#### **Appendix – Recommended Findings and Recommendations in this Brief, Listed Chapter By Chapter**

## **Chapter 1 The Big Picture – How is Ontario Doing?**

### **Recommended Findings**

We recommend that this AODA Independent Review make these findings:

\* There has been progress on accessibility since the AODA's enactment. However, this progress has been far too slow.

\* Ontario is not now on schedule for becoming accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. At the present rate of progress, Ontario will not even come close to reaching full accessibility by 2025. A dramatic improvement is needed now to the AODA's implementation and enforcement.

\* Since the 2014 report of the Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review, the Ontario Government did not show the renewed leadership and revitalized approach to the AODA's implementation that the Moran report recommended.

\* There is a pressing need to revitalize the AODA's implementation, as both the 2010 Charles Beer AODA Independent Review and the 2014 Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review recommended. This revitalization never took place in response to those reports' recommendations.

\* The Ontario Government has never had and now has no comprehensive plan for leading Ontario to reaching accessibility by 2025. There is a clear and present need for such a plan.

\* There is a clear need for substantial reform at the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the Government office that has lead responsibility for the AODA's implementation and enforcement, such as the development of AODA accessibility standards. This is so despite the fact that there are many hard-working, dedicated people working at various positions in the Accessibility Directorate.

\* The Ontario Government has tried to shroud the AODA's implementation and enforcement, including the development and review of AODA accessibility standards, with far too much secrecy. The public is entitled to expect the AODA's implementation and enforcement, including the development and review of AODA accessibility standards, to be open, transparent and publicly accountable.

### **Recommendations Regarding the Big Picture**

We therefore recommend that:

* 1. The Ontario Government must act promptly to re-vitalize and breathe new life into the implementation and enforcement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This should start with strong new leadership from the top, including the Premier, the Cabinet and the senior leaders within the Ontario Public Service.
  2. The Ontario Government should act quickly to adopt, implement and make public a comprehensive multi-year plan for effectively leading Ontario to become accessible by 2025, which includes the issues regarding the AODA's implementation and enforcement that are addressed in this brief.
  3. There should be substantial reform at the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario so that it better provides the leadership on the AODA's implementation and enforcement that Ontario needs.
  4. As is addressed in further detail elsewhere in this brief, the Ontario Government's implementation and enforcement of the AODA, including the development and review of AODA accessibility standards, should be carried out in an open, public transparent and accountable way.

The Ontario Government's current pre-occupation with excessive secrecy and confidentiality should be eliminated. For example, members of and presenters at Standards Development Committees should not be asked or required to sign non-disclosure agreements.

## **Chapter 2 The Ongoing Unmet Need for the AODA's Effective Enforcement**

### **Recommended Findings**

We recommend that this AODA Independent Review make the following findings:

\* For years, the AODA has not been effectively enforced, even though the former Ontario Government knew for years about unacceptably high levels of AODA non-compliance, particularly within the private sector. Enforcement efforts have been too weak.

\* This ineffective AODA enforcement does a disservice to Ontarians with disabilities, to the broader public, and to all the obligated organizations who have opted to comply with the AODA.

\* The former Ontario Government did not significantly improve AODA enforcement after the 2014 Mayo Moran Report called for strengthened enforcement. To the contrary, within a week of the former Ontario Government's public release of the final report of the Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review in February 2015, the former Ontario Government instituted a substantial cutback of the already-weak AODA enforcement. In June 2015, the former Ontario Government announced that it had a new plan for increased AODA enforcement, to begin in 2016. Subsequent Government records and the results of an AODA Alliance Freedom of Information application demonstrate that this never took place.

\* The former Ontario Government failed to effectively publicize the Government's promised toll-Free number for the public to report AODA violations, for purposes of AODA enforcement.

\* It is important to make AODA enforcement independent of the Ontario Government. The Ontario Government should not enforce the AODA against itself. Moreover, independent enforcement of the AODA will better ensure effective enforcement of the AODA. AODA enforcement should not be subject to any political involvement.

\* While enforcement is not the only way to get obligated organizations to comply with the AODA, it is one important way to do so. The failure to effectively enforce the AODA has contributed to low rates of AODA compliance.

\* The failure to effectively enforce the AODA also works against the efforts of those who try to get obligated organizations to comply, such as accessibility consultants. Those consultants can point to strong enforcement powers in the AODA. However, the fact that only five monetary penalties were imposed in 2015, 2016 and 2017 combined, is ample proof that obligated organizations need not fear any real consequences if they don't comply with the AODA.

\* It is not sufficient for AODA enforcement to take the form of "paper audits", where Government officials review an obligated organization's documentary records on AODA compliance, such as records of an obligated organization's accessibility policy and of its staff training on accessibility. Effective auditing or inspections need to include on-site examination of the actual accessibility of the obligated organizations, not just its accessibility paper trail.

### **Recommendations on the AODA's Enforcement**

We therefore recommend that:

* 1. AODA enforcement should be substantially strengthen, including effectively using all AODA enforcement powers, enforcing all AODA accessibility requirements, and enforcing the AODA in connection with all classes of organizations that must obey the AODA. The Government should not just enforce the requirement of certain obligated organizations to file an accessibility self-report. The Government should effectively enforce AODA requirements vis à vis both the public and private sectors, and vis à vis all classes of organizations within each sector.
  2. AODA enforcement should be transferred outside the Ministry responsible for the AODA, and be assigned to an arms-length public agency to be created for AODA enforcement.
  3. The number of inspectors and directors appointed with AODA enforcement powers should be significantly increased.
  4. Among other things, Ontario Government and local municipal inspectors and investigators under other legislation should be given a mandate to enforce the AODA when they inspect or investigate an organization under other legislation or by-laws.

A core feature of AODA enforcement should be the on-site inspection of a range of obligated organizations each year on the actual accessibility of their workplace, goods, services and facilities, not a mere audit of their paper records on accessibility documentation.

