



TORONTO ZOO ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2025-2030

1. Introduction

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the "AODA"). The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations ("IASR") under the AODA require that effective 2013-01-01, the Toronto Zoo establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities and to meet its requirements under the IASR.

In accordance with the IASR, the Toronto Zoo will:

- Post this plan on our website (www.torontozoo.com)
- Report on the progress of implementation of this plan
- Provide this plan in an accessible format, upon request
- Review and update this plan at least once every five years

2. Statement of Commitment

The Toronto Zoo is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. It is part of our Toronto Zoo's Strategic Plan to foster inclusivity in everything we do, ensuring that all feel welcomed, valued, and respected and we believe that inclusivity is integral in our success as a leader in conservation, innovation and sustainability in the community. The Toronto Zoo is committed to the principles outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of the requirements of the Act.

3. Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Since 2010-01-01, the Toronto Zoo has been in compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Regulation under the AODA and will continue to comply.

The Toronto Zoo is committed to excellence in serving all guests, including people with disabilities. The Zoo aims to provide programs and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of guests with disabilities. The following measures have been implemented by the Toronto Zoo with respect to the Customer Service Regulation:

- Ensuring all employees and volunteers who deal with the public and all employees involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures, are trained to provide the best possible customer service to all guests, including people with disabilities
- Providing training to staff on various assistive devices that may be used by guests with disabilities, e.g. wheelchair loading device on Zoomobile
- Training is tracked and recorded on our LMS system and is a mandatory requirement

- Including voice over, closed captioning and alt text in training modules to ensure training is available in various formats
- Providing fully accessible telephone service, offering to communicate with the public by TTY if telephone communication does not meet their needs
- Allowing guests with service animals to access the Zoo under certain conditions, that balance health and welfare considerations for the Zoo's animals
- Providing complimentary admission to a support person accompanying a person with a disability
- Alerting guests with disabilities of any temporary disruption of services or access to facilities
- Continuing to welcome and encourage feedback from people with disabilities through multiple communication channels
- Maintaining an "Accessibility" page on our website to communicate the Toronto Zoo's accessibility policies and guidelines. Guests seeking further information are directed to a staff member for assistance. The Toronto Zoo is pleased to offer individualized assistance with advance notice
- Celebrating Accessibility Awareness Days (e.g., Autism Awareness Month, National Accessibility Week, International Day of Persons with Disabilities) with relevant content (ie. Magnus Cards, KultureCity etc.)
- Providing video captioning for all videos (e.g., on Instagram Reels, YouTube, or Facebook)
- Ensuring text contrast and readability in photos, especially in Instagram Stories or carousel posts
- Providing guests with Guest Accessibility and Going to the Zoo Social Story. A social story is a downloadable resource designed to enhance the zoo experience with valuable insights, support, helpful information, tips, and visual cues for guests with diverse accessibility needs
- Providing Guests with a Toronto Zoo Sensory Map. This map identifies Headphone Zones and Quiet Areas to help our guests prepare for a visit
- Providing guests with a KultureCity Sensory Bag free of charge upon request. Guests can request a sensory bag from our Accessibility Hub
- Being an 'Inclusion Partner' in MagnusCards®, a FREE mobile app that supports independent community living for autistic and neurodiverse people. MagnusCards presents step-by-step visual guides for day-to-day activities in the form of virtual Card Decks
- Providing Guests with the option of a Toronto Zoo Adventure Access Pass upon request. The Adventure Access Pass supports guests and members who may have significant trouble standing/waiting in line to access the ride or adventure at a future time without waiting based on the current wait-times on site
- Providing guests with complimentary wheelchair rentals for the duration of their visit

4. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

Under the IASR, there are a number of requirements to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The Toronto Zoo is committed to meeting these requirements, as explained below. Some of the requirements apply to Zoo guests and the general public while other requirements are specific to Zoo employees and volunteers.

