

November 7, 2007

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Nadia Temple, Director
The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario
777 Bay Street, 6th Floor
Suite 601
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1S4

Dear Ms. Temple:

The Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) is an informal group of accessibility professionals representing municipalities, universities and other broader sector public organizations in Ontario. The group meets quarterly to educate and share information in effort to enhance accessibility in each of our organizations.

On behalf of ONAP, I am writing to request that the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario establish a formal venue in which the Chairs of the Accessibility Advisory Committees (AAC) of Ontario can communicate with one another.

Given that the functions of the Accessibility Directorate include: educating people on accessibility issues and the provisions of both the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*; providing public education and information and developing educational resources; and providing specialized knowledge, research and support in the implementation of the *ODA* and *AODA*, ONAP feels that this responsibility would be a perfect fit with the described functions of the Accessibility Directorate and as such, a forum for AAC chairs should be resourced and managed by the Province. This type of forum would also provide the needed linkages between the Accessibility Advisory Committees across Ontario and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Currently within municipalities, some AAC Chairs have already been meeting informally to exchange ideas and learn from one another. These exchanges have proven to be a valuable experience which we would like to see extended across the province.

As professionals working within organizations that have legal obligations under both the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* and most recently, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, we rely on the advice and direction received from each of our Accessibility Advisory Committees. By providing support to these committees through the establishment of a formal communication venue where they can share information and collect ideas, we believe that accessibility in Ontario will be enhanced further.

We look forward to a favourable response from the Province regarding the establishment of a communication forum through the Directorate for the Chairs of municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees across Ontario.

Sincerely,



Lisa Gonsalves (ONAP Member)
Senior Program Manager, ODA
Community and Health Services Department
The Regional Municipality of York, on behalf of the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals

LG/ld

cc. Ellen Waxman, Assistant Deputy Minister
ONAP members (see attached list)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Linda Crabtree, Coalition of Ontario Accessibility Advisory Committees
Shane Holten, Coalition of Ontario Accessibility Advisory Committees

(A21/ODA/ONAP/Letter to Directorate Aug 07)