



Long Point Region Conservation Authority

Long Point Region Conservation Authority
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2020 - 2024

Approved by the LPRCA Board of Directors
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Summary

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) became law in 2005. The purpose of this Act is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities by identifying, preventing and removing barriers that may otherwise limit their abilities to fully participate in society. Accessibility simply means giving all people opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

The multi-year Accessibility Plan describes measures the Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) will take to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the LPRCA, including employees and members of the public and highlights changes and improvements made to date.

LPRCA's new 2020-2024 multi-year accessibility plan outlines how the Authority will continue to remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. It builds on actions already taken to comply with the act. The plan outlines the ongoing commitment that the LPRCA has made to create an accessible organization by identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities.

This Plan will be posted on the LPRCA's website, and shall be made available in an alternate format and with communication supports, upon request. The Plan reflects the proposed intentions of the LPRCA over the next five years for meeting the regulations under the AODA and for identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities in communities across the watershed.

1.0 Background

1.1 Legislation

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, known as the AODA, is intended to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards in key areas of daily living. Standards have been developed in Customer Service; Information and Communications; Employment; and Transportation. In addition to these standards which have now been legislated, there remains one more standard to be enacted, the Built Environment standard. The accessibility standards apply to all organizations in Ontario.

The purpose of the AODA is to:

- Develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises by January 2025; and
- Provide for the involvement of persons with disabilities, of the Government of Ontario and of representatives of industries and various sectors of the economy in the development of the accessibility standards.

1.2 Types of Disabilities

Disabilities may be clearly evident, such as physical disabilities, but they may be invisible and are not always apparent. The broad range of disabilities also includes vision impairment, deafness or being hard of hearing, intellectual or developmental, learning and mental health disabilities. The AODA uses the same definition of “disability” as the Ontario Human Rights Code, which includes both visible and invisible disabilities.

1.3 Overview of the Accessibility Standards

The AODA is made up of five Standards, each covering an aspect of daily living.

The **Accessibility for Customer Service Standard** was the first standard to be developed and released. This standard addresses business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

The **Integrated Accessibility Standards** brings together four standard areas into one Regulation: Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.

- **Information and Communications** addresses the removal of barriers in access to information being provided in person, through print, a website or other means.
- **Employment Accessibility** addresses paid employment practices relating to employee-employer relationships, which include recruitment and hiring and retention policies and practices.
- **Accessible Transportation** addresses aspects of accessible public transportation.
- **Accessible Design of Public Spaces** addresses barriers in public spaces and buildings. This will apply to new construction and planned redevelopment beginning January 1, 2016.

The LPRCA does not operate or provide public transportation thus the Accessible Transportation Standard does not apply.

2.0 Objectives and Commitment to Accessibility Planning

The Accessibility Plan describes the measures that the LPRCA has taken and will continue to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers for all people, including those with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the LPRCA.

The LPRCA is committed to:

- Continuous improvement of access to facilities and services for employees and members of the public with disabilities.
- Providing accessible customer service.
- Annually reviewing the accessibility plan and incorporating elements of accessibility into all future projects and activities.

- Addressing existing barriers and preventing future barriers to allow people with disabilities full participation in LPRCA services.
- Providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of LPRCA services, programs, and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, integration and is equitable in relation to the broader public.

3.0 Barrier Identification

3.1 Barrier-Identification Methodologies

The following methodologies are used to identify accessibility barriers:

Methodology	Description
Staff Meetings	Accessibility legislation and barrier identification is discussed at Management meetings, Department meetings and Joint Health & Safety Committee meetings. These meetings give various departments an opportunity to discuss legislative requirements and brainstorm accessibility initiatives.
Site Visits	All worksites are visited periodically by Managers, Supervisors and other applicable staff to review accessibility barriers. During site visits, staff and supervisors are invited to provide feedback and discuss barriers they, or members of the public, have identified in their work areas.
Checklist for physical barrier identification	A checklist has been provided and completed for all buildings in our various work locations. The checklist pertains to the identification of physical barriers and is provided to the Manager of Corporate Services and the Workshop Supervisor to be considered in capital planning and facility upgrade discussions.

