenced in the other.

If it is decided to proceed with a joint plan, the working group formed to coordinate the plan development should reflect the organizations participating in the joint plan. A joint plan must reflect the issues identified by each organization and must be made public by each of these organizations. Further, approval of a joint plan is required by each participating organization's board or municipal council.

#### **iv) Review Past Initiatives**

Each plan must state the steps a municipality has taken to identify remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. Defining what activity has occurred in the past will help to provide a context for the new activity to be recorded in the plan and give your municipality the opportunity to showcase accessibility achievements. It is extremely important in the first plan for a historical account of activity to be included since this may define one of the benchmarks against which future progress may be measured in addition to meeting the obligations under the ODA.

A template to report the findings of this review is provided in the plan template section of this guide. Appendix A defines barriers, which can be used to help your municipality prepare its plans.

If a municipality has already conducted this form of review, they may provide the original report with a progress update along with any new information now required.

After the first initial plan, yearly planning will consist of a report on the targets met from the previous year's plan.

#### **v) Conduct an Operational Review**

A municipal accessibility plan requires the municipality to review its operations and decision-making from the context of accessibility. In some cases this will be a review of physical assets such as municipal premises owned or leased and include a review of items in the capital budget. In other cases it will include a review of business practises and policies such as employment standards and hiring procedures. It will also want to ensure that people with disabilities have access to meetings and can participate in decision making. In summary an entire organizational review will be conducted.

It is important that current operations are reviewed in preparation for completing the initial accessibility plan. Some municipalities may have already undertaken such a review and an update will need to occur. This reinforces the importance of the historical review, which sets the initial context of the plan.

It is through the historical context and the organizational review that the municipality defines its role in improving accessibility for people with disabilities and eliminating barriers. The operations review must be complete and thorough touching every aspect of the organization from current by-laws to public works. The operations review should include but not be limited to:

- Site plans and building plans of existing municipal buildings
- Existing municipal by-laws
- Business licensing
- Purchases
- Significant renovations
- Leased facilities or any other facility used as a municipal building
- Municipal capital facilities under the Municipal Act
- Goods and Services provided by the municipality or agents providing services under contract with the municipality
- Employment practices and accommodations
- Communications and publications
- External service providers
- Planning practices
- Current capital plan
- Operational policies
- Accessibility of meetings
- Identifying whether people with disabilities are involved in the decision-making process

Some municipalities will not have conducted an accessibility review in the past, while others may be in the process of doing so. The ODA provides flexibility in creating an accessibility plan. This review may be outside of the scope relative to the municipality's resources; therefore completing an operational review or components of a review is an acceptable target to be established in the initial plan.

The AAC can help the municipality to prioritize the areas of their review to gain the most impact for time invested. One method of review would be to conduct a review on a department by department basis. Relevant timelines could be established based on the size and scope of departmental activities. The plan template presented in the following section is organized according to this method.

#### **vi) Review Decision-making Practices**

Given the mandate of eliminating existing barriers and ensuring that no new barriers are created it makes sense to review municipal decision making related to by-laws, planning, building and the creation of municipal services. This review can ensure that accessibility is considered when site plans are developed and in the leasing of municipal facilities, for example.

Rather than review all by-laws from a to z, the advisory committee can help council prioritize its review, by identifying which by-laws might be the highest priority and reviewing those first. A by-law review may also be coordinated on a department by department basis.

### **vii) Determine How To Address Barriers**

The core intent of the accessibility plan is to provide an action plan for the elimination of present barriers and the creation of policies and procedures to prevent future barriers from being created. Once identified, municipalities must determine how to address barriers within their resources and set targets and timelines for these actions.

The input of an AAC into planning, development and acquisition decisions need not delay the approval process for development and/or raise costs.

A review of site plans can be facilitated through a sub-committee of the AAC, assisted by staff from the municipal planning department. Other AACs may wish to prioritize the projects their committee reviews.

Some municipal AACs may wish to hold information sessions for developers before the approval process of development and sub-divisions is initiated. The creation of standards and policies may also reduce the complexity of the decision-making processes and help ensure that access is addressed upfront in site and building plans.

Engaging the active participation of the sectors affected by the decision - the AAC, planning department, building/development industry and other stakeholders - will help to develop a binding consensus on the standards to be applied. Best practices within the municipal sector suggest that many municipalities have successfully undertaken such projects.

