



**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013 – 2017
Progress Report
Public Consultation Presentation**

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

The Niagara Parks Commission: History

- Established in 1885
- Heritage Preservation part of mandate since 1896
- Agency of the Provincial Government
- Operates under authority of the Niagara Parks Act



The Niagara Parks Commission Area of Responsibility

- 53 km of Recreational Trails and 56 km of controlled access Parkway (roads) from Fort Erie in the south to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the north
- 1,325 hectares of land along the entire Niagara River corridor



NPC Mission Statement

- To protect the natural and cultural heritage along the Niagara River for the enjoyment of visitors while maintaining financial self-sufficiency



NPC Vision Statement

- Ontario's Niagara Parks – ***PRESERVING*** a rich heritage, ***CONSERVING*** natural wonders, ***INSPIRING*** people, worldwide!



Who is Niagara Parks

- Niagara Parks
 - Stewardship responsibilities: to conserve the natural elements, preserve built and natural heritage
 - Maintain large asset base of facilities and infrastructure within an active asset management plan
 - Provide outstanding visitor experiences to a world wide audience, attracting the world to Niagara
 - Show leadership in horticulture, parks and tourism management; updated transportation network and policing protocols
- NPC does not receive operational funding from Ontario government, raising over \$97 million in revenue primarily through retail, culinary, attractions, golf and parking



Niagara Parks – Quick Facts

- NPC operates like a City but must do so on a self-sufficient basis:
... without property taxes and Government operational transfer funding
- Economic Impacts:
 - NPC employs approximately 1,700 staff with a payroll/benefits totaling over \$46 million, which helps support the economic vitality for Niagara
 - Provides City of Niagara Falls, Towns of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie with annual Voluntary Payments
 - Contribute \$1 million toward operation of WEGO
 - Operating expenses of \$83 million, including \$15.75 million to maintain gardens, roadways and tourism operations along the length of the Niagara River corridor



Purpose of AODA

- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (AODA) was passed in 2005
- Purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement, and enforce Accessibility Standards in order to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians by the year 2025
- NPC released its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in 2012 and has presented Progress Reports annually since then



NPC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

- Outlines the Commission's commitment to improving accessibility for visitors and staff
- Outlines our action plan for improving accessibility in the areas of:
 - Customer Service
 - Information and Communication
 - Employment
 - Transportation
 - Design of Public Spaces



NPC Commitment to Accessibility

- NPC will promote accessibility for persons with disabilities based upon the core principles of:
 - Dignity
 - Independence
 - Inclusion
 - Integration
 - Responsiveness
 - Equality of opportunity



NPC Commitment to Accessibility

- NPC shall provide accessibility and accommodation for persons with disabilities through AODA's customer service standard, integrated accessibility standard and all other standards as they are developed, and in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code





Accessibility Accomplishments 2016

General Accomplishments

- NPC Accessibility Policy updated to reflect changes to the legislation implemented by the Province including, clarifying:
 - Which medical professionals can certify service animals
 - Under what circumstances NPC would require a person with a disability to have a support person with them at a venue or attraction
 - Who will receive customer service training at Niagara Parks (employees, volunteers and third-party providers)



Customer Service Accomplishments

- NPC responded to 437 accessibility related enquiries as of October 31, 2016
- This is an increase of 49% over 2015
- Top Accessibility Questions/Enquiries:
 - Support Person Policy = 127 (29%)
 - Wheelchair Rentals = 80 (18%)
 - Adventure Pass = 42 (10%)
 - WEGO = 29 (7%)
 - Directions and Distances = 25 (6%)
 - Where to Park = 23 (5%)
 - Parking Policy = 16 (4%)



Customer Service Accomplishments

- Referrals to other Resources:
 - AccessibleNiagara.com = 41 (9%)
 - NPC Website = 35 (8%)
 - YouTube
Niagara Falls on Wheels = 19 (4%)



