



MULTI YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN Updated 2016-2021

INTRODUCTION

Science North is committed to the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and strives to ensure people of all abilities have the opportunity to participate fully in everyday life.

The AODA recognizes the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario and provide for the development, implementation and enforcement of mandatory standards for accessibility in all areas of daily life. The fundamental purpose of the AODA is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025.

The definition of disability under the AODA is the same as the definition of disability in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It includes disabilities of different severity, visible and non-visible, and encompasses disabilities characterized by effects which may come and go. The definition includes any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness of visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; it includes a condition of mental impairment or development disability, a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols of 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.

The principles under the Act include making reasonable efforts to ensure that person with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the services at Science North, ensuring services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, ensuring services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same pace and in the same or similar way as other persons, ensuring communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes the individual's disability into account and ensuring persons with disabilities may use assistive devices, service animals and support persons necessary to access services.

The Accessible Customer Service Standard covers all areas dealing with service for people with disabilities while the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) covers areas such as Employment, Information and Communications, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces.

STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO SCIENCE NORTH

Under the AODA, the following accessibility standard requirements are applicable to Science North:

- Customer Service Standards
- Integrated Accessibility Standards
 - General Requirements
 - Information and Communications Standards
 - Employment Standards
 - Design of Public Spaces

As set out below, the initiatives Science North will pursue to remove barriers to accessibility fall under those Customer Service Standards and Integrated Accessibility Standards applicable to Science North. In addition to meeting these standards, Science North will pursue additional initiatives which cross the boundary of the two regulations and which are intended to improve the visitor experience for people with disabilities.

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY AND PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

Science North is committed to supporting a barrier-free Ontario. The Science Centre will be guided by the four core principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. Dedicated resources will be responsible for the development and maintenance of an accessibility plan and will provide significant advice, recommendations and support in the development and monitoring of the implementation of our multi-year accessibility plan.

MULTI- YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

A requirement of the IASR is to develop, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan to outline strategies to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the IASR. The key purpose of this document is to outline Science North's multi-year accessibility plan as we continue to implement all requirements under the AODA.

Science North strives to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible. Our multi-year accessibility plan serves as a road map to help us meet our obligations and remove barriers to accessibility. Science North will report annually on the progress of our plan, review and update the plan at least once every five years and will ensure the plan is posted on our website and made available in alternative formats upon request.

ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Science North's Accessibility Compliance Committee is responsible to develop the Science Centre's multi-year accessibility plan and to ensure the actions set out in the Plan are implemented, working in conjunction with the designated individuals or units responsible to lead each initiative.

On an ongoing basis, the Accessibility Compliance Committee will monitor legislative changes to the Act and its regulations, and as required, will incorporate those changes into the Science Centre's Accessibility Plan.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2016-2021

Status last updated January 2018

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD REGULATION	TARGET DATE	STATUS
<p>Currently Science North is fully compliant with requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation.</p> <p>Moving forward, monitor legislative changes to the Customer Service Standard Regulation. Plan and implement any changes required by the revised legislation.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Science North recognizes that as of July 1, 2016 the Province of Ontario:</p> <p>a) made changes to the Accessible Customer Service Standard. Science North is in compliance with the changes;</p> <p>b) integrated all accessibility standards, including the Accessible Customer Service Standard, into one Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation in order to better align the requirements to make it easier for organizations to understand them.</p>
INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD REGULATION	TARGET DATE	STATUS
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS		
<p>Accessibility Policy Update the current Accessibility Policy to incorporate the Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements.</p>	March 2016	COMPLETED
<p>Accessibility Plan Update and re-post the Accessibility Plan to reflect initiatives to be undertaken between 2016 to 2021.</p> <p>Develop five year budget for the accessibility initiatives emanating from this Accessibility Plan; Identify potential funding sources. <i>Note: budget should include cost for individual employee accommodation</i></p>	<p>June 2016</p> <p>Early 2017</p>	COMPLETED

<p>Self-Serve Kiosk Work with service provider to install an ATM kiosk with improved accessibility features.</p>	<p>June 2020</p>	
<p>INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS</p>		
<p>Accessible Formats and Communications Supports Establish and then maintain standards for making information accessible for people with disabilities”.</p>	<p>Dec 2016</p>	<p>As a first step, an action plan to develop corporate-wide standards for making information accessible was created. Implementation of the plan is expected to be completed in 2018.</p>
<p>Identify, target and invest in other initiatives that will improve accessibility to information for both visitors and staff. Possible ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alternate formats for exhibit signage (beyond the current print format) 2. Self directed audio tour 3. Closed captioning in Imax and in object theatres 4. FM systems for use in science program <p>The initiatives that are identified and pursued here may be influenced by a proposed audit of visitor experiences, as described below under the heading “Visitor Experience Improvement”, point B – “Audit existing visitor experiences.”</p>	<p>Late 2016</p>	<p>In 2017 Science North enhanced the visitor experience in its IMAX Theatre with the installation of hearing devices for visitors with auditory disabilities. Similar devices will be installed in the Dynamic Earth Atlas Copco Theatre in early 2018.</p>