* 1. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and any successor body assigned responsibility for AODA enforcement should publicly release and promptly post detailed information on AODA enforcement actions at least every three months. It should report on how many obligated organizations are actually providing accessibility, and not, as too often is the case at present, how many organizations simply tell the Government that they are providing accessibility. This should include prompt reports of quarterly results and year-to-date totals, broken down by sector and size of organization. At a minimum, it should include such measures as the number of notices of proposed order issued, the total amount of proposed penalties, the number of orders issued and total amounts and number of penalties imposed, the number of appeals from orders and the outcome, the total amount of penalties including changes ordered by the appeal tribunal, and the orders categorized by subject matter.
  2. Obligated organizations should be required to report to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario or any successor AODA enforcement agency on accessibility complaints received via their required AODA feedback mechanisms, and on how they were resolved, while protecting individual privacy.
  3. New ways for crowd-sourced AODA monitoring/enforcement should be created, such as the Government beginning to post all online AODA compliance reports from obligated organizations in a publicly-accessible searchable data base, and by requiring each obligated organization to post its AODA accessibility policy and its AODA compliance report on its own website, if it has one.
  4. To reverse the public perception that the Government is not and will not be effectively enforcing the AODA, the Government should immediately and widely publicize its enforcement plans and its intention to substantially increase its efforts at AODA enforcement. This should not be limited to postings on a Government website.
  5. The Government should develop an effective strategy for ensuring that municipalities effectively enforce the Ontario Building Code's accessibility requirements as well as any built environment accessibility requirements in AODA accessibility standards, including
  6. providing effective training tools on the Ontario Building Code accessibility requirements that can be used by municipal enforcement officials;
  7. monitoring levels of enforcement and compliance at the municipal level across Ontario regarding the Ontario Building Code accessibility requirements.

## **Chapter 3 Current AODA Accessibility Standards Don't Ensure Ontario Will Become Accessible to People with Disabilities by 2025**

### **Recommended Findings**

We recommend that this AODA Independent Review make the following findings:

\* The current AODA accessibility standards will not ensure that Ontario becomes accessible to people with disabilities by 2025, even in the specific areas they regulate, e.g. customer service, employment, transportation, or information and communication.

The 2014 final report of the Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review correctly identified significant deficiencies with these accessibility standards. In the intervening years, the former Ontario Government did not rectify those deficiencies.

\* The Government's mandatory 5-year review of the 2007 Customer Service Accessibility Standard did not rectify most of the significant deficiencies with that accessibility standard. In one way, it made that weak accessibility standard even weaker.

\* The Government's mandatory 5 year- review of the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard resulted in weak recommendations to the Government from the Transportation Standards Development committee. Even if those recommendations were all implemented, these would not materially or substantially improve that accessibility standard.

\* Similarly, the 2018 draft recommendations from the Employment Standards Development Committee on how to improve the very limited Employment Accessibility Standard would not significantly improve that accessibility standard.

### **Recommendations Regarding Deficiencies in Current AODA Accessibility Standards**

We urge this Independent Review to recommend as follows:

* 1. The Ontario Government should substantially strengthen all the existing accessibility standards.
  2. Any accessibility standards enacted under the AODA should, at least, measure up to the accessibility standards and accommodation and undue hardship requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Where any existing standard falls below that standard, or provides defences to obligated organizations that are broader than those under the Human Rights Code, the AODA accessibility standard should be amended as part of any review of that accessibility standard, to bring it in line with the Human Rights Code.
  3. The Ontario Government should direct each Standards Development Committee that is now developing recommendations for a new accessibility standard or that is reviewing an existing standard, or that is appointed in the future, to make recommendations on accessibility that live up to the Ontario Human Rights Code. To assist with this, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario should give each Standards Development Committee up-to-date information on relevant rulings by the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and courts, and should centrally involve the Ontario Human Rights Code in each Standards Development Committee on an ongoing basis, including appointing a representative of the Ontario Human Rights Commission as an ex officio non-voting member of each Standards Development Committee.
  4. When any Standards Development Committee is conducting a review of an existing AODA accessibility standard, that Committee should be advised that its mandate is not simply to decide if the existing accessibility standard is working "as intended". Rather, it should investigate whether the accessibility standard will ensure that accessibility in the area that the standard addresses will be achieved by 2025. If it does not, then the Committee should recommend measures needed to ensure that accessibility in that area will be achieved by 2025.
  5. The Ontario Government should appoint a Standards Development Committee to review the sufficiency of the general provisions in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, since no Standards Development Committee appears to be reviewing them.
  6. The Ontario Government should now launch the next review of the Customer Service Accessibility Standard, since that standard remains so weak, and since the last review of that accessibility standard failed to significantly improve it. As part of that review, that accessibility standard should be revised to remove the barrier it impermissibly creates. That review should be mandated to consider, among other things, the low-cost revisions that the AODA Alliance and ARCH Disability Law Centre recommended to the Ontario Government in their joint March 15, 2016 brief.
  7. The Ontario Government should now convene a summit with leaders from the disability community and the transportation sector to identify substantially stronger reforms to the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard than those which the Transportation Standards Development committee had recommended.

* 1. The Ontario Government should ask the Employment Standards Development Committee to expand its efforts, and to develop recommendations on measures to remove and prevent specific workplace disability barriers.

## **Chapter 4 The Need for New Accessibility Standards, Including a Strong and Comprehensive Built Environment Accessibility Standard**

### **Recommended Findings**

We recommend that this AODA Independent Review make the following findings:

\* After the AODA has been part of Ontario law for 13 and a half years, the built environment in Ontario remains replete with far too many disability accessibility barriers. The AODA has not had a significant effect on removing existing barriers or preventing new ones in the built environment. A new building can be built in full compliance with the AODA and the Ontario Building Code and yet have serious accessibility problems. The Ontario Building Code's accessibility requirements, like the few built environment requirements in AODA accessibility standards, are entirely inadequate to meet the known modern needs of people with disabilities.

\* Ontario also has a pressing need for a comprehensive Built Environment Accessibility Standard to be enacted under the AODA. The former Ontario Government's decision to carve the built environment largely out of AODA accessibility standards and to only address it in the Ontario Building Code was wrong. It set Ontario back.

\* The former Ontario Government's failure to keep its August 19, 2011 election promise to promptly enact the promised Built Environment Accessibility Standard set Ontario back.

\* The former Ontario Government's failure to act effectively on the 2014 Mayo Moran recommendations to address retrofits in existing buildings further set Ontario further back.

\* Ontario has a pressing need for a Residential Housing Accessibility Standard. There is a serious shortage of accessible housing in Ontario for people with disabilities. It is getting worse because the demand for accessible housing increases as Ontario's population ages. There is no effective strategy in place in Ontario to ensure a sufficient increase in the supply of accessible housing in Ontario.

\* Ontario needs a Goods and Products Accessibility Standard to be created under the AODA.

\* The former Ontario Government never undertook a comprehensive consultation or other effort to determine what additional accessibility standards need to be created in order for the AODA to ensure that Ontario reaches full accessibility by 2025. There is no indication that the current Government did this, or has a plan to do this.