Planned Customer Service Improvements 2017

- Preparing AODA learning modules for NPC's New Learning Management System (LMS)
- Will include all AODA Standards as well as NPC Policies and Procedures and other accessibility tools
- Staff will have easy access to refresher or issue specific training as needed



Information and Communications Accessibility Accomplishments

- NPC attraction information is available upon request in a variety of alternate formats including braille, e-text, large print, DAISY, audio and other formats upon request
- 2016/2017 NPC Visitor Guide provides basic accessibility information to assist visitors to make informed choices when planning their visit to Niagara Parks



Information and Communications Accessibility Accomplishments

- NPC staff created an Accessible Documents Style Guide to use when creating internal and external documents
- The guide outlines standardized procedures for accessible word processing, accessible PDF's and accessible web-based materials for use organization-wide



Planned Information and Communications Accessibility Improvements 2017

- All NPC websites currently meet WCAG 2.0 Level A standards and are currently being redeveloped to meet Level AA, where possible, far in advance of the 2021 deadline
- NPC will be preparing a Learning Module on NPC's Accessible Style Guide to assist staff in preparing accessible documents



Employment Accessibility Accomplishments

- NPC Human Resources Department has moved to a new, accessible location
- Accommodations provided throughout the recruitment and selection process upon request
- New online Applicant Tracking System is accessible to people with disabilities



Employment Accessibility Accomplishments

- Accommodations provided upon request throughout all employment stages, including: performance management, career development and reassignment
- Documented employee accommodation plans are created for employees requesting job related accommodations, which follows the employee through their entire employment cycle



Employment Accessibility Accomplishments

- NPC Internal Audit conducted review of NPC's Human Resources AODA policies, practices and commitments, within the multi-year plan
 - Recommendations for improvements and greater clarity being implemented
- New learning management system for staff training launched
 - On-line training modules are accessible (e.g. audio component for those with visual disabilities, online scripts for those with hearing disabilities)
- NPC has improved its emergency response process for assisting those with disabilities who may need help to evacuate in the event of an emergency

Transportation Accessibility Accomplishments

- WEGO Vehicles include:
 - Ramp access to vehicle
 - Mobility spaces
 - Priority seating
 - Audible and text announcement of route and stops
 - Refresher driver training in accessible customer service, equipment failures and emergency procedures conducted annually



Built Environment Accessibility Accomplishments

- **MistRider ZipLine and Whirlpool Aerial Adventure Course**
 - NPC has worked with WildPlay Niagara Falls to ensure Accessibility Plans were created for both attractions
- **NPC Floral Showhouse**
 - New automatic door installed
- **Queen Victoria Place**
 - New automatic door installed



Built Environment Accessibility Accomplishments

- **Thompson's Point**
 - New accessible parking space installed
- **Legends Golf Course**
 - Accessibility upgrades to washrooms; new stall fixtures, automatic door openers on both and grab bars installed in men's washroom
- **Whirlpool Aero Car**
 - New tactile warning surface installed on steps; upgrades to family washroom; new accessible service counter, re-grading of walkway and curb cut added at WEGO stop
- **Oakes Garden Theatre**
 - New ramps to pergolas installed

Built Environment Accessibility Accomplishments

- **NPC Recreation Trail**
 - New trail from Dufferin Islands to NPC Floral Showhouse. Curb cuts have been added at both locations
- **Oak Hall**
 - New sidewalk installed with curb cuts added

