



2024 Accessibility Plan

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation

Legal, Policy and Compliance



About MPAC

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is Ontario's property expert. We create and maintain a comprehensive database of information for each of the more than five million properties in Ontario. We are responsible for delivering property values, insights and services to taxpayers, municipalities, governments and businesses.

Our Accessibility Commitment Statement

MPAC strives to deliver products and services to its customers and stakeholders in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, MPAC is working to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility standards passed under authority of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, AODA 2005*.

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Online Accessibility Feedback Form is available at this link: [Accessibility Feedback Form](#)

MPAC takes privacy very seriously and we are committed to the protection of your personal information under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. MPAC will only access, use and disclose your personal information with your consent or where it is permitted or required by law.

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Executive Summary

The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*,¹ Ontario Regulation 191/11, passed under authority of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*,² 2005, requires the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to establish and implement plans, policies and procedures, that outline commitments and strategies to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

This Accessibility Plan (the Plan) provides a high-level overview of disability barrier prevention and removal measures MPAC has developed, initiated and maintained in order to improve the accessibility of its products, services and facilities. Efforts to continue the seamless integration and mainstreaming of Ontario's accessibility standards in all aspects of MPAC's corporate life will continue. The methodical integration of accessibility focused input, or mainstreaming, is known to minimize the risk of non-compliance by oversight. This is a proven, efficient and sustainable approach to compliance.

The overarching goals of MPAC's Accessibility Program are to normalize the consideration of accessibility at the forefront of all types of corporate undertakings, safeguard compliance with Ontario's mandatory accessibility standards, mitigate the risk of the inadvertent creation or perpetuation of barriers to access, inform projects with consistent and correct interpretations of accessibility standards, and support fiscally responsible outcomes.

This Plan also considers:

- The relationship between the Accessibility Program and MPAC's evolving Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism initiative.
- Continuous improvement.
- The policies and procedures by which accessibility standards are operationalized.

Finally, this Plan contemplates the people side of compliance and change management tactics that positively influence the corporate culture. Improving accessibility for persons with disabilities is a complex undertaking; embracing proactive rather than reactive behaviours will best bring about meaningful change.

¹ Hyperlink to [The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) ©Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2011

² Hyperlink to [The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2005

Background

Legislative Mandate

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, AODA 2005, (the *Act*) with a goal to make Ontario fully accessible to persons with disabilities by 2025. The *Act's* Purpose Statement evidences itself as a human rights-based law and reads, in part, as follows

- “1. Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this Act is to benefit all Ontarians by,
- a. Developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025...”

Ontario's Accessibility Standards

Accessibility standards “set out measures, policies, practices or other requirements for the identification and removal of barriers with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises or such other things as may be prescribed, and for the prevention of the erection of such barriers...”

Mandatory accessibility standards are set out in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) Ontario Regulation 191/11 and include the following areas:

- The Information and Communications Standards govern equitable access to information and communications such as websites, web-content, print documents and alternate format.
- The Employment Standards govern all stages of the employment life cycle and promote accessible hiring, retention and employee support practices.
- The Transportation Standards seek to improve accessible transit opportunities; MPAC has no regulated obligations under these standards.
- The Design of Public Spaces Standards govern the accessibility of public spaces such as parking, walkways and customer service areas.
- The Customer Service Standards seek to foster inclusionary attitudes and behaviours that directly impact the excellence of customer service.

The Act and its regulations apply to almost all persons and organizations in Ontario

in both public and private sectors. MPAC has achieved compliance in accordance with requirements and deadlines for “large organizations”.

Ontario's Human Rights Code

Ontario's Human Rights Code (the Code) protects Ontarians from discrimination and retains primacy over the AODA. The IASR acknowledges that its accessibility standards do not replace requirements of the Code, nor limit any obligations owed to persons with disabilities under any other legislation.

To learn more about key pieces of Canadian legislation that secure the rights of persons with disabilities please visit MPAC's Accessibility Webpage.