### **Recommendations Regarding Next Accessibility Standards to be Developed**

* 1. The Government should consult with the public, including with people with disabilities, over the next three months, on all the sectors that other accessibility standards need to address, to ensure that Ontario becomes accessible by 2025, with a decision to be announced on the economic sectors to be addressed in those standards within three months after that consultation.
  2. The Government should not delay a decision on whether to have a new accessibility standard developed, while the Ontario Public Service decides what barriers it might include.
  3. Immediately after the Government decides what remaining accessibility standards need to be created, it should promptly create Standards Development Committees to develop recommendations for each of those new accessibility standards.
  4. The Government should now publicly recognize that there is a problem with the inaccessibility of the built environment in Ontario. It should launch a concerted and comprehensive strategy that will address new construction, major renovations, and the retrofit of existing buildings that are undergoing no major renovations, using feedback from the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal complaints and findings, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission's policies and advice.
  5. The Government should develop and enact a comprehensive Built Environment Accessibility Standard under the AODA, ensuring that it effectively addresses accessibility retrofits in existing buildings, as well as accessibility in new construction and major renovations (not limited to those covered in the DOPS accessibility standard). Among other things, the new and comprehensive Built Environment Accessibility Standard should include additional accessibility requirements for elevators that are not currently addressed by the requirements in the Ontario Building Code and other provincial laws. To this end, the Ontario Government should appoint a new Built Environment Standards Development Committee, both to review the 2011 Public Spaces Accessibility Standard and to develop recommendations for a far more comprehensive Built Environment Accessibility Standard.
  6. The Government should create a Residential Housing Accessibility Standard under the AODA, and should promptly appoint a Standards Development Committee to make recommendations on what it should include, or assign this to the Built Environment Standards Development Committee, referred to in the preceding recommendation.
  7. The Government should direct each AODA Standards Development Committee now in operation to make recommendations on standards for the built environment as it relates to the area that that Standards Development Committee is studying. For example, the Education Standards Development Committee should be directed to make recommendations for accessibility in schools, colleges or universities. The Health Care Standards Development Committee should be directed to recommend requirements for the accessibility of the built environment in the health care system.
  8. The Government should announce a comprehensive strategy on accessible housing to address the current and growing crisis in accessible housing in Ontario, in addition to creating an AODA accessibility standard on point.
  9. The Government should strengthen enforcement of accessibility in the built environment. For example, it should require that before a building permit or site plan approval can be obtained for a project, the approving authority, municipal or provincial, must be satisfied that the project, on completion, will meet all accessibility requirements under the Ontario Building Code and in all AODA accessibility standards.
  10. The Government should require professional bodies that regulate or licence key professionals such as architects, interior designers, landscape architects, and other design professionals, to require detailed training on accessible design, to qualify for a license, and continuing professional development for existing professionals. The Government should also require, as a condition of funding any college or university that trains these key professions, that their program curriculum must include sufficient training on accessibility and universal design. This should be designed to ensure that no new graduates in these fields will make the same mistakes as too often is the case for those now in practice.
  11. The Government should substantially reform the way public sector infrastructure projects are managed and overseen in Ontario, including a major reform of Infrastructure Ontario. This should include:

1. A requirement that accessibility advice be obtained on all major projects starting at the very beginning, during master planning, feasibility studies, and functional programming, with any accessibility advice that is received being made public. This input should also be obtained through consultations with people with disabilities.
2. A requirement to track any decisions to reject any accessibility advice, identifying who made that decision and the reasons why. That information should promptly be publicly reported.
3. To require the Government to promptly make public the accessibility requirements under consideration as a requirement for a contract for any infrastructure, with enough time before the start of the bidding competition to allow for feedback and adjustments. It is too late to make this public only after the bidding competition.
4. A requirement for post-project accessibility commissioning inspections which would include compliance with the project specific output specification accessibility requirements as well as the Ontario Building Code and AODA accessibility standards.
5. A requirement in all contracts that any accessibility deficiencies found must be the financial responsibility of the Project Company who built the project to fix them.
   1. The Government should require that when public money is used to create new public housing, 100% of that housing should include universal design and visit-ability as mandatory design features.
   2. The Government should agree to create a Goods and Products Accessibility Standard.
   3. Accessibility standards should include, where appropriate, not only end-dates for achieving results, but also interim benchmarks for major milestones towards full accessibility.

**Chapter 5 The Need to Substantially Reform the Standards Development Process Under the AODA**

### **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* There is a pressing need to reform the standards development process under the AODA. The problems with the standards development process that the 2010 final report of the Charles Beer AODA Independent Review identified remain present to this day. The former Ontario Government's attempt to address these by temporarily assigning the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council with responsibility for developing recommendations for all accessibility standards was a failure and was properly abandoned by the former Ontario Government by 2016.

\* The Ontario Government has been and remains in violation of the AODA, because it has thrice failed to appoint Standards Development Committees on time to conduct mandatory 5-year reviews of existing AODA accessibility standards by the AODA's deadline. This includes the former Ontario Government's failure to appoint the mandatory review of the 2007 Customer Service Accessibility Standard until sometime in 2013, and its failure up until it left office to appoint the mandatory review of the 2012 Public Spaces Accessibility Standard by the end of 2017 and the review of Part I of the 2011 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation by 2016.

\* Since taking office in June 2018, the current Ontario Government has also not appointed the mandatory review of the 2012 Public Spaces Accessibility Standard, or the mandatory review of Part I of the 2011 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

\* Once the former Ontario Government had decided to develop new accessibility standards in the area of education and health care, it took far too long to take the simple first step of appointing Standards Development Committees to start working on recommendations on what those accessibility standards should include. It took some two years for the former Ontario Government to appoint the Health Care Standards Development Committee and over one year to appoint the K-12 and Post-Secondary Education Standards Development Committees. It took that Government longer to set up any of these Standards Development Committees than it had taken the Government to develop the entire AODA legislation and introduce it for First Reading in the Legislature back in 2003-2004.

\* The new Ford Government has unjustifiably created further delays in reaching accessibility in Ontario, by its excessively-long freeze of the work of existing Standards Development Committees that were already appointed and working on their mandates before the June 7, 2018 Ontario election. It froze the work of the Employment Standards Development Committee and the Information and Communication Standards Development Committee for five months, and then lifted that freeze around November 2018. Its freeze on the work of the Health Care Standards Development Committee and the two Education Standards Development Committees has continued in effect up to the time of this brief. The Ford Government has indicated that it is awaiting the report of the current AODA Independent Review before deciding on whether to lift that freeze.