When standards are developed through consensus of the AAC and the other affected stakeholders, the AAC does not have to be involved in the decision-making process for all site plans, except when the standards are not being met or in monitoring the effectiveness of these measures. Through this process stakeholders in the decision approval process - whether they are council, staff, private-business or people with disabilities - know upfront the standards that are to be met.

### **viii) Develop a Draft Accessibility Plan**

All plan actions must have a corresponding target date for completion. It is reasonable to establish some actions that will not be completed within a year. In these cases, dates should be set to help monitor the progress on a long-term activity.

Each municipality must establish a process that monitors the achievement of the targets set forth in the plan (see section on Monitoring). Plan content must also include:

- A list of by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services the municipality will review in the coming year to identify barriers, and
- How the municipality intends to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the coming year.

#### **ix) Consult with AAC or People with Disabilities**

The ODA requires Municipal AACs to advise municipalities (of over 10,000 residents) about preparing an accessibility plan; how it will work, or is working and if it achieves its goals.

When the working group completes the draft plan, the AAC should be invited to analyze the plan and provide comments and recommendations to be incorporated into the plan.

#### **x) Amend Plan**

The working group amends the Accessibility Plan according to the advice and direction from the AAC.

#### **xi) Obtain Council Approval and Make Public**

The municipal accessibility plan is complete when the plan (including a joint plan) receives Council approval.

The plan (including a joint plan) must then be made available to the general public. The method a municipality uses to make its plan public will vary depending on its resources, needs and/or practice. Many municipalities however are making increasing use of their municipal websites in publicizing committee activities and initiatives.

Public libraries serve as a point of access of government information and can be a useful mechanism to make municipal draft plans and plans (including joint plans) available to the public.

## **6. Accessibility Plan Template**

The following section provides a template which municipalities may use in the development of their plans. Depending upon local circumstances municipalities may choose to edit the templates or include additional information to meet other identified needs.

For the purposes of this document, the template has been presented in letter page size. Municipalities may choose to expand this to legal page size for the purposes of recording the required information and submitting the plan.

### **MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

*This is a sample - please adapt and/or customize as appropriate.*

#### **Section 1: Municipal Jurisdiction(s) Participating in this Plan**

*Describe each municipality that participates in this plan according to the following subheadings.*

## **Municipality**

*Insert the name of the municipality and type, i.e., town, township, etc.*

## **Address**

*Insert the address of the corporate office including postal code*

## **Key Contact**

*Include the contact name of person for inquiries regarding the Accessibility Plan, telephone number and email address*

## **Population**

*Describe the population according to the 2000 Census*

## **Municipal Highlights**

*Provide a brief description of the municipality, its location, history, the organizational structure (i.e. fire and emergency services, public works, and social services)*

*Accessibility contact information*

## **Section 2: Other Organizations & Agencies Participating in this Plan**

*Describe each organization or agency participating in this plan according to the following subheadings.*

### **Organization-Agency**

*The name of the Organization-Agency*

### **Address**

*Address of the corporate office or head-office within the plans boundaries*

### **Description**

*Provide a brief description of the agency, its service catchment, history, the organizational structure and the rationale for participation in this plan*

*Public transit organizations are named in the ODA as organizations that are required to submit accessibility plans. Scheduled agencies are defined by the ODA as: School boards, Hospitals, Community Colleges and Universities. An agency is defined by the ODA as an organization or class of organizations that provide services to the public and are not organizations in the private sector. Regulations are being developed to name or describe which organizations or class of organizations fall within the meaning of an "agency".*

## **Section 3: Consultation Activities**

*In preparation of a municipal accessibility plan, each municipality is required to consult with people with disabilities or use their AAC for advice and recommendations. Municipalities are not restricted to this minimum requirement and may want to consult*

more broadly with all sectors of their community. Consultation activities undertaken to prepare the plan may be reported using the following subheadings.

### Target Group

For example, the general public, the AAC, supportive stakeholder groups etc.

### Activities and Convenor

Activities could be, for example, focus groups organized by a disability coalition and facilitated by AAC members, the draft plan reviewed for comments and recommendations as submitted by working group etc.

### Time period activity occurred

Provide the month(s) the activity(ies) occurred

### Summary of Information Collected through Consultation

Provide summary of consultation information.