3.2 Barriers Identified & Status of Corrective Actions

The following barriers and status updates on corrective actions taken to date are listed below:

Administration Center

Barrier	Strategies for Removal/ Prevention	Actions taken to date
Customer service	All current employees have received training in accessibility standards for customer service. Training will be ongoing for new employees or as needed when new practices or policies are implemented.	All staff and volunteers are trained in AODA customer service requirements. This training is ongoing and is completed by all new employees and volunteers. Additional training is provided when required.
Recruitment processes	Research to identify best practices in similar organizations for inclusion of accessible formats and communication supports.	LPRCA's recruitment process invites individuals of all abilities to apply to openings and advises of the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment process.
Procurement of goods, services or facilities	Review procurement and purchasing practices to incorporate accessibility criteria and requirements. Educate staff on these requirements. Research options when acquiring point-of-sale (POS) devices.	Ongoing as purchases are made. A new POS system received in 2020 which offers many accessible formats including; TalkBack, large text, text to speech, captions, and high text contrast.
Lack of signage	Where applicable, post universal signage to direct people to accessible entrances, washrooms, etc.	Universal signage is used around the Administrative office.
Public Washrooms	Where feasible, make improvements to existing washroom facilities to make them accessible or build accessible washroom facilities in locations that do not have any.	In 2014 a new accessible unisex washroom was installed in the administration office where one did not already exist.
Main lobby	Assess current layout of the main lobby (i.e. location of public telephone, furniture placement, etc.). Where feasible, make improvements to increase accessibility.	In 2014 a new accessible ramp was built at the front entrance to the administration office along with a sliding door unit that uses automatic opening equipment. There is a lowered accessible service counter at the front reception desk.

Information Systems, Communication, and Technology

Barrier	Strategies for Removal/ Prevention	Actions taken to date
Current LPRCA website not compliant with accessibility standards	Currently evaluating design of website, with AODA compliance as a priority. Redesign website and web content according to WCAG 2.0 Level A, AA.	The updated website will go live on December 15 th and meets all requirements of WCAG 2.0 Level AA.
Readability of printed materials (i.e. brochures, tabloids, minutes, forms)	Educate staff on creating accessible documents. Research alternatives and redesign new printed materials to make them accessible. Provide alternative accessible formats when requested.	Accessible document guidelines are followed. To date, no alternate accessible formats have been requested.

Conservation Areas

Barrier	Strategies for Removal/ Prevention	
Gatehouses	Evaluate gatehouses to determine accessibility; make improvements as feasible. Provide exceptional customer service to persons who may not be able to access the gatehouse. Provide accessible customer service training to all staff.	<p>All staff and volunteers are trained in AODA customer service requirements. This training is ongoing and is completed by all new employees and volunteers. Additional training is provided when required.</p> <p>Backus Heritage's gatehouse was modified in 2014 to include a lowered service counter and an accessible ramp.</p>
Washrooms and Showers	Where feasible, make improvements to existing washroom facilities to make them accessible or build accessible washroom facilities in locations that currently do not have any.	<p>Signs posted in parks display pertinent universal symbols that relay information regarding site rules, safety information and identify the location of restrooms and trails.</p> <p>A new accessible washroom was built in 2019 at Waterford North CA.</p> <p>Both Deer Creek and Backus Heritage CAs had accessible washrooms built in 2015.</p>

3.3 Action Items for 2020 - 2024

Organizational

LPRCA will continue to build elements of accessibility into all practices, procedures and policies. All employees, volunteers and persons developing policies for LPRCA are trained on accessible customer service and how to interact with people with different disabilities as well as on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Persons who provide goods and services on behalf of LPRCA are all to be trained.

LPRCA's Accessibility Policy and Plan is updated as needed to reflect changes to any of the standards, and training is provided in order to ensure an understanding of any changes. Records will continue to be maintained for training provided on accessibility, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals who attended.

Administration Centre

Potential Barrier	Action Items for 2020 - 2024
Recruitment processes	<p>LPRCA will continue to document, monitor and update employment policies and procedures, where required, to provide accommodations in the recruitment, assessment, and selection process, upon request.</p> <p>LPRCA will continue to inform staff and the public that accommodations are available throughout all stages of employment and advised of policies that support employees with disabilities.</p>
Employee Accommodation	<p>LPRCA will continue to regularly review our policies to prevent or remove systemic employment barriers, ensure they are compliant with legislation and reflect best practices. Policies and processes for recruitment; workplace emergency response; employee accommodation; disability management and return to work; performance management; career development and employee redeployment will be reviewed as the need arises.</p> <p>Any accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the job and any information that is generally available to employees will be available upon request.</p>

Customer Service	<p>LPRCA will continue to provide the required Accessible Customer Service Training for all staff and volunteers, in order to continue to comply with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation, Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The updated Accessibility Policy will become part of the update training documents for all new employees and volunteers, Records will be kept of all training provided.</p> <p>LPRCA will continue to ensure that our services are easy to navigate and that our customers are given accessible customer service through phone, in person, e-mail and contact forms.</p> <p>LPRCA will review the Accessible Customer Service Policy along with the Accessibility Policy and identify opportunities to reinforce and promote requirements that enhance accessible customer service.</p>
Procurement of goods, services or facilities	LPRCA will continue to incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities by regularly reviewing procurement policies and procedures and make any updates as required.
Lack of signage	Universal signage will be posted where it remains outstanding.