\* The former Ontario Government inappropriately tried to restrict or narrow the work of some of the AODA Standards Development Committees that it had appointed.

\* The Ontario Government has shrouded the work of Standards Development Committees in far too much secrecy, especially in recent years.

\* The mandatory minutes that each Standards Development Committee must keep and publicly post, regarding their meetings, are too often insufficiently detailed and informative to enable the public to know what these committees are doing, and have confidence in their work.

\* The former Ontario Government was wrong to require Standards Development Committees to have a 75% vote in support before a recommendation for an accessibility standard could be submitted to the Government, or for any other decision by a Standards Development Committee, e.g. a decision to approve an amendment to its minutes.

\* It put the cart before the horse for the former Ontario Government to require a Standards Development Committee in its first six months to set priorities for its work, before it had fully assessed which barriers exist in the area that the committee was assigned to study.

\* The former Government did not give the public sufficient advance notice of when it would be consulting on a proposed accessibility standard.

\* The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario has been overstepping its role, when supporting the work of Standards Development Committees, by attempting to inappropriately micromanage and influence the direction of their work and recommendations.

\* Standards Development Committees have not been effectively fulfilling their core role under the AODA to propose an accessibility standard for the Government to consider enacting. For example, in 2018 the Transportation Standards Development committee submitted recommendations that are in significant part made up of items that are not a proposal for revisions to the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard.

\* The recommendations from Standards Development Committees for revisions to the 2007 Customer Service Accessibility Standard and the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard, and the draft recommendations for revisions to the 2011 Employment Accessibility Standard, are all very weak, and dramatically less than people with disabilities need.

\* The standards development process requires much more extensive involvement by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

\* Standards Development Committees have at times insufficiently consulted with the disability community, especially when formulating their draft recommendations.

\* Since 2013, the former Ontario Government has broken its 2007 election promise to provide dedicated staff support to disability sector representatives on Standards Development Committees.

\* In and after May 2018, the Government has inappropriately failed to consult the public on final recommendations it received for revisions to the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard from the Transportation Standards Development committee.

\* The Government' has repeatedly failed to comply with the statutory deadline for deciding on making an accessibility standard after a Standards Development Committee recommends one.

\* The former Government took the extraordinary and highly problematic step in June 2016 of purporting to amend parts of the 2011 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation without first appointing a Standards Development Committee to review the relevant parts of that standard, a mandatory precondition under the AODA.

### **Recommendations on Improving the Process for Developing New Accessibility Standards and Revising Existing Standards**

We urge this Independent Review to recommend as follows:

* 1. There is a strong need for the standards development process under the AODA to be substantially strengthened so that it produces stronger accessibility standards that will fulfil the AODA's purposes.
  2. The Government should lead by example, by always ensuring that it meets all of its own deadlines set by the AODA, such as the deadlines for appointing Standards Development Committees 5-year mandatory reviews of existing AODA accessibility standards.
  3. The Government should immediately lift its freeze on the work of the Health Care Standards Development Committee, the K-12 Education Standards Development Committee, and the Post-Secondary Education Standards Development Committee.
  4. The Government should modify the Mandate Letter for the Health Care Standards Development Committee so that it ensures that that Standards Development Committee makes recommendations on barriers throughout the health care system, and not only or primarily regarding barriers in hospitals.
  5. The Government should ensure that the Standards Development Committees, appointed under the AODA to make recommendations on what an accessibility standard should include, can operate in a more open and accountable manner and are fully independent of Government. These should not be shrouded in secrecy and non-disclosure requirements. An independent Ontario Access Board should be created to conduct and oversee this work, that is fully independent of and arms-length from the Ontario Government.
  6. The Ontario Government should not try to get members of Standards Development Committees to sign non-disclosure agreements when inviting them to serve on an AODA Standards Development Committee.
  7. The Accessibility Directorate should provide effective dedicated staff support to the disability sector representatives on each Standards Development Committee.
  8. The Government should amend the Terms of Reference for Standards Development Committees, to allow them to make a recommendation on what an accessibility standard should include as long as that recommendation is supported by a simple majority of 50% of the voting members, at least half of which comprise representatives on the Committee from the disability sector
  9. The Accessibility Directorate should not direct Standards Development Committees that when they vote on other matters such as approving or amending Committee meetings' minutes, they require a 75% super-majority. A simple majority should be all that is required.
  10. Minutes kept by Standards Development Committees should be more detailed and informative. They should include minutes of any sub-committee and should have appended to them, as part of any public posting, any documents which are tabled with the Standards Development Committee to review. Minutes of meetings of a Standards Development Committee should accurately and comprehensively record the detailed issue-by-issue deliberations of that committee on accessibility standard proposals. They should be written in a fashion to make them fully understandable by members of the public who did not attend those meetings.
  11. The Ontario Government should not direct Standards Development Committees to decide, within their first six months of work, on priorities for their work.
  12. The Government should widely publicize the opportunity for community groups to request a chance to present to a Standards Development Committee, when it is developing proposals for an accessibility standard.
  13. Because several different AODA public consultations will be coming up, the Ontario Government should make public a schedule of all the forthcoming public consultations that will come up over the next 24 months under the AODA, and ensure they are not overlapping, so that the public can adequately prepare to participate in them all.
  14. The Government should now launch the process to recruit members of a new Standards Development Committee to comprehensively review disability barriers in the built environment, including those addressed in the 2012 Public Spaces Accessibility Standard.
  15. The Government should now appoint a Standards Development Committee to conduct the overdue mandatory 5-year review of Part I of the 2011 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.
  16. When it is developing proposals for the contents of an accessibility standard, the Government should strongly encourage a Standards Development Committee to extensively and publicly consult the public, including the disability community. As part of this, each Standards Development Committee should be encouraged to invite stakeholders from the disability community and regulated sectors to meet together with that Standards Development Committee, to informally discuss issues that a Standards Development Committee has found challenging to resolve.
  17. When a Standards Development Committee submits an initial or draft recommendation to the Government for the contents of a new accessibility standard, or for revisions to an existing accessibility standard, the Government should then convene face-to-face stakeholder meetings as one avenue for gathering input and should not restrict input to written submissions from the public. It is best when these meeting include stakeholders from all perspectives, rather than isolating disability sector from obligated organizations.
  18. When a Standards Development Committee submits to the Government a final proposal for the contents of a new accessibility standard, the Government should obey s. 9(7) of the AODA by the minister, responsible for the AODA, deciding within 90 days what to enact from that proposal. The Government should immediately make that decision public.
  19. When a Standards Development Committee is developing a recommendation for the contents of an accessibility standard, the Accessibility Directorate should provide to that committee, and post on the internet for public input, a review of measures adopted in other jurisdictions to advance the goal of accessibility for persons with disabilities in the area that the new accessibility standard or the existing accessibility standard under review is to address.
  20. The Human Rights Commission should be far more extensively involved in the formal and informal work of each Standards Development Committee, including during review of public input and discussion and votes on clauses of proposed accessibility standards. This could include having a representative of the Ontario Human Rights Commission sit on each Standards Development Committee, as they work on proposals for the contents of accessibility standards, whether as a voting member or a non-voting member.
  21. The Government should encourage each Standards Development Committee, when developing proposals for the contents of an accessibility standard, to identify where changes are needed to provincial or municipal legislation, regulations or bylaws, to advance the goal of a fully accessible Ontario.
  22. Standards Development Committees should fully fulfil their core mandates under the AODA by each recommending the specific contents of a proposed accessibility standard, or revisions to an existing accessibility standard. The accessibility standard or revisions to a standard that they recommend should be designed to meet the AODA's goal of achieving accessibility in Ontario by 2025. If they are to recommend any other measures at all, such as non-legislative measures, this should be secondary to their core mandate, and not the core of their recommendations.
  23. The Government should now conduct a robust consultation with the public on the Transportation Standards Development committee's final recommendations for revisions to the 2011 Transportation Accessibility Standard, because those recommendations are so weak.
  24. The Government should never attempt or purport to amend an AODA accessibility standard without first fulfilling the mandatory AODA requirement to appoint a Standards Development Committee to consider revisions to that accessibility standard.