## Section 4: Plan Development Working Group

The body co-ordinating the accessibility plan should be identified specifying whether this is an individual or larger working group. This information is an important component of the plan and will allow officials from municipalities to contact their cohorts to discuss different approaches in plans and share best practices and experiences.

This provides a ready method for municipalities to share information, techniques and background to their approaches on the many facets of accessibility. The following chart may be used to present the information.

Working Group Member	Municipality / Agency	Department Represented	Contact Telephone / TTY & email

## Section 4: Plan Development Working Group

In this section the municipalities and organizations participating in the plan identify past accessibility initiatives, report on barriers identified through these initiatives and whether they have been addressed.

**Note:** If previous accessibility reports have identified this information, they may be used in lieu of the information below.

The following subheadings may be used to organize the information.

### Initiative

State the initiative and organization that conducted the initiative if a joint plan is being prepared.

## Methods Used to Identify Barriers

### Barriers Identified

Use the following chart to summarize the barriers identified in the past.

Barrier and Type	Strategy for removal/prevention	Status
Describe the barrier (use one of physical, architectural, information/communication, attitudinal, technological, policies and practices to describe the type)	(a brief description of strategies in place to address the barrier)	(i.e., date completed, date work to commence, not addressed etc.)

## Section 6: Operational Review

*This section reports the review activities necessary to identify barriers in the current operations of the organizations that are participating in this plan. This information should be organized according to department using the following sub-headings.*

### Organization

*Name the organization.*

### Department

*Provide the name of the department and a description of the activities that take place within the department, the departmental responsibilities, the departmental work teams and/or divisions.*

### Review Date

*Provide the dates that the review took place. If a review has not taken place, provide the dates for when the review is planned and the completion date. A planned review becomes an action set by the plan.*

### Rationale for Planned Review

*If the review has not taken place a rationale should be provided for the planned time period. Appropriate rationales could consist of the size of the department, the scope of the activity, a recent amalgamation, and the resources available.*

*A 12-month target should be set for activities.*

### Review Methodologies

*Describe the methodologies use to conduct the review. Examples would be office sites review, building plans reviewed, client questionnaire, etc. If a review has not taken place, describe the methodologies that will be used to conduct the planned review. In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams different review methodologies may be used. This section should be structured according to the departmental structure.*

### Status

There are three choices to identify the status of the departmental review:

**Completed:** if the review is completed provide the dates completed.

**Ongoing:** If the review is still underway, provide a summary of the progress and an assessment if the review is within the time frames set.

**Planned:** In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams a review may be completed within certain divisions or work-teams. This section may be structured according to the departmental structure and a status accorded to each division and/or work team.

### List of Barriers Identified

Use the chart provided to list the barriers identified by the review.

In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams, review results may be reported on individual charts specific to work teams and/or divisions.

Barrier	Barrier Type	Strategies for removal or prevention
(describe barrier)	(see appendix 2 for terms)	(describe corrective measures, and when these will occur)

## 7: Decision-Making Review

This section provides information about how the decision-making processes are to be reviewed. This review includes reviewing policies and practices, capital planning, by-laws approval etc. The information is to be organized according to the specific department using the following headings.

### Organization

Name the organization.

### Department

Provide the name of the department and a description of the activities that take place within the department, the departmental responsibilities, the departmental work teams and/or divisions.

### Review Date

Provide the dates that the review took place. If a review has not taken place, provide the dates for when the review is planned and the completion date. A planned review becomes an action set by the plan.

### Rationale for Planned Review

If the review has not taken place a rationale should be provided for the planned time period. Rationales could consist of the size of the department, the scope of the activity, a recent amalgamation, and the resources available.

A review may take longer than one-year. In these cases a rationale should be provided for this extended time line.

## Review Methodologies

*Describe the methodologies use to conduct the review. Examples would be by-laws review, policy review, client questionnaire, etc. If a review has not taken place, describe the methodologies that will be used to conduct the planned review. In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams different review methodologies may be used. This section should be structured according to the departmental structure.*

## Status

*There are three choices to identify the status:*

*Completed:* if the review is completed provide the dates completed.

*Ongoing:* If the review is still underway, provide a summary of the progress and an assessment if the review is within the time frames set.

*Planned:* In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams a review may be completed within certain divisions or work-teams. This section may be structured according to the departmental structure and a status accorded to each division and/or work team.

