

# TOWNHALL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

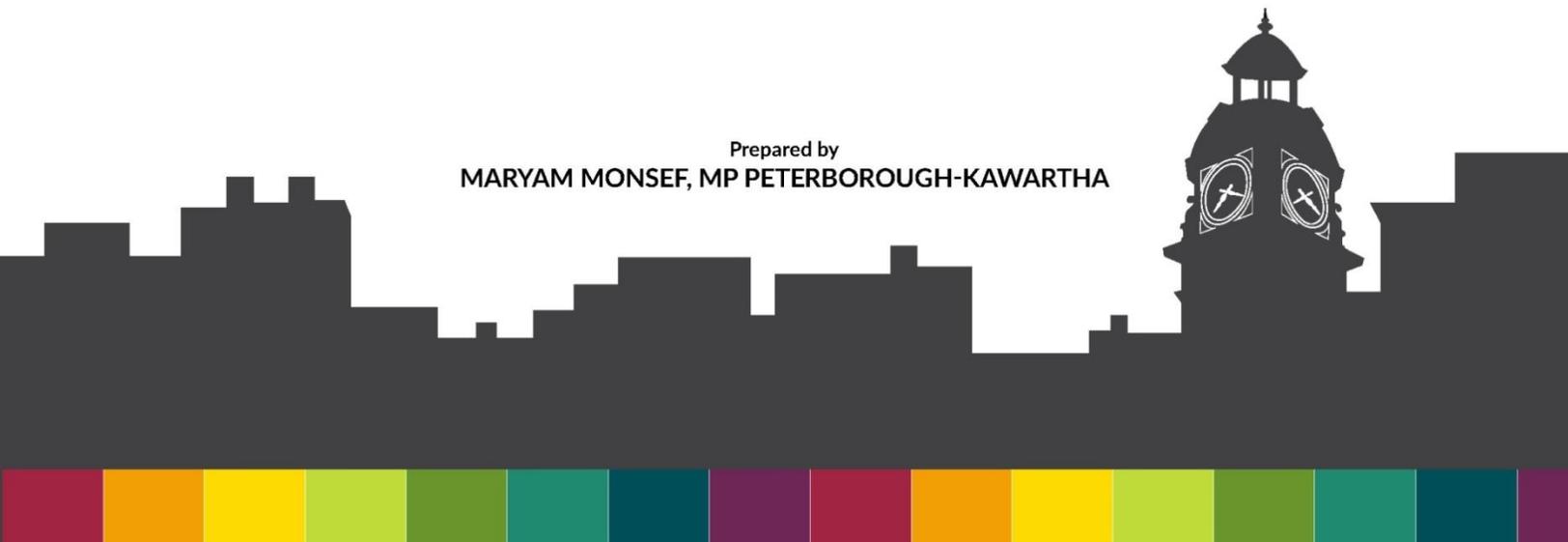
— REPORT —

## Accessibility and Inclusion Addendum

January 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Peterborough, Ontario

Prepared by  
MARYAM MONSEF, MP PETERBOROUGH-KAWARTHA





HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

## Program Agenda

|  |
|--|
| <p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review of logistics</li><li>- Communications and technical details</li><li>- Overview of agenda</li></ul>   |
| <p>Introduction by MP Maryam Monsef</p> <p>Large group warm up questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are some examples of when you have felt included and fully able to participate in our community?</li><li>2. What activities or opportunities are you unable to participate in? What prevents your participation?</li></ol>   |
| <p>Small group discussions:</p> <p>Introductions, ground rule review, questions, prepare for report back</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What issues or barriers should the law cover?</li><li>2. What is the best way to get people and organizations to follow the law?</li><li>3. How can the government raise awareness, change attitudes and show leadership to increase inclusion, participation and equality of opportunity?</li></ol> |
| <p>Report back by Small Groups - Comments</p>  |
| <p>Concluding Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Next steps</li><li>- Evaluation</li><li>- Acknowledgements</li></ul>   |



