



NVCA's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Based on Not-for Profit Sector Small Organizations

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Nottawasaga Valley
Conservation Authority

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Executive 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.

This is the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's (NVCA) first Accessibility Plan, prepared to meet the requirements of the AODA. The plan describes measures the NVCA will take to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the NVCA, including employees and members of the public. This report will focus on the NVCA's Tiffin Conservation Area and Administration office, our most widely used property.

The NVCA is committed to the continual improvement of accessible services, facilities and information.

1.0 Policy Statement

The NVCA is committed to having all members of our communities accommodated and included for equal participation and experiences in all environments. We are dedicated to creating a sustainable culture that continues to facilitate socially inclusive environments for continued success.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Legislation

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, also known as the AODA, which became law in June 2005, 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 both private and public sector organizations across 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.

2.2 Types of Disabilities

When we think of disabilities, we tend to think of people in wheelchairs and physical disabilities—disabilities that are visible. But disabilities can also be non-visible and are not always apparent. The broad range of disabilities also includes vision disabilities, 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 non-visible disabilities.

2.3 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** (Ont. Reg. 429/07) 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** (Ont. Reg. 191/11) brings together three standard areas into one Regulation: Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation.

- **Accessible Information and Communications** standard addresses the removal of barriers in access to information. The standards could include information being provided in person, through print, a website or other means.
- **Employment Accessibility** standard addresses paid employment practices relating to employee-employer relationships, which could include recruitment, hiring and retention policies and practices.
- **Accessible Transportation** standard is addresses aspects of accessible public transportation.

The **Accessible Built Environment Standard** focuses on removing barriers in both public spaces (trails, outdoor public eating areas, etc.) and buildings. **It is important to note that the standard for the design of these public spaces and buildings applies only to new construction or major changes to existing features.** However, the NVCA would like to ensure that we go above the requirements wherever possible.

3.0 Description of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is one of 36 Conservation Authorities across Ontario under the umbrella organization of Conservation Ontario.

Our watershed is approximately 3700 sq. km, with jurisdiction in 18 municipalities, and is the source of watercourses that flow into Georgian Bay at Wasaga Beach, Collingwood and Severn Sound. It includes 35 km of Georgian Bay shoreline along the Wasaga Beach and Collingwood waterfront.

Our Mission: Working together to deliver innovative, integrated watershed management that is responsive to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Nottawasaga Valley watershed.

Our Vision: A sustainable watershed that is resilient to the effects of climate change, urban growth and other stressors and provides for safe, healthy and prosperous people and communities.

What We Value:

- An abundance of clean water, clean air and fertile soils that provide for healthy people and ecosystems.
- Natural heritage systems and the ecosystem services they provide, particularly as they support resilience to the effects of a changing climate.
- Distinctive landforms and waterways including the Georgian Bay coastline, Niagara Escarpment, Minesing Wetlands and others that give our watershed a unique sense of place.
- Quality recreational opportunities that our hills, forests, meadows, wetlands, waterways and coastline provide for residents and tourists alike.
- A wealth of resources within the capacity of our watershed to provide for thriving communities, successful economies and sustainable agriculture, now and in the future.

4.0 Objectives and Commitment to Accessibility Planning

This report describes the measures that the NVCA will take during the coming years to identify, remove and prevent barriers for all people, including those with disabilities who use the facilities and services of the NVCA.

The NVCA is committed to:

- Continuous improvement of access to facilities and services for employees and members of the public with disabilities.
- Providing accessible customer service.
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans.
- Annually reviewing the accessibility plan and incorporating elements of accessibility into all future projects and activities, including establishing an accessibility line item in the Annual Board Approved Budget.

5.0 NVCA's 2020 to 2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
Organization must develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements	Create policies and procedures for each standard	Jan. 1, 2014	NVCA will develop integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) Policy that outlines how the agency will meet the	Completed	Corporate Services Department

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>referred to in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR)</p> <p>Organization shall develop a Statement of Commitment to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner.</p> <p>Accessibility policies must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publicly available • in an accessible format upon request 			<p>requirements of the IASR.</p> <p>Statement of Commitment will be incorporated into IAS policy.</p> <p>IAS policy will be reviewed every 2 years.</p>	Ongoing	

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>Organization is required to establish, implement, maintain and document multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the strategy to prevent and remove barriers to persons with disabilities and meet the requirements under the IASR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan must be posted on the NVCA website • plan must be provided in an accessible format upon request • plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years 	<p>Create Multi-Year Accessibility plans</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2014</p>	<p>NVCA will develop a multi-year accessibility plan. The multi-year plan can be found at the NVCA website. Paper copy is also available at the agency and in an accessible format upon request.</p> <p>NVCA will review and update every 2 years.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>
<p>Large organizations and small organizations shall have regard to the accessibility for persons with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-serve kiosks. This includes interactive electronic terminals people use to pay parking fees, validate tickets, buy</p>	<p>Consider accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-kiosks</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2014</p>			