Guiding Principles

Accessibility, along with all equity and similar value-related initiatives will be embedded in everything we do. The 2024 Accessibility Plan builds on progress to date and outlines initiatives for achieving further progress.

Disability Inclusion

MPAC will consider accessibility for persons with a broad spectrum of disabilities in accordance with the definition of disability as found in the Code and the AODA.

MPAC will operate in accordance with the following principles:

Dignity

Persons with disabilities are valued and as deserving of MPAC's products and services as any other customer or stakeholder.

Independence

The capabilities of persons with disabilities will be acknowledged and respected.

Integration

The provision of products or services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person to obtain, use or benefit from MPAC's products or services.

Equity

Where a uniform response is inappropriate, individual needs will be taken into account when providing products and services.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism

This plan aligns with recommendations made by DiversiPro (MPAC's equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism consultant.)

Review of Achievements and Ongoing Initiatives

The following list of achievements provides a sampling of achievements.

The General Standards

- Provided advocacy and advice to ensure disability inclusion becomes an integral component of MPAC's equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism program.
- Mandatory policies, procedures and training modules were reviewed and updated where warranted. Examples include the Corporate Code of Conduct, mandatory AODA training materials and EDIA Data Collection procedures.
- Reviewed and updated corporate training modules on the IASR and the Code in accordance with regulated curriculum.
- Accessibility focused recommendations provided to various business units regarding program area functions such as procurement and valuation. Examples include transition to a new e-procurement portal, the procedure for the Seniors and Persons with Disabilities assessment exemption, new photo ID cards, and renovations of office space at MPAC head office.
- Advocated for the inclusion of accessibility as a pillar in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

The Employment Standards

- Provided disability inclusion input to MPAC's Flexible Work Week Program to ensure all employees can participate and benefit.
- Conducted a comprehensive review of a number of HR policies, most notably being the Business Attire Policy and an updated Accommodation Policy.
- Mainstreamed the Accessibility Standards for Employment in MPAC's Workforce Strategy to ensure employees with disabilities are supported at all stages of the employment lifecycle.
- Reviewed the Notice of Disruption process to identify potential improvements for multi stakeholder protocols that support compliance obligations.
- Provided input to HR team regarding MPAC's new Performance Management program – What Counts.

The Information and Communications Standards

- Collaborated with IT and Valuation to improve the accessibility of print and online documents such as Property Assessment Notices (PAN), Property Profiles, Market Valuation Reports and so forth.
- Collaborated with IT to improve user testing protocols. Retained the services of a vendor who employs persons with disabilities to conduct live testing of websites and apps.
- Provided support to Strategic Communications on various projects and documents such as MPAC's Annual Report, Corporate Performance Report and Municipal Partnerships Reports.
- Developed and delivered practical training, resources and support tools for web authors.
- Provided accessibility focused input to About My Property (AMP™) and Municipal Connect Extranet.
- Continued to improve the accessibility of Internet Websites and Applications to meet WCAG 2.0 AA requirements.
- Provided the eESSENTIAL Accessibility™ online assistive technology Application for use on internal/external websites.
- Consulted with customers and satisfied requests for accessible documents and communication supports in a timely manner.

The Design of Public Spaces Standards

- Improvements to the Temporary Service Disruptions Procedure were made.
- Notices regarding maintenance issues with accessibility elements in MPAC public spaces were posted.

The Customer Service Standards

- Improved online Customer Contact channels and chat features to provide accessible communications to a broad range of customers.
- The Customer Contact Centre has a team of accessibility specialists; these agents receive extra training and are able to resolve most issues for customers with disabilities.

Planned Barrier Identification, Removal and Prevention Measures

The Accessibility Program's chief function is to achieve, monitor and enforce corporate compliance with Ontario's mandatory accessibility standards. MPAC will continue to monitor compliance and continue its work to proactively integrate

barrier identification, removal and prevention processes at all levels of the organization.

The following measures are in place to influence behaviour, protect and enhance achievements to date, and provide mechanisms to proactively identify disability barriers.