## List of Barriers Identified

*Use the chart provided to list the barriers identified by the review.*

*In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams, review results may be reported on individual charts specific to work teams and/or divisions.*

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Barrier Type</b>	<b>Strategies for removal or prevention</b>
(describe barrier)	(see appendix 2 for terms)	(describe corrective measures, and when these will occur)

## 8: Targets and Actions

*Targets need to be set to help establish when barriers will be addressed or actions taken to address preventative measures. This section organizes the targets and actions according to the specific departments. The following sub-headings are to be used for this purpose.*

*Where reasonable numerous barriers and the corrective measures may be grouped together into one action.*

### Organization

*Name the organization.*

### Department

*Provide the name of the department and a description of the activities that take place within the department, the departmental responsibilities, the departmental work teams and/or divisions.*

## Barrier(s)

The barrier(s) to be addressed by the specific actions are to be itemized with a corresponding action. Depending on the size of the department and municipality-organizations, name and numbers can be used to code each barrier and associated action for tracking purposes.

## Action(s)

Actions reflective of the strategies proposed to address the barriers are detailed after each barrier itemized. The goal of the actions is to move the organization forward in eliminating and preventing barriers. In larger municipalities where a department may consist of divisions and/or work teams actions should be structured according to the departmental structure.

### Resources Necessary to Undertake Action

Resources necessary to undertake the actions are to be detailed as a sub-heading of each action. Necessary resources may be funding for actions or merely staff time dedicated to doing the work proposed.

### Departmental Lead

The names of staff members or group who are accountable for completing the action(s) are named.

## Target

The target is the anticipated timeline for the action. A target does not necessarily have to be set within a 12-month period. The nature of the actions may be phased in over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the community.

## Summary of Actions to be completed within 12 months

The following chart may be used to summarize

Action	Resources	Costs	Target
<b>Total Cost</b>			

## 7. Monitoring Progress

A municipal accessibility plan should set targets that are to be achieved within a specified time period. Some time periods will come due during the 12-month period of each plan. Municipalities should establish a monitoring process that is proactive in nature to keep their organizations on track to complete set targets.

A process within the 12-month period of annual accessibility plans should be created so that targets can be re-evaluated to adapt to changing circumstances. The AAC should

be used for assistance in creating a monitoring process and in the actual monitoring itself.

A mid-year (6-month) report may be helpful to some municipalities to help identify progress in achieving annual targets.

## 8. Annual Accessibility Plans

Once the initial plan has been created, plans in the following years will focus on the targets achieved and work completed with an update of plans for the next year. They can follow the sample template format provided in this Guide.

Once existing barriers have been eliminated and preventative measures such as accessibility standards and guidelines have been implemented, the annual accessibility plans will address the ongoing suitability of the guidelines, how they are used and identify exceptional impacts on these plans.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING CHECKLIST

Activity	Timeline	Completed
Establish AAC or create a process for consultation with people with disabilities (refer to Section 12 of the ODA for specific details in this area)		
Create an Accessibility Planning Work Group		
Consult with potential partners in a joint plan		
Review Past Initiatives		
Conduct an Operational Review		
Review Decision-making practices		
Determine How to Address barriers		
Develop a Draft Plan		
Set Targets (6, 12 month or longer), establish a monitoring process		
Consult with AAC or people with disabilities on the draft plan;		
Amend plan based on AAC recommendations or the results of the consultations		
Obtain Council Approval		
Make the Plan Public		

### Appendix B

## DISABILITY BARRIERS

People with disabilities face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, at work, at school, in parks, in recreational facilities, in the streets, in theatres, in stores and in restaurants - and even in municipalities.

A "barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.<sup>1</sup> Barriers prevent people with disabilities from going to school and to work.

### Types of barriers

Barrier type	Example
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a elderly person with limited upper-body mobility and strength
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with low vision
Communicational	A professor who talks loudly when addressing a deaf student
Attitudinal	A recreational swimming program which discourages people with developmental disabilities from participating.
Technological	Information on a municipal website, which cannot be accessed by a person who is blind who has reading software for a computer.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly

## Appendix C

### DISABILITY: THE ODA DEFINITION

The ODA draws on the broad definition for disability that appears in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. "Disability" is:

- a. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

For additional information on disability, types of disability and barriers see Appendix A of the [Guide to Accessibility Planning](#).

- 
1. Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 : Bill 125*. Toronto : Queen's Printer of Ontario, 2002.  
[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32\\_e.htm#BK3](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01o32_e.htm#BK3).