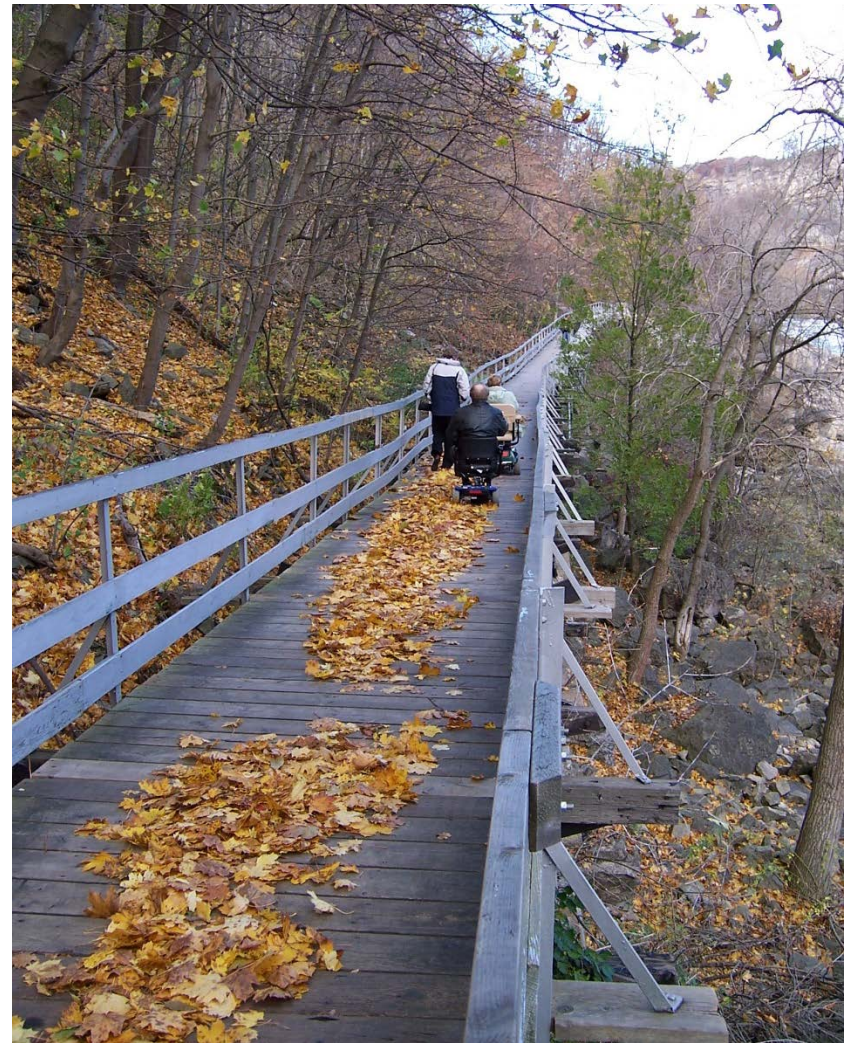


2017 Planned Built Environment Accessibility Projects

- **Queenston Heights**
 - Curb cuts planned to enhance access to the monument
- **Botanical Gardens**
 - Planned curb cuts to take place, when new watermains are installed. To be placed in three locations:
 - ❖ Across from accessible parking lot
 - ❖ Two curb cuts, where Recreation Trail intersects with Butterfly Conservatory parking lot entrance
- **Niagara Parkway at Clifton Hill**
 - Planned new sidewalk, curb cuts and tactile plates to be located at bottom of Clifton Hill between Hornblower Group Tour building and WildPlay Niagara Falls attraction/Ticket Office

2017 Planned Built Environment Accessibility Projects

- **Niagara's Fury/Table Rock**
 - New automatic door being installed on family washroom
- **Journey Behind the Falls**
 - New accessible queuing area to be installed as well as a new automatic door opener.
Accessible washroom retrofit planned
- **White Water Walk**
 - Installation of new accessible washroom



Other Planned Accessibility Initiatives 2017

- NPC is hiring a new AODA Coordinator to assist the organization in continuing its accessibility efforts
- NPC will be developing a new Multi-Year Plan in order to identify and address barriers for people with disabilities and to identify best practices in accessibility



We Want to Hear From You

- NPC is pleased to work with its community partners to identify accessibility issues and improvements which can be made
- We look forward to hearing from the public and receiving feedback on their experiences at Niagara Parks



We Welcome Your Comments

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