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

## Lessons Learned

- Promotion was done primarily through email contact with organizations, as well as through mainstream media and online sources including the MP website and social media channels. Most participants found out about the session by email. Promotion for future events should use a wide variety of approaches and offer sufficient time for planning.
- The timing of meetings should be chosen to allow for greatest accessibility. In communities with snow and ice in the winter, meetings should be organized in other seasons. In Peterborough-Kawartha, a preference was expressed for afternoon rather than morning meetings.
- Transportation is a major barrier to participation – sufficient time should be allowed for participants to plan for accessible transport, and venues should be chosen to offer as many transportation options as possible.
- If working in partnership with local organizations, discussions should occur early in order to work together on logistics and promotions.
- Media coverage of the two sessions, as well as online promotion of the events, increased awareness among the broader community as well. Even if community members are not able to attend a discussion in person, ensuring adequate coverage in traditional and social media can ensure a greater reach.
- Resources are required to ensure accommodations are met for a range of disabilities (eg. CART Captioning, ASL, mobility needs etc.).
- In organizing this type of community dialogue or forum, it is essential to have guidance and involvement of persons living with disabilities in order to ensure the best experience for all participants in terms of logistics, communications, and program.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

## Full Feedback Received

### Question 1: What issues or barriers should the law cover?

- More flexible approval process for ODSP and Developmental Services Ontario
- Drug Plan – basic – CPP and ODSP generally deny first application
- Uniform definition of what a disability is
- AODA needs to be more precise, currently too vague
- Change language – accommodation is limiting, person first language is better
- Definition of accessibility
- Cognitive, Sensory, Mobility barriers
- ALS needs to be recognized as a language on government forms
- Municipal/Provincial Government services – transportation, ramp accessibility, hospital wait time
- One legislation – hard to find information, funding, cross referencing between government legislation
- Creating environment of inclusion
- Problems with consent forms
- Province or other jurisdictions held to account in transfer payment process
- Make services seamless for people with multiple disabilities
- Funding opportunities – transportation, recreation, equipment
- Legislation around budgets and accessibility needs
- Boards of education need to indicate how they meet accessibility
- Lack of interpreters – resources available
- Access to special needs technology
- Discrimination against people with disabilities – harassment, employment discrimination,
- Employment barriers – accommodations in workplace supported by legislation
- Income and employment standards for persons with disabilities
- Government incentives to employ people with disabilities
- Employment discrimination – screening, interview and training processes, adaptive technologies that are not accessible to all (financially)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Reform of tax credit when people cannot find employment
- Advancement is too subjective & employers are able to get around human rights code.
- Accessibility to public spaces – universal design requirements – building codes, signage
- Require visual smoke alarms to be mandatory in all buildings (private, public)
- Government funded organizations like museums
- National accessibility standards in housing, housing strategies – physical accessibility of all federal government buildings, post boxes
- Education for all children that meet their needs, including deaf children
- Teachers must have education on various disabilities – ADA education mandatory for teachers
- Legislation to keep Schools for the Deaf open
- 1<sup>st</sup> step towards employment is ensuring disabled students receive education
- Transportation services – handicap parking (sufficient size for vans, wheel chair loading), handi trans buses – all forms of transportation
- Supportive housing – right to housing as a federal law,
- Accessible housing for families, not just individuals
- Mailbox accessibility – height, snow/ice removal
- Central Hub for information after high school
- Help Lines to talk about problems
- Resources for mental illness (call centre), shorter wait times for mental health supports
- Oversight on health care accessibility – transfer payment process
- Health services include health advocates
- Caregiver respite
- Provide advocates for people who need them – rights education
- Address rural intersectional barriers like transportation
- Make Interpretive services mandatory esp. for emergency services
- Legal aid, legal assistance
- Human Rights Code is broad therefore can't be enforced
- Lack of Legal Assistance or Representation: when it comes to human rights
- Federal elections polling stations
- Canada is the only G7 country that does not have a genetic discrimination law (Bill S201)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Address instances of discrimination where people are being denied insurance due to need to use a wheelchair (life insurance)
- National building code should be a leader in accessibility ie. Site development requirements for accessible parking
- Curbs (too many)
- Buildings – bars – restaurants \*options
- Text 911 emergency service as it applies to CRTC; consistency is critical from province to province (universal 911); not just for people with hearing/speech disability
- Apply information and communication standards and best practices for Canadian broadcasting networks (ie. CBC captions for videos)
- Banking ie. Accessible ATMs - colour contrast, wheelchair friendly, beeping buttons
- Employment – federal organizations should be leaders in accessible employment and hiring people with disabilities – ie. part time opportunities
- Support service to help people complete funding applications – embrace universal design
- Full inclusion – according to the U.N. standard
- Equality/equity
- Must provide accessibility (rather than just “may”) to all services
- Make services seamless for people with multiple disabilities
- Lack of Legal Assistance or Representation: when it comes to human rights
- Representation in court can get expensive & take a long time
- Feels like we have to win in court to make people stick to the law
- Legal Aid for any kind of discrimination is needed
- Education barriers: 1<sup>st</sup> step towards employment is ensuring disabled students receive education.
- Adapting an education institute or facility to the individual needs rather than general needs, ex: physical barriers in the building (sometimes outdated),
- Hard to get books for people who are blind (outdated technology) → need audio books & audio technology
- Financial assistance
- Transportation
- Accessibility – more cabs- none in afternoon due to school runs
- Limited – Taxi prices – Advanced booking