## **Chapter 6 Public Education on Accessibility Remains Insufficient**

### **Recommended Findings**

We recommend that this AODA Independent Review make the following findings:

\* With only six years left before we reach 2025, and with the AODA having been the law since 2005, the findings in the 2010 Charles Beer AODA Independent Review report and the 2014 Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review report remain valid and current. Many if not most in the public are not aware of their AODA obligations. Of those who are aware of the AODA, too many, including too many within the Ontario Government itself, are not aware that the Ontario Human Rights Code and, where applicable, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms impose disability accessibility obligations that are as high as or higher than those now imposed by AODA accessibility standards.

\* Government efforts on public education on the AODA since 2014 have not solved this problem.

\* The former Ontario Government's ineffective enforcement of the AODA has undermined efforts at public education on the AODA. This is because the message has been widespread that failing to comply with the AODA likely brings no adverse consequences for an obligated organization.

\* It works against the AODA's goals for the Ontario Government to have publicly posted online that accessible customer service does not include providing ramps or automatic door openers.

\* There is a pressing need to include disability accessibility and inclusion in school curriculums. Moreover, professional training for a range of professions (such as design professionals e.g. architects and interior designers), needs to include sufficient training on disability accessibility. The former Ontario Government never kept its 2007 election promises to take action in these two important areas.

\* This many years after the AODA was enacted, it would be wrong to contend that effective AODA enforcement must now await further efforts to educate the public and obligated organizations on their obligations under the AODA. It is incorrect and harmful to treat public awareness and education as some unending precondition to initiating effective AODA enforcement.

\* While it has made available some useful tools and resources, the Ontario Government has not provided obligated organizations all the tools that could help them comply with the AODA and has not effectively and sufficiently publicized the tools and resources it has provided.

\* The public, including obligated organizations, will pay far more attention to public education and awareness efforts on accessibility when they know there is effective AODA enforcement.

\* The aim and core focus now should be raising action, not raising awareness.

### **Recommendations on Public Education on the AODA**

We urge this Independent Review to recommend as follows:

* 1. The Government should widely advertise on the mass media, and not just on the internet, via email and on Twitter, about the availability of resources, training materials and guides it has already developed for organizations to comply with accessibility standards enacted under the AODA.
  2. Promptly after any new AODA accessibility standard is enacted or an existing accessibility standard is revised in the future, the Government should make available and widely publicize a free guide, policy guideline and other like resource materials for obligated organizations to comply with that accessibility standard's accessibility requirements
  3. The Government should develop, make available and widely publicize a free web-authoring tool for creating accessible web pages, to comply with the, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation's information and communication website accessibility requirements.
  4. The Government should promptly implement a permanent program to ensure that students in the school system are educated in disability accessibility. For example:

1. The Government should identify the Minister and public officials responsible for this program's development and implementation.
2. School boards and teachers' representatives should be consulted on its development and implementation.
3. The Government should develop a sample curriculum which school boards could adopt if they wish, in lieu of developing their own curriculum.
4. The Government should report to the public on this program's implementation and effectiveness.
   1. The Government should promptly require the self-governing bodies for key professions (such as architects, interior designers, planners, other design professionals, lawyers, doctors and social workers) to adopt, implement and require education on disability accessibility to qualify for those professions, and to require continuing professional development on this topic for those already qualified in those professions. Among other things, as part of this effort:
5. For these key professions such as architects and planners, the Government should require that to qualify in future for a licence or other qualifications certificate, a specified amount of training in barrier free design must be completed, that goes beyond the insufficient requirements of the Ontario Building Code and AODA accessibility standards.
6. A lead minister and public servants should be identified as responsible for this initiative.
7. The Government should make publicly available resource materials to help those self-governing professional bodies develop the needed disability accessibility curriculum on accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.
8. The Government should report to the public on this program's monitoring, implementation and effectiveness.
9. Funding to any post-secondary faculty or self-governing professional organization for any of these professions should be made strictly conditional on compliance with this provincial policy and goal. Any college, university or other educational institution that provides training to any of those professions should be required to include accessibility training in their curriculum, especially if they are to receive any public funding.
   1. The Government should promptly consult with persons with disabilities, including the AODA Alliance, on the content of these public education materials. This should involve in-person discussions, and not merely an invitation to provide on-line feedback to the Government.
   2. The Government should not treat AODA public education or AODA awareness-raising as a substitute for or precondition for effective AODA enforcement. The Government's aim and core focus now should be raising action, not raising awareness.

