



# 5 Year Accessibility Plan (2012-2016)

## Report on 2012 Achievements

### Introduction:

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. Under the *Act*, all municipalities are required to prepare annual accessibility plans, make the plans public and consult persons with disabilities.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario will develop mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

The province has been working with representatives from the disability community, as well as public and private sector organizations to develop accessibility standards. Standards were developed to achieve real results in stages. They set milestones that must be reached every five years or less, so that Ontario is accessible to people with disabilities by 2025.

The five standard areas under the AODA include: **Customer Service; Information and Communications; Employment; Transportation; and Built Environment.**

All of the standards have been developed and are now law.

**Customer Service Standard** is the first standard developed to become a regulation. It came into force on January 1, 2008 and is now the law. Public sector organizations were required to comply by January 1, 2010. Private sector organizations will be required to comply by January 1, 2012. The standard addresses business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

**Integrated Accessibility Regulation** (IAR) is an amalgamation of the Information and Communications Standard, Employment Standard, Transportation Standard and Built Environment Standard. The Integrated Accessibility Standards became law on June 3, 2011 with a variety of compliance dates ranging from 2011 to 2021. On January 1, 2013, the IAR was amended to include Design of Public Spaces (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment).

**Accessible Information and Communications Standards** address the removal of barriers in access to information. The standards include information being provided in person, through print, a website or other means.

**Employment Accessibility Standards** address paid employment practices relating to employee-employer relationships, which include recruitment, hiring, and retention policies and practices.

**Accessible Transportation Standards** have been identified as crucial for people with disabilities. Access to transportation is needed for going to work or school, shopping and other aspects of daily life. This standard is to address aspects of accessible public transportation.

**Accessible Built Environment Standard** addresses access into and within buildings and outdoor spaces and will build on Ontario's Building Code. Beginning in 2016, public and private sector organizations will have to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas for public use
- Outdoor play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on- and off-street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

The City of Pickering's 5 Year Accessibility Plan (2012-2016) was prepared by city staff, endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Pickering Council, and is designed to position the municipality to meet ministry compliance for all standards. A core accessibility staff team made up of staff across all departments meet every two months to review the plan and to report on their progress on their respective action items.

The following is a summary of 2012 Achievements of the City of Pickering 5 Year Accessibility Plan (2012-2016).

## **City of Pickering 5 Year Accessibility Plan (2012-2016): 2012 Achievements**

### **A. Customer Service Standard**

#### **Staff Training**

Accessible Customer Service Training is included as part of Pickering's Employee Orientation Program. Sessions are held monthly for all new staff. In 2012, 120 staff received Accessible Customer Service provided by our Customer Care Centre staff. This includes all new hires, Camp staff and Operations summer/term employees. This also includes ensuring municipal volunteers are trained.

Staff continue to promote and reinforce the importance of ensuring accessibility standards are met. Customer Care Centre staff are a key resource for other department staff should they have questions related to the standard, and the best service delivery methods. The Customer Care Centre is a single point of contact should anyone require any documentation or information in an alternate format. This is the simplest and most streamlined approach to centralize any requests, and to field enquiries.

### **B. Accessible Information and Communications Standards**

#### **City Hall Signage**

As part of the municipal service delivery review, a staff team was established to look at signage within City Hall, not only as it relates to service delivery, but also to incorporate accessibility standards. A proposal was submitted for 2013 budget consideration, which has subsequently been approved. This project is included in our 2013 work plan.

#### **Website**

The City of Pickering's new website, launched in May 2012, has been developed to meet WCAG 2.0 AA standards. This is the highest standard that can be attained, and legislatively, it is not required until 2021. Through the development of the website we wanted to ensure that we surpassed the minimum requirements. Some key features include enhanced search functions, BrowseAloud screen reading capability, text resizing, Google Translate, and a section dedicated to Accessibility which provides easy access to resources including:

- Annual Accessibility Plan
- Accessible facilities and services
- Navigation Tips
- Quick Links
  - ✓ Accessibility Advisory Committee
  - ✓ Accessible Customer Service Statement
  - ✓ Community Resources
  - ✓ Language Resources
  - ✓ Program Cancellations & Service Disruptions

- ✓ Seniors & Persons with Disabilities Snow Clearing Program
- ✓ Temporary Road Closures
- ✓ Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy
- Comments and Feedback
- Applicable By-laws

### **Adobe Acrobat X Training - January 2012**

Staff recognize that PDF documents available through the website may not be fully compliant, and staff members are working towards updating all new PDF documents to be accessible by December 2013. A dedicated staff team comprised of a cross-representation of department representatives received Adobe Acrobat X training, to learn how to create accessible PDF's. The intent is that these staff will be designated as train the trainers, and will be a key resource to staff within their departments. This team is working on creating resource documents and related procedures in order to support training requirements.