4.1 Accessible Emergency Information

The Toronto Zoo will provide public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information to the public upon request, in an accessible format with appropriate communication supports. The Zoo has an Emergency Management Plan (EMER-001) to ensure that all necessary measures are taken for the protection and safety of its employees, guests and assets. This document is available upon request. Public safety and emergency information is posted at the Toronto Zoo and on the Zoo's website, as appropriate and as determined by the situation.

Timeframe: Implemented

Where the Toronto Zoo is aware that an employee has a disability and that there is a need for accommodation, an individualized emergency response plan will be established, if necessary, given the nature of their disability.

Timeframe: Implemented.

4.2 Training

The Toronto Zoo provides training to employees and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training is provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees and volunteers. Training records are maintained.

The Toronto Zoo has taken the following initial steps to ensure employees and volunteers are provided with the required training needed to meet Ontario's accessibility laws:

- For new staff, online training is provided through online modules and it is mandatory for all staff to complete during their onboarding
- Volunteers receive their training through the Zoo's Learning & Engagement Branch
- Contractors on the Zoo site receive training through their employer
- Requirements for successful contractors/successful bidders to ensure that all employees or agents receive training about the provision of goods and services for persons with disabilities are included in bid documents
- Implemented access to the KultureCity Sensory training and The Inclusive Venue Training Certificate for all staff and volunteers

Timeframe: Implemented and ongoing

4.3 Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

The Toronto Zoo is committed to incorporating accessibility considerations into our procurement processes. We ask potential suppliers to tell us about the accessible options they offer.

In accordance with the IASR, the Toronto Zoo will:

- Adhere to a procurement process that uses accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so
- Provide an explanation, upon request, when it was decided not to incorporate accessibility features
- Ensure the needs of people with disabilities are considered when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks. A kiosk means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, allowing the user to access one or more services.

Timeframe: Implemented.

4.4 Information and Communications

The Toronto Zoo is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for people with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats used by people with disabilities.

The following steps have been taken to ensure compliance in meeting information and communication needs:

- Consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support
- Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports in a timely manner, at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

Timeframe: Implemented and ongoing.

The Toronto Zoo website conforms with WCAG 2.0, Level AA. The following steps were taken to ensure that the Zoo's website meets the requirements of WCAG 2.0, Level AA:

- A site refresh was completed and is compliant with the noted standard
- AODA compliance is included as one of the criteria in selecting technology vendors for new website development initiatives
- Homepage slider updated to be more accessible, allowing visitors to navigate it using

the tab key on their keyboard and pause or play the slides

Timeframe: Implemented.

4.5 Education

The Toronto Zoo operates a number of education programs where participants register in advance. These include day camps, overnight programs, school programs/tours, and other public programs. Learning experiences are designed to consider everyone's needs and be accessible for all.

The Toronto Zoo also produces a number of educational resources which are available online on the Zoo's website for educators and students to download/access. For educational resources offered in print, these materials will also be provided in accessible or conversion-ready formats upon request.

Additionally, the Toronto Zoo delivers Zoo School, a Grade 11 Biology University Preparation (SB13U) course, for which we are authorized by the Ministry of Education to grant credits. The Toronto Zoo is committed to ensuring this program is compliant with the IASR standards and ensures that:

- Educational resources/print materials for Zoo School are provided in an accessible format upon request
- Course program descriptions/requirements are provided in an accessible format upon request
- Program instructors are provided with accessibility awareness training
- Any future Ministry-certified programs delivered by the Toronto Zoo will also comply with the IASR standards.

Timeframe: Implemented.

4.6 Employment

The Toronto Zoo is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities. This includes providing accessibility in each phase of the employment process for both internal and external applicants.