## **Chapter 7. The Government's Failure to Effectively Ensure that Public Money Is Never Used to Create, Perpetuate or Exacerbate Disability Barriers**

### **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* Public money should never be used to create or perpetuate accessibility barriers against people with disabilities. Public spending to which accessibility strings can and should always be attached includes, for example, infrastructure spending, spending on procurement of goods, services and facilities, transfer payments to the Ontario Government's transfer partners, and spending on grants or loans such as those given to businesses or local authorities, or the broader public sector. It would be irresponsible for any public official or office to permit public money to be used to create or perpetuate disability accessibility barriers. It creates more future costs – the cost of removing barriers that should never have been created in the first place.

\* The Ontario Government does not have in place effective, monitored procedures for ensuring that public money is never used to create or perpetuate disability accessibility barriers. There is no real accountability or consequences for a public official who permits or directs the use of public money in a way that creates or perpetuates disability barriers. The public has no way to find out who made or advocated for the bad decisions that result in these publicly-funded barriers.

\* The former Government did not take effective new action to address this concern after the 2014 Mayo Moran AODA Independent Review Report identified it as a concern.

\* Where the Government has put in place some policies regarding accessibility considerations when undertaking public procurement of goods, services or facilities, there are no publicly-disclosed regimes for monitoring or enforcing these. There are no known consequences for contravening these policies or procedures.

\* As widely-viewed online videos produced by the AODA Alliance in 2016, 2017 and 2018 reveal regarding the new Centennial College Culinary Arts Centre, the new Ryerson University Student Learning Centre, and new and recently-renovated Toronto area public transit stations, the former Ontario Government broke Premier Wynne's pledge in the 2014 Ontario election that public money would not be used to create or perpetuate disability barriers.

\* There was no discernable progress in ensuring accessibility of publicly-funded infrastructure from June 2014 to June 2016, when the Minister of Infrastructure was also the minister responsible for the AODA. The fact that both subjects were under one minister should have led to far better provincial efforts at ensuring that new infrastructure is fully accessible to people with disabilities.

\* An effective use of the Government's lever of power over the use of public money could have a very dramatic impact on the removal and prevention of disability accessibility barriers, at little or no cost to the Ontario Government.

\* Infrastructure Ontario, part of the Ontario Government, has not shown itself to be effective at or truly committed to ensuring that provincially-funded infrastructure projects are fully accessible to people with disabilities. In connection with public transit, the same problem persists with Metrolinx, the major provincial organization that oversees many transportation infrastructure projects. This is so despite any positive rhetoric on this subject emanating from those Government organizations.

### **Recommendations on Ensuring Public Money Is Not Used to Create, Perpetuate or Exacerbate Barriers**

We urge the Independent Review to recommend that:

* 1. The Ontario Government should adopt and broadly publicize a cross-government policy that public money may never be used to create or perpetuate accessibility barriers against people with disabilities.
  2. The Government should set standards for, implement, widely publicize, monitor, enforce and publicly report on a comprehensive strategy to ensure that public money is never used by anyone to create or perpetuate barriers against people with disabilities, for example, in capital or infrastructure spending, or through procurement of goods, services or facilities, or through transfer payments to the Ontario Government's transfer partners, or through business development grants or loans, or research grants. A senior public official within the Ontario Public Service should be designated with lead responsibility and authority for this effort.
  3. The Government should make it a condition of research grants that it funds or to which it contributes that people with disabilities should, where feasible and appropriate, be included in research study as subjects.
  4. In any Government strategy to ensure that public money is not used to create or perpetuate accessibility barriers, it is not sufficient for the Government to make it a condition that a recipient of public money merely obey the AODA and AODA accessibility standards. It should require that recipients of public money comply with accessibility requirements in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and where applicable the Charter of Rights. It should require, among other things, that the recipient organization's specific capital project or goods, services or facilities be fully disability accessible or require a commitment to remediate these to become fully accessible by time lines to be set out in the grant, loan or other terms of payment of public money.
  5. Any Government contract for infrastructure or for the procurement of goods, services or facilities should include a mandatory, enforceable term that requires the recipient of the public money to remediate any accessibility barriers that the recipient allows to be created or perpetuated at the recipient's expense.
  6. The Government should make it a condition of transfer payments and capital or other infrastructure funding to municipalities, hospitals, school boards, public transit providers, colleges, universities, and transfer partners that these recipient organizations adopt comparable initiatives to ensure that their procurement and infrastructure spending, and any loans or grant programs that they operate, do not create, exacerbate or perpetuate barriers against people with disabilities. The Government should make public a resource guide to assist those transfer partners to know how to effectively implement this requirement.
  7. The Government should promptly establish a process for monitoring and enforcing the recommended comprehensive strategy to ensure that public money is not used to create, perpetuate or exacerbate accessibility barriers. It should not be left to each ministry to do as little or as much as it wishes to implement Government policy and procedures on this topic, and to have to re-invent the wheel in this area.
  8. The Government should widely and prominently publicize as soon as possible to any organization that seeks Ontario infrastructure or procurement funds, or any Government funded or subsidies, loans or grants, that they must prove in their applications that they will ensure that public money isn't used to create, perpetuate or exacerbate barriers against persons with disabilities.
  9. The Government should establish and widely publicize an avenue for the public to report to the Government on situations where public money is used to create, perpetuate or exacerbate disability accessibility barriers.
  10. The Provincial Auditor should audit the Government to ensure compliance with recommendations on ensuring that public money is not used to create, perpetuate or exacerbate disability accessibility barriers.
  11. It should be a mandatory Government policy that when an accessibility consultant is retained on an infrastructure project to which Ontario public funds are contributed, whether that consultant is working for a Government office or a contractor that is hired using public money the accessibility consultant should report directly to the Ontario Government, with the consultant's advice being made promptly public.
  12. When a public infrastructure project is undertaken involving any Ontario Government funds, the Project Specific Output Specifications (on disability accessibility PSOS) for the project should be made public well before the competition process, and subject to public input. These should not be kept secret until after the bid competition is completed.
  13. The Provincial Auditor should audit the accessibility practices at Infrastructure Ontario, and provide a report to the public, including on any recommended reforms to how that Government organization approaches the planning for accessibility in infrastructure projects.
  14. When a Government-funded infrastructure project is undertaken, successive plans in progress for the project should be made public on a real time basis, for crowd-sourced input on accessibility.
  15. Where a public official or private contractor project team member, paid out of the public purse, vetoes or decides against an accessibility measure that an accessibility consultant recommends, the identity of that public official or private contractor should be recorded and made public, when successive plans for the project are made public, with an explanation of what the accessibility feature is that was excluded from the project on the decision or advice of that public official or private contractor.

