![London Public Library]

REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Session:	Public Session
Subject:	*Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities Policy*
Prepared By:	Anne Becker
Presented By:	Anne Becker
Purpose of Report:	For Decision: 　　　Approval ☑

Recommendation

To approve the newly created *"Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities Policy"* for London Public Library.

Issue / Opportunity

London Public Library has developed a policy entitled *Accessibility for Library Users with Disabilities*. The policy goes beyond what we currently have in place, by formally stating that library services are relevant, inclusive and responsive to all and that each member of the public has an equal right to library services; by taking into account disability access issues, including the need for specific services and materials for those users who cannot use regular services and materials; and by formalizing guidelines for the training of staff. The policy also delineates our responsibility to manage staff awareness and staff training and a promotion and feedback process with a view to making people with disabilities aware of the services the library offers and how to access them and provide feedback on them.

As a result of the policy, an action plan has been developed and will be implemented to address any gaps and to enhance our training support for employees and volunteers who deal with the public.

Background & Review

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005 and is comprised of 5 Standard Development Areas (i.e. Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Built Environment and Transportation). Each of these areas is at different stages of development. However, **The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service** has been adopted (Ontario Regulation 429/07). These regulations come into force on January 1, 2008 with compliance dates of

January 1, 2010 for all public sector organizations and January 1, 2012 for all other providers of goods and services in the Province of Ontario.

There are a number of requirements that must be adopted, the largest component of which is likely to be training of all staff that deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the library, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

The City of London has a number of staff pro-actively involved in the Standard Development process as well as serving either as Chairs or members of AMO Resource Support groups. In addition, the City of London is in the process of establishing an AODA Steering Committee to determine the implications of AODA and to oversee the implementation of the AODA Standards within the City.

London Public Library has always taken our responsibility for accessibility very seriously. The further responsibility we have to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities is very critical to our mandate. Currently, we have a number of services, policies and processes in place that address the compliance requirements for the Customer Service Standard such as:

Processes:
- Mutual Respect Policy
- Rules of Conduct Policy
- The London Public Library Board endorses as policy the London Race Relations and Diversity Policy of the City of London as approved by London City Council on November 27, 1997 and August 9, 2000).

Services:
Technology (Not all software is available in all branches)
Blind and low-vision patrons • JAWS for Windows - reads onscreen text aloud Assistive Services • Kurzweil 1000 - converts scanned text into speech and reads it aloud • VERA (Very Easy Reading Appliance) - this device scans and reads documents without the use of a computer • ALVA refreshable Braille display - converts text off the screen into a Braille display • ET Braille printer - embosses Braille onto card stock paper in a variety of formats • ZoomText - computer screen magnification software (all Library locations) • Optilec Clear View series - high quality magnifiers of print, available in black and white, and colour displays • TTY phone service for hearing-impaired
Physical Alternatives • Adjustable Workstations • Ergonomic Keyboard • Kensington Trackball • Penny and Giles Joystick • Large Print Keyboard • Keyguides
Alternate Formats, Additional Resources • CNIB Talking Books, Daisy Books ,Visunet • Books in Braille for children • Audiobooks (CD, audiocassette) for all ages

• Downloadable audiobooks
• Closed-captioned videorecordings (VHS, DVD)
• Described videorecordings (VHS, DVD)
• Large print books
• Books on American Sign Language
• TTY phone

Libraries For All

- "Libraries for All" is a joint project between London Public Library and Thames Valley Children's Centre. Communication boards are available in all libraries for patrons who cannot talk or have speech that is difficult to understand.
- Communication Boards include:
  - Alphabet Board (for patrons who can spell by pointing to letters).
  - Word Board (commonly used words and phrases about library services).
  - Picture Board (concepts represented in picture form).
  - QWERTY Board (for patrons who can spell by pointing to letters, laid out in keyboard format).

Training:

The following training resources have been available to employees and volunteers to develop their skills and proficiency for effectively working with patrons with disabilities.

- Accessibility Services - Working with Patrons with Disabilities workshop
- Clear Language Workshop
- Libraries for All Communication Boards training workshop
- Zoomtext software
- Microsoft Accessibility features
- Adaptive Technology overview
- Use of TTY

Facility Design:

London Public Library adheres to the Facility Accessibility Design Standards (City of London) which address accessibility requirements for the design and construction of new facilities, as well as the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing facilities. We are in a strong FADs compliance position since so many of our facilities have been built or updated in the past few years. We will continue to diligently address any gaps in facility and website accessibility. Furthermore, our new suite of signage better addresses accessibility needs and the signage strategy will be rolled out to all branches in the coming months.