Information Systems, Technology and Communications

Potential Barrier	Action Items for 2020 - 2024
LPRCA Website	LPRCA will ensure all new documents and web content posted are in an accessible format and meets the WCAG 2.0 Level AA Standard. Refresher training for staff about posting on the website will be provided if required. All digital services are designed with accessibility at its core, striving for all users to have equal access to information and functionality.
Readability of printed materials (e.g. brochures, tabloids, minutes, forms)	LPRCA will continue to monitor the accessibility of communications and will continue to provide a variety of means to access communications such as phone, email, website, mail, and in person. LPRCA will ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback regarding customer service practices are, upon request, accessible for persons with disabilities.

Conservation Areas and Other Recreational Properties

- All five conservation parks will be examined to address potential barriers at public spaces. LPRCA will continue to prioritize accessibility in every element of new infrastructure projects or major modification projects.

Potential Barrier	Action Items for 2020 - 2024
Gatehouses	<p>Accessible customer service training will continue to be provided to all staff and volunteers</p> <p>The Gatehouses at each of the five conservation parks will be reviewed to make sure the doors are more accessible through the use of a push-pull motion door or the utilization of a lever instead of a doorknob. This review will also ensure each park gatehouse has at least one service counter accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or an accessible service window.</p>
Washrooms and Showers	<p>Universal signage installation will continue. Identify where accessible washroom upgrades are needed and integrate into facility planning.</p> <p>Review current washroom facilities and provide required updated mapping of public accessible washroom facilities. Modify laneways to ensure a firm surface, roadway, or path should be available between the accessible and other campground amenities. This review will also ensure each park has a washroom with an accessible door handle. Door handles should require only a push-pull motion or utilize a lever instead of a doorknob.</p>
Picnic areas	<p>Build new picnic tables for each of the five conservation parks that fit the criteria to be accessible under the AODA. The new picnic tables will provide enough clear space around and under the tables to allow people using a wheelchair or other mobility aid to easily access the tables as well as provide adequate knee and armrest clearance.</p>
Parking	<p>Identify areas to create accessible parking spaces at each conservation park. Accessible parking spaces must have access aisles (a space between parking spaces) with a minimum width that provides people with disabilities the space to get in and out of their vehicles. Each accessible parking space must be identified with current signage requirements found in Regulation 581 (Accessible Parking for Persons with Disabilities) under the Highway Traffic Act.</p>
Campsites	<p>Investigate the possibility of accessible campsites, identify current barriers and develop accessible campsites where feasible.</p>

<p>Outdoor Play Spaces/ Trails</p>	<p>Incorporate the Design of Public Spaces when planning to develop new or significantly alter recreational trails and beach access routes.</p> <p>All future purchases of play spaces will incorporate accessible design. If a plan to construct or make major modifications to a trail or beach access is brought forward, elements such as minimum clear width, head room clearance, signage, slope, and trail surface will be taken into account.</p>
<p>Backus Heritage Education Center</p>	<p>The on-going Gallery Revitalization project will incorporate accessible upgrades and designs in the building plan.</p>

4.0 Plan Review and Communication Processes

4.1 Review and Monitoring Process

In 2020 - 2024, LPRCA continue to identify barriers and review progress on removal and development of barrier prevention strategies annually.

The accessibility plan will be updated at least once every five years and will be made available on LPRCA's website and in an alternate accessible format upon request.

4.2 Communication of the Plan

Copies of this plan are available to staff and members of the public on the LPRCA website. Alternative accessible formats will be available upon request.

APPENDIX

Glossary of Key Terms and Definitions

BARRIER as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, 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 information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. There are many kinds of barriers. Some are visible, but many are not visible.

Barriers to accessibility	
Type of barriers	Examples
Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking that people with disabilities are inferior • assuming that a person who has a speech impairment cannot understand you
Information or communications barriers happen when a person cannot easily understand information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • print is too small to read • websites that cannot be accessed by people who are not able to use a mouse • signs that are not clear or easily understood
Technology barriers occur when a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a website that doesn't support screen-reading software
Organizational barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities
Architectural and physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hallways and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, electric scooter or walker • counters that are too high for a person of short stature • poor lighting for people with low vision • doorknobs that are difficult for people with arthritis to grasp • parking spaces that are too narrow for a driver who uses a wheelchair • telephones that are not equipped with telecommunications devices for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing

BARRIER-IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGIES are processes or practices used to determine what barriers exist, where barriers exist and any other information.

Examples of barrier identification methodologies may include: customer feedback surveys or questionnaires, and discussions with employees or members of the public.

DISABILITY means:

- 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.