## **Chapter 8. Ensuring that All Ontario Laws Do Not Authorize or Require Disability Barriers**

### **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* The Ontario Government has a special obligation to ensure that Ontario legislation and regulations are barrier-free for people with disabilities. These laws should not create or permit the creation of disability accessibility barriers.

\* The former Ontario Government promised to review all Ontario laws for accessibility issues in the 2007 election. It repeated that pledge in the 2011 and 2014 elections.

\* The former Government delayed even starting this review until 2011. That effort was further delayed for another two years after that.

\* Over eleven years after the initial pledge, the Ontario Government has only reviewed a mere 51 of Ontario's 750 statutes and no Ontario regulations, for accessibility problems. Of the 51 statutes reviewed, the former Ontario Government only amended a mere 11 of them. The former Government rejected further NDP amendments. The former Government did not correct a number of barriers in the 51 statutes it reviewed.

\* Within the former Government, this issue was shuffled from ministry to ministry over the past 11-12 years, and through a revolving door series of deputy ministers.

\* After some amendments were made to 11 Ontario statutes in spring 2016, the former Ontario Government in effect did nothing further on this review for its last two years in power. The new Ontario Government has not announced any action or plans on this issue.

\* It should not take 11 years to complete this review, much less a review of only 51 Ontario statutes. Between 1982 and 1985, the Ontario Government reviewed all laws for compliance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including its equality guarantee in section 15.

### **Recommendations on the Government's Duty to Review Ontario Statutes and Regulations for Accessibility Barriers**

We urge this Review to recommend that:

* 1. The Government should announce, within four months of this Independent Review's report, a detailed plan for completing a comprehensive review of all Ontario statutes and regulations for accessibility problems, and for ensuring that new legislation and regulations will be screened in advance to ensure that they do not authorize, permit, create or perpetuate barriers against people with disabilities.
  2. The Government should complete this review of all legislation for accessibility barriers by the end of 2020, and of all regulations by the end of 2021. The Government should introduce into the Legislature, with the intent of passing it, an omnibus bill or bills to amend any legislation as needed a result of this review, along timelines that the Government should announce by the end of March 2019.
  3. Cabinet should amend any regulations that the government deems necessary as a result of the accessibility review, by the end of 2022.
  4. The Government should appoint the Attorney General of Ontario to lead this review of all Ontario laws for accessibility problems, in coordination with the Secretary of Cabinet.
  5. The Government should report to the public by the end of 2018, the end of 2019 and the end of 2020 on its progress toward meeting the deadlines for reviewing all legislation and regulations for accessibility barriers. These reports should give specifics on what the Government has done and plans to do, whether by legislative amendments or other actions, to address accessibility barriers it has discovered in this review.
  6. When the Government identifies a potential barrier in an Ontario statute or regulation, it should consult with the public, including with people with disabilities, on options for addressing the barrier, before deciding on the contents of possible amendments to those laws.

## **Chapter 9 Making Ontario and Municipal Elections Accessible to Voters and Candidates with Disabilities**

### **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* In 2018, voters and candidates with disabilities in Ontario provincial and municipal elections continue to face too many disability barriers. This is unjustified and unacceptable.

\* The same disability barriers can present themselves in provincial and municipal elections. It is inappropriate to have to reinvent the accessibility wheel in the election context at both the provincial and municipal levels, and then again, from one municipality to the next. This slows progress on accessibility while wastefully costing the taxpayer more.

\* Elections Ontario has not solved this problem at the provincial level, even though this issue has been within its mandate for many years.

\* A comprehensive new strategy is needed to ensure elections accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities, which can be expected to require legislative and non-legislative reforms.

### **Recommendations on Ensuring Municipal and Provincial Elections are Barrier-free for Voters and Candidates with Disabilities**

We urge this Independent Review to make these recommendations:

* 1. By June 2019, the Government should appoint an independent person to conduct a three month independent review of barriers facing voters and candidates with disabilities in provincial and municipal elections, including both in the campaign process and the voting process. This Review, should, among other things, gather information on the use of telephone and internet voting in municipal elections in Ontario. This Review should hold an open, accessible and province-wide public consultation, and report to the public within six months of its appointment. Its report should be made public immediately on its being submitted to the Government.
  2. Within six months after the report of the Disability Elections Accessibility Independent Review, the Government should introduce into the Legislature omnibus elections accessibility reforms for both municipal and provincial elections, to remove and prevent barriers impeding voters and candidates with disabilities in the voting process, and in participating in election campaigns, to ensure that:

1. all voters with disabilities can independently mark their own ballot in private and verify their choice. This bill should, among other things, open up the option of telephone and/or internet voting in Ontario elections and by-elections.
2. all voters with disabilities have full physical accessibility to all polling stations and all public areas in polling stations,
3. including sharing at the provincial and municipal levels information on accessible polling station venues, so each does not have to reinvent the same accessibility wheel.
4. Ensure that election campaign information is immediately and readily available in accessible formats, and that campaign websites are designed to be fully accessible.
5. ensure that all-candidates debates are accessible.

## **Chapter 10 Ontario Government - Leading by Example, But by What Example is it Leading?**

### **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* The Ontario Government and Ontario Public Service has not led and is now not leading by a good example, in the area of accessibility. That is not to say it has done nothing on accessibility. Rather it has done far too little, and has not lived up to its stated intention to lead Ontario by example.

\* The former Government did not keep Premier Wynne's commitment to instruct all ministers on their accessibility commitments. This contributed to slower progress on accessibility.

\* The fact that the new Ontario Government has not made its Mandate Letters public makes it impossible for the public, including people with disabilities, to know what the Premier has instructed his ministers to do on accessibility for people with disabilities.

\* The transfer from 2013 to 2016 of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to the Ministry of Economic Development was well-intentioned and held great promise. However it turned out to be a failure.

\* It is important for the Ontario Government to have a full-time Minister of Accessibility, to lead the AODA's implementation. It was inappropriate for the former Ontario Government to assign to the same minister both the responsibility as Minister for Accessibility and the conflicting role of Minister of Government Services.

\* There is a pressing need for the Ontario Government to re-engineered the way the Government delivers and oversees the delivery of accessibility within the Ontario Public Service, as an employer and service-provider.