Accessible websites and web content Develop a new Science North website that meets the WCAG 2.0 level AA guidelines by no later than January 2021.	December 2016	
EMPLOYMENT		
Conduct an annual review of accessibility needs, systems, processes, and impacts to policies/procedures related to employment.	April of each year	ONGOING
DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES		
Undertake review of SN owned/operated recreational trails/beach access routes to assess accessibility improvements	June 2016	COMPLETED
Undertake review of SN owned/operated outdoor public eating spaces to assess accessibility improvements	June 2016	COMPLETED
Undertake review of SN owned/operated outdoor play areas to assess accessibility improvements	June 2016	COMPLETED
Undertake review of SN owned/operated exterior paths of travel to assess accessibility improvements	June 2016	COMPLETED
Undertake review of SN owned/operated parking to assess accessibility improvements	June 2016	COMPLETED

<p>Undertake review of SN owned/operated service related elements (service counters, queuing lines, waiting areas) to assess accessibility improvements</p>	<p>June 2016; then annually thereafter</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>
<p>Generate a preliminary report detailing accessibility improvements to SN owned/operated public spaces based on the reviews noted above. Report to include a prioritization of improvements over a 5-year period.</p>	<p>July 2016</p>	<p>COMPLETED. Report generated. Initial 5-year prioritization of improvements schedule completed but will be reviewed annually and adjusted if required.</p>
<p>Identify, target and invest in other improvements that will positively impact accessibility. Possible ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify options for egress from non-accessible areas. 2. Improve washroom accessibility in the science building 3. Improve lighting in poorly lit areas 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>In 2017 Science North continued to improve its facilities based on a prioritized five year list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ installation of power door openers on entrance doors of six separate washrooms making it easier for people with mobility devices to enter and exit; ○ installation of ramps at several entrance door locations to remove elevation differences making it easier for people with mobility devices to enter and exit; ○ Architectural drawings were prepared to address the structural changes required to Science North’s popular “Discovery Theatre” in order to provide accessible seating for visitors with disabilities. The modification work is expected to be completed in late 2018 or early 2019. ○ Modifications made to the parking lot: a) to increase

		<p>size and number of accessible parking spaces, and b) installation of approved signage (as per regulation 581 of the Highway Traffic Act).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial work was begun on the development of a fully accessible family washroom, to be located in the main lobby of the Science Centre. ○ The height and configuration of the Copper Café service counter at Dynamic Earth was corrected to ensure it complies with maximum height specifications. ○ design work was completed to correct the height of Sales Ticket desk and Big Nickel Boutique sales counter at Dynamic Earth to ensure both comply with maximum height specifications. ○ The height of washroom hand dryers were all lowered to ensure easy access to, and use of, these units for people in wheelchairs and with limited physical abilities.
Establish, document and maintain procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces and for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.	Ongoing	
VISITOR EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENTS		
<p>General: Review and update the <i>Characteristics of Excellence for Exhibitory at Science North</i> to ensure accessibility is incorporated into one of</p>	Fall 2016	COMPLETED.

<p>the characteristics (likely under the characteristic “Comfort”).</p>		
<p>Design: Review and revise Science North’s current exhibit design process(es) to ensure accessibility is considered within the early stages of design.</p>	<p>Fall 2016</p>	<p>Reference document is in development, entitled “Exhibit Design Standards for Accessibility”.</p>
<p>Space and Experience Improvement: Working with organizations representing persons with disabilities, conduct the following audits:</p> <p>A. Audit existing spaces: Audit the public and private spaces at Science North and Dynamic Earth to determine: (i) quick improvements, and (ii) longer-term improvements, to our existing spaces. Generate report. Prioritize the improvements recommended in the audit over a five year period.</p> <p>In furtherance thereof, and recognizing the unique challenge of the Dynamic Earth underground facility, the audit shall address separately options for egress of the Dynamic Earth underground location for persons with physical disabilities.</p>	<p>Late 2016</p>	

<p>Establish a new protocol that will ensure a similar audit process is undertaken when new spaces are built or renovated.</p> <p>B. Audit existing visitor experiences: Audit the visitor experiences at Science North and Dynamic Earth to determine: (i) quick improvements, and (ii) longer-term improvements, to our current suite of experiences. Generate report. Prioritize the results over three year period.</p> <p>Establish a new protocol that will ensure a similar audit process is undertaken when new exhibits or experiences are introduced.</p>	<p>Late 2016</p>	
<p>Training: Provide Project Managers who are leading major projects (and other staff who may need it) training in accessible design. External expertise may be needed to assist in accessible design training.</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	