### **Creating Accessible Documents Training**

Staff partnered with Accessibility Experts in October 2012 and provided training space and support to their sessions. In turn, staff were able to offer training to key staff in Pickering's bid to support our train the trainer initiatives.

### **Writing Workshop**

A Writing Workshop was held in September 2012 that included a section on accessibility requirements in which 20 staff participated. This was the third workshop held in the past two years. To date, 80 staff members have participated and another workshop is being planned for 2013.

## **Corporate Writing Guide**

The Corporate Writing Guide was updated to include additional resources related to Accessibility and Writing for the Public. The Guide includes the following sections:

- Document Design (use of colour, font choice, spacing and alignment)
- Layout (page design, use of tables)
- Printing and binding documents
- Electronic documents
- Presentation materials
- Alternate formats
- Accessibility Communications Checklist

## **Information & Communications Standard Overview**

Members of the Corporate Communication Team, along with selected department representatives, attended a training session in July 2012 providing an overview of the requirements of the Information & Communication Standards.

## **Website Content Managers**

Website Content Managers received training in March 2012. In addition, Content Management System procedure has been developed to ensure that standards are maintained. Ongoing support and training will be provided to content managers.

## **Municipal Matters – Employee Newsletter**

Staff have a regular feature in Pickering's employee newsletter to keep staff apprised of any updates and initiatives. In 2012, two issues of our newsletter were distributed to all staff and included features on accessibility initiatives within the municipality.

## **Pickering Public Library**

The Pickering Public Library created a new policy in 2012 that incorporates both the Customer Service Standard and the new Accessible Information and Communications Standard. This policy was posted on our website and it includes a feedback mechanism. This policy makes it clear that we will consult with the individual to select a suitable format, handle requests in a timely manner and ensure that disabled clients are not charged more than any other person in the community.

Signs that highlight key points from the new Accessible Information and Communications Standard were posted at all our service desks to draw client attention to this pertinent information. Training on all relevant Accessibility standards has been incorporated in the training plan for new hires. Two of our staff attended training on creating documents in accessible formats.

An Information and Communications procedure was developed to support and guide staff. For instance, this procedure outlines the hiring process for a sign language interpreter because Library programs are considered information sharing and everyone in the community should be able to attend.

The Pickering Public Library has arranged to provide accessible materials where they exist. We routinely provide resources in large print, audiobooks, ebooks and online databases for online learning and research.

A special magnifier was purchased in 2012 to ensure that clients can read print material in-house.

Through a partnership with the CNIB, we can provide resources in Braille and Daisy reader audio books for anyone with a visual or print disability. With the support of the CNIB, we can now be the public library for the visually disabled in our community. The Library continues to digitize its local history collection so that it can be accessible. The Local History Librarian is willing to research and digitize primary documents based on individual requests.

The Library's website was overhauled to meet World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A.

## **C. Employment Accessibility Standards**

### **Emergency Planning**

During 2012, the City of Pickering's Human Resource Division ensured that Workplace Emergency Plans include individual plans for those employees who may require assistance because of a disability. Emergency Responders, located in all facilities, are provided with information from these individual plans, with the employee's consent, in order to provide appropriate assistance to an employee during an emergency situation.

### **Policy Development**

The Pickering Public Library created an Accessible Employment Standards policy in 2012. This policy outlined the Library's commitment to:

- ensure that employees are provided with the accessible formats and communication supports to do their job and to access information that is generally available to other employees in the workplace
- develop individualized workplace emergency plans for an employee with a disability and alter them if an employee moves to a different branch
- notify employees and applicants that they will be accommodated during the recruitment, assessment and selection process in a way that takes into account their accessibility needs
- outline our commitment to put work processes in place for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and need disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

This policy was reviewed with all library staff. Our commitment to accommodate applicants during the recruitment process is outlined on the Job Opportunities section of our website.

## **D. Accessible Transportation Standards**

### **Taxi Licensing**

Because the City of Pickering does not operate a public transit system, the only requirements under the Transportation Standards for 2012 were those relating to the licensing of taxicabs.

- Ensuring that owners and operators place vehicle registration and identification on the rear bumper.
- Ensuring that owners and operators provide this information in alternate formats to persons with a disability, upon request.

## **E. Accessible Built Environment Standard**

The City of Pickering continued to examine its physical facilities to identify and remove physical barriers to enable persons with disabilities to fully participate in programs and events in those facilities. The following upgrades were made in 2012:

### **City Hall**

- 3 Automatic door openers to provide access to meeting rooms which are used for public meetings and consultations: the main committee meeting room and the tower meeting room/lunchroom area.

### **Pickering Public Library**

- New accessible water fountains were installed at the Pickering Central Library.

