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Seniors' Accessibility Improvement Plan

Objectives

This plan outlines how the Museum of Health Care will identify, remove and prevent barriers for seniors and older adults to access its site and services.

About this Plan

This plan should be consulted during renovation, exhibit and program planning, and staff orientation. It should be used in conjunction with the Museum's Accessibility Policy and Customer Service Accessibility Plan.

This plan is a living document and should be updated as needed. The plan will be reviewed annually.

The writing of this plan is an important component of the Museum's 2016 Seniors Interactive Learning Education Program and was funded by the Government of Ontario through the Seniors Community Grant (SCG) Program (2016-17).

About the Museum of Health Care

The Museum of Health Care acquires, conserves, researches, displays and interprets artefacts that help tell the story of health and health care in Canada. We serve the general public, practitioners, students and historians through exhibitions, guided tours, education programs, online resources and special events throughout the year.

The Museum is housed in the Ann Baillie Building National Historic Site, an impressive Beaux-Arts style limestone building and former residence for student nurses, built in 1904 on the grounds of the Kingston General Hospital.

The Museum is a non-profit institution incorporated in the Province of Ontario, and granted charitable status in February 1997.

Phase 1 of a restoration and renovation project was completed in June 2007 at a cost of 1.1 million dollars. This phase included the construction of a stairwell and elevator tower to provide a barrier-free entrance that meets the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, as well as the installation of a three-stop hydraulic elevator to make the building accessible and more operationally effective.

Phase 2 of the project – to address the adaptive reuse and renovation of the public areas of the Museum – is underway. The Ann Baillie Building was designed for nursing education and is now used for public education on the history and science of health care. Full public access is a part of these plans.

Assessment Methods

- Walkthrough assessment with Alzheimer Society of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington (KFL&A) representatives
- Feedback from pilot program participants and staff – including groups from the Seniors Association Kingston Region, Rideaucrest Home, Alzheimer Society KFL&A, and Kingsdale Chateau – solicited orally and via email (anonymous, written evaluation forms were also offered)
- Comments collected from visitors, volunteers, staff and program participants

Resources We Found Helpful

- Government of Alberta, *Building Age-Friendly Communities Creating an Age-Friendly Business in Alberta*, <http://www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca/documents/AgeFriendly-Business-2012.pdf>
- Government of Ontario, *How to make websites accessible*, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible>
- National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, *Making Your Website Senior Friendly: A Checklist*, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/checklist.pdf>
- The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, and the University of Waterloo and McMaster University, *Finding the Right Fit Age-Friendly Community Planning*, http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/resources/AFCP_Eng.pdf

Accessibility Achievements

- The Museum is wheelchair accessible (elevator available)
- Hallways are wide
- Washrooms are clearly marked
- Stairs are non-skid and well-lit, and have sturdy handrails and clearly marked edges
- Galleries are visually well-organized; displays are not overwhelming in stimuli

- Gallery tour and programs include hands-on demonstrations to provide a sensory experience
- The Museum has a scent-free policy
- The Museum is well-lit
- All publications (newsletters, manuscripts) are available digitally
- Mechanisms are in place to gather visitor and program participant feedback in multiple formats (telephone, email, anonymous forms, in person)

Barriers Identified

- There is not enough public parking
- The parking lot is unpaved and has potholes
- The edge of the sidewalk is exposed in front of the exterior door
- Signage is lacking at the entrance
- High-contrast carpets between rooms can appear as a change in level
- There is a small slope or threshold bump at the entrances to some galleries
- Washroom doorknobs may be difficult to twist for a person with limited strength or mobility, such as someone with arthritis
- The Museum can be hot and stuffy in the summer

Implementation Plan

Goals	Implementation plan	Resources	Timeline	Status
Museum building is easy to find and navigate within	Produce and install consistent and clear signage for site navigation. Use bilingual signage with easy-to-read lettering, good contrast and symbols.	SCG budget	By March 2017	In progress
	Provide map of museum near entrance.	SCG budget	Fall 2016	Complete
	Improve exterior A-frame signs to help visitors find museum.	SCG budget	Fall 2016	Complete
	Improve exterior signage to help visitors find museum.	Project grant	To be determined	n/a
Museum's website is easy to navigate and includes age-friendly information	Include additional accessibility information. Post information about seniors' programming.	Staff time	March 2017 / Continuous	Complete/ Ongoing
	Improve website organization to simplify use. Provide a site map. Ensure all images have ALT text. Continue to prioritize clean design, readable fonts and direct messages.	Staff time	March 2017 / Continuous	In progress

	Upgrade website to keep pace with accessible technologies.	Project grant	Ongoing	n/a
Museum is free of tripping hazards (or risks are mitigated)	Alert visitors to potential hazards (bumps and slopes between rooms). In areas with contrasting carpets (creates illusion of step), tour guides will walk ahead of group to demonstrate that the floor is even.	Staff time (training)	Ongoing	Current staff trained
	Add safety tape, or other, to increase visibility of bumps and slopes between galleries.	SCG budget	September 2016	Complete
	Replace high-contrast carpets to reduce illusion of holes or steps. Remove bumps and slopes at gallery entrances.	Project grant	Ongoing, when funding available	In progress
Museum is barrier-free to visitors using wheelchairs or mobility aids (or barriers are mitigated)	Communicate limits to access before visitors arrive (unpaved parking lot, nearest accessible washrooms) on website and on request.	Staff time	September 2016	Complete/ Ongoing
	Post a map to the nearest wheelchair accessible washrooms outside public washrooms.	SCG budget	December 2016	Complete
	Maintain gravel at entrance to minimize concrete lip on exterior sidewalk.	Landlord	Ongoing	Completed September 2016 / Ongoing

	Provide wheelchair-accessible parking in proximity to Museum.	Unknown	Unknown	n/a
	Add fully-accessible washrooms on both levels.	Project grant	To be determined	n/a
Museum communicates with seniors, older adults, and accessibility in mind	Develop age-friendly training document for docents.	Staff time	August 2016	Complete & in use
	Purchase (or borrow) system to amplify guide & participant voices.	Project grant (in-kind loan)	As needed	Temporary loan Sept. 2016
	Include depictions of elderly and/or disabled persons in Museum promotional materials.	SCG budget, project grant	Ongoing	Limited images in use
Museum provides comfortable environment	Use floor fans during the summer to mitigate stuffiness.	Museum	July 2016	Complete
	Ensure sturdy seating available.	SCG budget	August 2016	Complete
	Interact sensitively with all visitors. Provide dementia-friendly and accessible customer service training to staff.	Alzheimer Society, staff time	Annually or as needed	Training of 2016 front line staff complete

Seniors' Accessibility Improvement Plan
Museum of Health Care at Kingston

	Install climate control in galleries.	Capital project grant	To be determined	n/a
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Feedback and Contact

We welcome any suggestions as to how to improve accessibility at the Museum of Health Care.

Online

<http://www.museumofhealthcare.ca/about/contact-us.html>

Telephone

(613) 548-2419

In Person/Postal Mail

Museum of Health Care at Kingston
32 George Street
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 2V7

Administrative hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Thank You

The Museum of Health Care acknowledges with gratitude the financial, in-kind, and volunteer support that made this project possible.