Cross Corporate Collaboration

The breadth, scope and overlapping nature of Ontario's accessibility standards make compliance a complex matter best achieved through cross corporate collaboration. While the Accessibility Program assumes ownership for regulatory compliance, MPAC values teamwork and understands that strategies developed in isolation are not likely to bring about desired results. MPAC's Strategic Project Management process provides an existing and well-honed cross corporate framework for the consistent consideration of accessibility focused input that aligns with corporate strategic planning exercises.

Proactive and Fiscally Responsible

A shared responsibility for due diligence protocols that facilitate the early consideration of accessibility in business and project planning processes is becoming the norm at MPAC. This approach mitigates risk of inadvertent non-compliance and the creation of barriers to access by oversight. Preventing barriers at the design stage is recognized as a fiscally responsible strategy; project delays and monetary costs of remediation efforts almost always cost more than accessibility by design.

Advocacy

MPAC's Code of Conduct addresses the AODA and reminds employees that failure to adhere to mandatory accessibility standards constitutes discriminatory behaviour and places the corporation in a state of regulatory non-compliance. Employee excellence at MPAC includes respect for all customers and the application of inclusionary principles while carrying out one's responsibilities.

"Nothing about us Without Us"

It was an oft stated and proud fact that MPAC's equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism initiative was an employee driven project.

1. Develop an Employee Resource Group Framework for Employee's with Disabilities.

The framework should clearly address the role of ERGs in the overall EDIA

governance structure to set a realistic tone; based on experience - expectations will need to be managed.

2. Establish and consult with employees with disabilities.

The ERG should be open to employees with disabilities, employees who have family members with a disability and those who have a general interest in improving accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Compliance with the IASR General Requirements

Plans and Policies

- Continue to communicate accessibility policies, procedures and plans to employees, stakeholders and members of the public.
- Review and update corporate accessibility documents annually.
- Identify opportunities to mainstream accessibility standards in existing policies, procedures and processes that
 - further embed accessibility as a self-sustaining business objective
 - remove and prevent barriers to access
- Explore the concept of and usefulness of an Accessibility Impact Assessment (AIA) protocol.

Training

- Provide, track and monitor mandatory accessibility training as mandated by the IASR to employees and all other persons providing services on behalf of MPAC.
- Identify gaps in knowledge, resources and behaviour and respond with appropriate resources and tools.

Procurement

- Review and enhance procurement tools such as accessibility checklists and templates for use in RFP's, vendor ratings, evaluation scoring etc.

Information and Communications

- Continue to provide employee resources, training and tools relevant to accessible information and communications.
- Review MPAC's Web accessibility style Guide and quick reference web accessibility style guide for employees to better understand WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) requirements and responsibilities.

- Continue partnership between AODA SME, IT and COMMS to ensure MPAC websites and web content achieve and maintain compliance with WCAG 2.0 AA.

Employment

- Provide accessibility focused input to MPAC's Employment System Review to safeguard regulatory compliance with regulated standards.
- Investigate transferring responsibility for Emergency Response Information Plans from Facilities to purview of HR. This requirement falls under the Employment Accessibility Standard.
- Advocate and protect persons with disabilities from ableism, bias and stereotyping.

Customer Service

- Continued collaboration and communication with MPAC's Customer Contact Centre to ensure accessible customer service.
- Continued collaboration with IT and COMMS to provide alternate formats and communication supports upon request.

Design of Public Spaces

- Review internal strategy for the maintenance of accessible building elements.
- Ensured the consideration of accessibility for persons with a wide range of disabilities in the post-COVID-19 office downsizing initiative.
- Review accessible customer service feedback and respond as needed.

Summary

MPAC's Accessibility Program will continue to mature and develop over the lifespan of this plan. Commitments detailed herein are flexible and loosely designed in order that they may self-articulate in response to changing corporate priorities, evolving accessibility regulations and the need to recognize and adapt to environmental changes.