### **Pickering Recreation Complex Arenas**

- Additional automatic door openers on the main entrance doors.
- 2 Automatic door openers for the O'Brien Room washrooms.
- Installation of an automatic sliding door from the main lobby to the Delaney Rink.



## East Shore Community Centre

- 2 automatic door openers: the exterior entrance to the Pickering Lawn Bowling Club and the interior entrance to the Community Room.
- A ramp was added to the deck at the exterior entrance to the Pickering Lawn Bowling Club.
- Ramps were improved and railings added at both the front and rear main entrances to allow safe access to the building.
- Railings were added at the 3 emergency exits from the South Pickering Seniors Club.
- Upgrades were completed to the washrooms in the South Pickering Seniors Club to improve access for persons with mobility aids.
- Ramps and rails were added at emergency exits to provide added safety during evacuations of the building.



### **Millennium Square (Beachfront)**

- 2 automatic door openers added to the public washrooms.

### **Claremont Community Centre**

- 3 automatic door openers: the main auditorium entrance and the interior entrances to the public washrooms.

### **Mt. Zion, Green River, Greenwood Community Centres**

- New accessible soap dispensers installed in washroom.

### **Pickering Museum Village**

The Pickering Museum Village is a collection of heritage and reproduction buildings presented in an 1800's village setting. Several of the heritage buildings have public display areas on the second floor. As it is impossible to provide full access to these areas without considerable destruction to heritage features of the buildings, Museum staff has provided photographic versions of the displays with accompanying information. These can be viewed on the accessible main level of each of the buildings.

The village setting of the Museum requires considerable travel from one building to another and around the exterior displays and gardens. To provide assistance for visitors who may have difficulty walking these distances, the Museum, in 2012, acquired a transport wheelchair for their use.

- 4 automatic door openers installed: the exterior entrance to the public washroom area, both interior public washrooms and the interior doorway from the meeting room to the washroom area.
- Improved ramps to 3 heritage buildings: the Oddfellows Hall, the Brougham Temperance House and the log house.



Redman House



Brougham Temperance House

## City Parks

During 2012, the City's Parks Operations installed the first accessible, raised bed in the Valley Plentiful Community Garden. This was in response to a request from a long-time member of the community garden and the plan is to install more raised beds in 2013.



## F. Accessible Programs

### Arenas

Access to skating/ice programs in the City of Pickering arenas improved in 2012 through several initiatives.

- Adult skate aids were purchased and made available during public skating programs for persons who require some assistance for balance or support.
- Ice time was provided to the Grandview Childrens' Centre for therapeutic skating/ice programs.
- Standard Operating Procedures was initiated for the safe integration of persons with disabilities into the City's public skating/ice programs through the use of wheelchairs, skate aids and ice sledges.



### Pools

The City of Pickering Aquatics programs continued to provide services for persons with disabilities through:

- Aquafit programs for persons with a range of mobility problems, 325 users.
- One-on-one programs for children with a disability.
- Use of the Recreation Complex Pool for a volunteer organized, community based learn-to-swim program for children with special needs, 20 children per week from September to May.

In 2012, Dunbarton Indoor Pool also had a chair lift installed so patrons with mobility problems can access the pool.

### Day Camps

The City of Pickering Day Camp programs provided integrated camp experiences for approximately fifty (50) children with disabilities. The City's Integrated Services program provided one-on-one support to these children which enabled them to participate in a variety of camp programs.

All camp staff received training in accessible customer service, as well as awareness and specific practical training in how to support children with disabilities.

## G. The Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee held a total of nine meetings in 2012 and participated in the following initiatives:

### 1. Accessibility Awareness Event:

- Held 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Accessibility Awareness Event on Sat. November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- Pickering Town Centre – Centre Court, 11 am – 3 pm
- Included a combination of speakers and entertainers with the focus being on “abilities in our community”



### 2. Policy Review - Standards and Implementation:

- Completed review of Accessibility Parking By-law – still to go to Council
- Reviewed standards for curb cuts /sidewalks - completed by city staff to meet provincial standards
- Reviewed pedestrian crossing times at signalized intersections and received response from the Region of Durham regarding 2 intersections, Dixie / Finch and Glenanna / Highway #2
- Reviewed the City's policy on full service gas stations – to be updated
- Accessibility Audit of Public Facilities was almost completed. In 2013, the Committee will identify areas which are non-compliant.

### 3. Reach Out to Residents of Pickering:

- Completed an Accessibility Survey which is currently on the City website
- No significant community response has been received (8 responses by December 31, 2012)
- The survey was advertised on Community Page, in a tax bill insert, and at the Accessibility Awareness Event

### 4. Liaise with City Staff:

- Continue efforts to work with City Planning staff about accessibility/issues relative to site plans.
- Planning staff now attend AAC meetings to review site plans with the Committee
- Various city staff attended meetings to discuss facility upgrades, by-law etc.