\* The Ontario Government's efforts at becoming an accessible employer and service-provider were slowed and hampered by virtue of the fact that the Government has no Chief Accessibility Officer, at the level of a deputy minister or associate deputy minister, with lead responsibility and authority for ensuring that the Ontario Public Service becomes accessible as an employer and service-provider.

\* The Ontario Government missed an extraordinary opportunity to achieve advances on accessibility in the tourism and hospitality sector, when Ontario hosted the 2015 Toronto Pan/Parapan American Games. Despite our repeated efforts over two years, the former Ontario Government did not undertake a strategy to use the Games to leverage an increase of accessibility in the tourism and hospitality sector, such as in hotels, restaurants and tourism sites.

\* The Minister of International Trade did not incorporate disability accessibility as a prominent part of the International Trade Ministry's strategy for economic development and innovation.

\* The Minister of Research and Innovation did not ensure disability accessibility is a key focus of research and innovation programs and projects that the Government operates or finances.

### **Recommendations on the Ontario Government Leading By Example on Accessibility**

* 1. The Government should designate a single minister to be responsible for ensuring that the Ontario Public Service becomes a fully accessible employer and service provider, and to ensure that the Government keeps all its accessibility commitments and duties, other than those for which the Minister for Accessibility and Seniors is responsible.
  2. The Government should establish a full-time Deputy Minister or associate deputy minister responsible for ensuring the accessibility of the Ontario Government's services, facilities and workplaces, to be called the Chief Accessibility Officer.
  3. The Premier should include in the mandate letter that his office issues to each cabinet minister, specific directions to fulfil the Government's commitments and duties on disability accessibility which fall in whole or in part in that ministry's purview. The Premier's instructions to cabinet ministers on accessibility should be made public.
  4. The Premier's office should direct the Secretary of Cabinet to ensure that the Government's disability accessibility commitments and duties are kept, and direct the Secretary to Cabinet to take all needed steps to implement them.
  5. The Government should announce and implement a plan to re-engineer how the Ontario Public Service discharges its duty to ensure that its own services, facilities and workplaces are fully accessible.
  6. The Government should ensure that there remains an Accessibility Lead position in each ministry, and should ensure that it is or becomes a full time position, which reports directly to the deputy minister of that minister, with an option for a dual report as well to the ministry's Chief Administrative Officer.
  7. The Government should promptly implement and widely publicize within the Ontario Public Service a comprehensive permanent periodic program for auditing and monitoring its workplaces and public services and facilities for disability accessibility and barriers. This program should include, among other things, on-site audits and inspections, and not merely paper trail audits. The results of this monitoring should annually be made public.
  8. The Government should promptly implement a constructive program for ensuring accountability of public servants in the Ontario Public Service for efforts on disability accessibility. Among other things, the Ontario Public Service should require that every employee include in his or her annual performance review, performance goals on disability accessibility within the scope of their duties. Performance on this criterion should be assessed for performance, pay and promotion decisions.
  9. The Government should not solely or predominantly rely on on-line programs to train the Ontario Public Service on accessibility. It should implement live, interactive programming where possible that involves face-to-face interaction with persons with disabilities.
  10. The Minister responsible for International Trade should incorporate disability accessibility as a prominent part of Ontario's international trade strategy for economic development and innovation.
  11. The Minister who is responsible for research and innovation should ensure disability accessibility is a key focus of research and innovation programs and projects that the Government operates or finances.

## **Chapter 11 The Unmet Need for a Strong and Effective Ontario Strategy to Substantially increase the Employment of Ontarians with Disabilities**

## **Recommended Findings**

We urge this AODA Independent Review to find as follows:

\* People with disabilities continue to face unfair and high rates of unemployment. This inflicts serious hardships on people with disabilities and on society. Society significantly benefits by substantially increasing the employment of people with disabilities

\* The Ontario Government is a significant cause of the disability unemployment problem

\* Ontario does not now have in place sufficient measures to combat this. At the present rate, employment in Ontario will not be achieve full accessibility for people with disabilities by 2025. A stronger AODA Employment Accessibility Standard would help. However, companion Government strategies on increased employment for people with disabilities are also needed. Short term tax cuts or financial incentives are no long term solution

\* Barriers that students with disabilities face in Ontario's education system contribute to the unemployment plight facing too many people with disabilities. A good education is needed to get a good job. As such, delays in creating a strong and effective AODA Education Accessibility Standard contribute to the ongoing unemployment plight facing people with disabilities. That includes the previous 'Governments multi-year delay in deciding to create an AODA Education Accessibility Standard, and the current Government's freeze on the work of the K-12 and Post-Secondary Education Standards Development Committees.

\* If Ontario had in place a combination of a stronger Employment Accessibility Standard, a strong Education Accessibility Standard, a stronger Transportation Accessibility Standard, a strong Built Environment Accessibility Standard, and a strong provincial disability employment strategy, the workplaces of 5 to 6 years from now can and should be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

\* It was unjustifiable for the former Ontario Government to have taken over four years to develop a disability employment strategy. There have already been ample studies, reports and advisory councils on employment for people with disabilities. What is needed now is action, not more delay for extensive study and discussions.

\* The former Government's "Access Talent" disability employment strategy, announced in June 2017, has some helpful ingredients. However these were too often too high-level or preliminary. More concrete action is needed with prompt benefits for people with disabilities trying to enter or remain in the workforce.

**Recommendations to Improve Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

* 1. The Ontario Government should designate a specific minister and deputy minister with lead responsibility for ensuring that all the needed measures are taken to ensure substantially increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
  2. The Ontario Government should, within two months, make public a list of options for a strengthened disability employment strategy, drawn from the Government's own past and present programs, and from the programs and ideas that others have accumulated, e.g. those readily discoverable on the internet. The Government should promptly consult the public, including employers and people with disabilities on those options, and on any additional options that the public brings forward. Within three months of releasing that list of options, the Government should announce a new and strengthened Ontario disability employment strategy, supplementing the existing Access Talent strategy, to substantially increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. As part of this strategy:

1. The Government should not treat "raising awareness" among employers about the benefits of employment for people with disabilities as its core strategy for substantially increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
2. The Government should become a role model - leading by example through increased employment of people with disabilities in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) and the broader public sector and procuring services, providing grants or financing to organizations with a strong orientation toward supporting employment of people with disabilities
3. The Government should eliminate Government-created barriers to increased employment of people with disabilities
4. The Government should promptly implement a pro-active strategy to ensure that all students with disabilities in K-12 education secure an experiential learning opportunity, to work towards getting a good job reference to assist them in securing their first paid job.