The following steps have been taken to ensure compliance in employment practices:

- A review and modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes
- Specifying that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities on job postings and on the website
- Advising candidates when the interview is being scheduled that accommodation is available
- If a candidate requests accommodation, consulting with the candidate to arrange

- suitable accommodation that takes into account the candidate's needs
- Advising successful candidates in the Employment Terms form and Offer of Employment letter that the Toronto Zoo has accommodation policies for employees with disabilities
 - Introducing the Breaking Barriers program, a job readiness workshop developed in partnership with community organizations supporting individuals living with disabilities. The program provides participants with skill-building opportunities, professional networking, and pathways to employment at the Zoo

Timeframe: Implemented.

The Toronto Zoo will take the following steps to implement a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability:

- Ensure there is a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities
- The existing policy on Workplace Accommodation, OHS-045 has been updated to ensure compliance with IASR

Timeframe: Implemented

The Toronto Zoo will ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered when using performance evaluation, career development and redeployment processes.

Timeframe: Implemented

Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment focus on removing barriers in two areas: public spaces and buildings. Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will continue through the Ontario Building Code (OBC), which governs new construction and renovations in buildings. Accessibility standards regarding public spaces are part of the IASR and therefore this section addresses the Toronto Zoo's compliance with accessibility in public spaces.

The Toronto Zoo is committed to greater accessibility, in compliance with existing laws and standards, when adding new or making major modifications to public spaces. In the context of the Toronto Zoo, public spaces include but are not limited to public pathways, restaurants and picnic areas, rest areas, public indoor spaces, outdoor play spaces, parking lots, queuing areas, and guest service counters.

The following steps have been taken to address accessibility issues on the Toronto Zoo site:

- African Rainforest Pavilion, Indian Rhino Pavilion and Malayan Woods Pavilion have all been renovated to comply with OBC Barrier Free Access Standard

- Preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in the Zoo's public spaces
- In the event of a temporary disruption to services or facilities, the public are notified of the service disruption and alternatives available
- Automatic door openers in the process of being updated to touchless, currently approximately 50% of door operators have been updated with the transition to continue over the next few years
- In the process of installing accessible water fountains

As public spaces at the Toronto Zoo are renovated or newly built, all designs will comply with AODA standards. When designing a project adjacent impacted areas and expanded scope to improve accessibility of public space in the vicinity are examined at the same time.

The following initiatives/projects have been completed or are scheduled to be completed soon to improve accessibility:

- Renovation of Simba, Madagascar, Africa Pavilion, Caribou Café & Discovery Zone washrooms
- New boardwalks constructed to remove steep grade hills
- Greenhouse renovation
- Accessible ramp to education portables
- Parking lot 2 pathway update

Upcoming projects that will improve accessibility or remove barriers to accessibility:

- Africa Village pathway renovation
- Orangutan indoor habitat & pavilion pathway
- Red Panda climate-controlled viewing
- Community Conservation Centre
- Hyena pathway
- Mayan Temple pathway
- Front entrance washrooms

Timeframe: Implemented and ongoing

Procedures for Maintenance of Accessible Elements

To ensure accessible elements are maintained, routine checks & annual maintenance are completed for all accessible elements on site. This includes, but is not limited to, accessible ramps, pathway slopes, automatic door entries, fixed seating areas, waiting areas & outdoor play spaces.

Procedures for Dealing with Temporary Disruptions of Accessible Elements

In the event that an accessible element is affected, procedures are put in place to ensure accessibility for our guests is upheld. This is addressed by means of temporary ramp systems, waiting/eating area set-up, re-directed pathway routes, clear visible signage, and manned building access assistance. Prompt repairs are made to limit the duration of any temporary installation. This disruption will be communicated by the branch involved at the Zoo to our Strategic Communications team who will then ensure that this disruption is added to the alerts on our website and evaluate whether broader communication via social media or media notices is warranted. The communication will be updated with comprehensive details on the duration, location, purpose of the disruption and alternative arrangements that will be in place during the disruption.

Timeframe: Implemented and ongoing.

For More Information

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact Guest Relations Manager at 416-392-5932 or by e-mail at info@torontozoo.ca.

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request, please email info@torontozoo.ca or call Guest Relations at 416-392-5932.