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
groceries and renew licenses.					
<p>Provide training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards and the Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities to employees, student interns, volunteers, contractors, Board of Directors.</p> <p>Organization shall keep records of the training, including the dates on which the training is provided.</p>	Train all staff and volunteers (including Board Members) on what they have to do under the IASR and on aspects of the Human Rights Code that relate to accessibility.	Jan. 1, 2015	<p>NVCA will provide training to employees, student interns, volunteers, contractors, Board of Directors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Accessibility Standards - Understanding Human Rights (AODA). <p>NVCA will record training completion (including dates) to ensure compliancy</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Corporate Services Department
	Complete government accessibility report	Dec. 31, 2014	Reported for less than 50 employees	Completed	Corporate Services Department
	Update Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Jan. 1, 2019	To be reported by December 2020 as we have reached over 50+ employees	Pending	Corporate Services Department
	Complete government accessibility report	Dec. 31, 2017	Reported for less than 50 employees	Completed	Corporate Services Department

6.0 Information & Communications

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>All the emergency plans, procedures and public safety information that organizations make available to the public must be available in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.</p> <p>This shall meet the requirements as Sections 8 and 9 of the Customer Service Standards by January 1, 2012</p>	<p>When asked, make your emergency and public safety information accessible to the public</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2012</p>	<p>NVCA public safety information (floor plan - exits, accessibility, in case of fire) can be found at the following website address: www.nvca.on.ca</p> <p>NVCA will notify the public (via website) that upon request, public safety information is available in accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>
	<p>All new internet websites and web content on those sites must conform with WCAG 2.0 level A</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2014</p>	<p>NVCA will inform the IT department about their responsibility to ensure the website compliance under AODA Regulations.</p> <p>External provider will review NVCA website and web content to</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>IT Department</p>

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
			determine the compliance status.		
<p>Organizations must ensure that the existing feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request. This applies in addition to obligations under Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.</p> <p>Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication reports.</p>	<p>Make your feedback processes, like surveys or comment cards, accessible when asked</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2015</p>	<p>NVCA will ensure that the existing feedback processes are accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request. This additional feedback process is included within the IAS policy.</p> <p>NVCA will communicate (via website) to the public that alternate formats and communication supports for the</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
			feedback process will be provided or arranged, upon request.		
<p>Obligated organizations must provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports when a request is made. The alternate formats must be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs; • at the same cost that is charged to other individuals, and • in consultation with the person making the request. 	<p>Make information about your organization's goods, services and facilities accessible upon request</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2016</p>	<p>NVCA will inform employees that accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided or arranged for service users when a request is made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a timely manner • at same cost • in consultation with the person making the request <p>NVCA will provide or arrange for accessible format and communication supports, upon request.</p> <p>To ensure timely translation and provision of documents, NVCA will</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
			develop a list of resources.		
	All internet website and website content conform with WCAG 2.0 level AA (excluding live captioning and audio description)	Jan. 1, 2021	NVCA will inform the IT department about their responsibility to ensure website compliance under AODA. External provider will review NVCA website and web content to determine the compliance status.	Pending	IT Department

7.0 Employment

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
	When necessary, provide individual plans to help employees with disabilities during an emergency, or emergency information that's formatted so an employee with a disability	Jan. 1, 2012	NVCA will provide individual plans if required, to help employees with disabilities during an emergency and provide materials AODA compliant.	Completed	Corporate Services Department

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
	can understand it.				
	Notify employees, potential hires and public that accommodations can be made during recruitment, assessment and selection processes for people with disabilities	Jan. 1, 2016	NVCA will review and revise its Career web page and job postings to include a statement indicating that accommodations will be provided upon request.	Completed	Corporate Services Department
	Notify new hires and staff of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities	Jan. 1, 2016	NVCA will notify (train) its employees about availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment processes, upon request.	Completed	Corporate Services Department

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>Organizations must develop a written process for the development of documented Individual Accommodation Plans (IAP), for employees with disabilities, that includes the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the employee can participate • how the employee will be assessed on an individual basis • how an evaluation by an outside expert, at the employer's expense, can be requested to assist in determining if accommodation can be achieved and how. • how the employee can request participation of union representative or other representative from the workplace • how the employee's personal information will remain private 	<p>Have in place a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees with a disability</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2016</p>	<p>NVCA will incorporate the written process, which will include all AODA required elements, within the Job Accommodation policy.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how, and how often, the plan will be reviewed and updated • how reasons for a denied accommodation request will be communicated • how the plan will be provided to employee in a format that takes into account the employees accessibility needs <p>Employee Accommodation Plans shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include if request, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports as per Section 26. • if required, include individualized workplace emergency response information as per Section 27, and • identify any other accommodation that is to be provided 					

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
See above	See above	See above	NVCA will develop a template to guide the Individual Accommodation Plan process including, if required, information regarding accessible formats and communication supports and IWER, as well as other accommodations.	Completed	See above
<p>Organizations are required to develop a documented return-to-work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.</p> <p>The RTW process must outline the steps to facilitate the RTW and use documented Individual Accommodation Plans (as per Section 28).</p> <p>The RTW process does not</p>	Have a written return to work process in place for employees who have been absent due to a disability	Jan. 1, 2016	<p>NVCA will create a Return to Work policy and procedures that incorporate AODA requirements (outline steps to facilitate the RTW and use IAPS).</p> <p>This policy will include the process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.</p>	Completed	Corporate Services Department

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
replace or override any other statutory RTW processes.					
Organizations shall take into account the accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities.	If your office uses performance management, career development and redeployment processes, take the needs of employees with disabilities into account	Jan. 1, 2016	NVCA will review its careers development and advancement processes/policies for possible barriers and will revise as necessary to incorporate AODA requirements.	Completed	Corporate Services Department

8.0 Design of Public Spaces

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
Section(s) 80.1-90.44 Obligated organizations, other than small organizations, shall ensure that when building new public spaces or making planned significant alterations to existing public spaces that	Make new or redeveloped public spaces accessible	Jan. 1, 2018	All alterations done to date are compliant with the Accessibility standard. NVCA will continue to ensure technical Accessibility Standards requirements are met when building new or	Completed	Corporate Services Department

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>accessibility is incorporated and the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standard is adhered to: This applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recreational trails and beach access routes • outdoor public uses eating areas • outdoor play spaces • exterior paths of travel • off-street parking lots • service counters, fixed queuing guides and waiting areas with fixed seating • maintain accessible elements of public space 			<p>replacing and building new or making planned significant alterations to the following existing spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exterior paths of travel • accessible of street parking • service - related elements such as service counters and waiting areas 		

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
<p>80.44 In addition to the accessibility plan requirements set out in Section 4, obligated organizations, other than small organizations, shall ensure that their multi-year accessibility plans include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces as required under this Part. • procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements required under this Part are not in working order. 	<p>Maintenance of accessible elements</p>	<p>Jan. 1, 2018</p>	<p>To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place on NVCA premises, website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Services Department</p>

9.0 Part/Section V/5 Reporting Compliance

AODA Standard	IASR requirement	Due Date	Steps to take	Completion Date/Status	Responsibility
Every 3 years not-for profit organizations shall file an Accessibility Compliance Report confirming they have met accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).	Reporting Compliance	Dec. 31, 2012	Compliance Report filed with the Government of Ontario	Completed	Corporate Services Department
	Reporting Compliance	Dec. 31, 2012	Compliance Report filed with the Government of Ontario	Completed	Corporate Services Department
	Reporting Compliance	Dec. 31, 2017	Compliance Report filed with the Government of Ontario	Completed	Corporate Services Department
	Reporting Compliance	Dec. 31, 2020		Pending	Corporate Services Department
	Reporting Compliance	Dec. 31, 2023		Pending	Corporate Services Department

* Per regulation 80.44: Should NVCA re-develop or construct any element referred to in the Design of Public Spaces subsection, NVCA will follow current practices for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. Further, we will ensure that preventative and emergency maintenance is performed on the accessible elements in public spaces as required in the Act

10.0 Plan Review and Communication Processes

10.1 Review and Monitoring Process

The NVCA will continue to identify barriers and review progress on removal and development of barrier prevention strategies. NVCA clients are encouraged to provide Accessibility Feedback available on the NVCA [website](#) or by contacting the NVCA at 705-424-1479.

The accessibility plan will be updated at least once every five years.

10.2 Communication of the Plan

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

11.0 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.

Type of barriers	Examples
<p>Attitudinal barriers are those that discriminate against people with disabilities.</p>	<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
<p>Information or communications barriers happen when a person cannot easily understand information.</p>	<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
<p>Technology barriers occur when a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a website that doesn't support screen-reading software
<p>Organizational barriers are an organization's policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a hiring process that is not open to people with disabilities
<p>Architectural and physical barriers are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities.</p>	<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 as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is:

- 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;
- 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.