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Affordable and accessible housing – ODSP not enough for housing leads to domino effect
- Built environment using universal design – best practices including acoustic, sensory
- ODSP has medical benefits but low level of income; CPP has not medical benefits
- Expand definition of accessibility – people who need it are being denied – appeal process takes way too long – universal definition for all levels of government – consistency with who is eligible for what
- Reform of tax credit when people cannot find employment
- Attitudes need to change – employers think people with disabilities can only be employed in menial jobs
  
- Inability to make historic buildings accessible – contradicting legislation
- Need for employment counsellors to act as intermediaries
- Too much buck passing – Not Federal, Not Provincial, Not Municipal – all pointing to another level of government
- Physical accessibility
- Help for persons living with disability to stay independent – training classes in accounting, small appliance repairs
- Need living wage! To live with dignity
- Access to information and advocates
- Look at rules around dependents and the impact on funding
- Basic Human needs in businesses (water, washrooms), basic human rights at home (compliance by landlords)
- Attitudes: people think it's getting better but it's not. Ex: not wanting a physically disabled person in the public eye.
- need more backbone to laws that we have to force "them" to follow the law
- "In the real world, we don't follow the human rights code" (quote by employer June 2014)
- Have proven leadership skills but employers uses the same excuse to avoid advancement in position
- Advancement is too subjective & employers are able to get around human rights code.
- Need rules around how they write job descriptions so they can hand-pick



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Ensure access to basic needs – income equality/housing/food as well as Special assistance – devices, dogs, foot care
- Ensure quality of life opportunities – recreation, employment, counselling, health care (including dental)
- “No one should go through all these hoops to live with dignity.”
- Need advocates – advocates cannot be seen as troublemakers – clients don’t always have the knowledge base
- Wait for subsidized housing can take years

## **Question 2: What is the best way to get people and organizations to follow the law?**

- Incentives – wage subsidies, funding for physical mobility improvements
- Possible tax rebates, funding, incentives for changes
- Provide tools for easy communication – provide funds to offset costs of accommodations
- Set standards, goals, financial incentives for surpassing benchmarks
- Federal Tax breaks & incentives for businesses to hire people with disabilities
- Principle that the law should reinforce and reward positive action not punish violations and omissions
- Fund barrier assessments
- Ombudsman for accessibility rights; need to improve
- Enforcement of AODA and existing legislation
- Legislation enforced to ensure minimum standards
- More rigid guidelines on building codes
- Punitive/negative as last resort but existent
- Refinement of legislation
- Mandatory hiring, recruitment, accommodation through government procurement processes
- Fines or closure of business
- Enforcement mechanism – fines, officers, new Tribunal, Accessibility rights tribunal
- No “weasel” clauses
- Auditing – random or by complaint – warning, grading system, public posting, follow up – “accessibility inspectors”



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Should focus on Outcomes
- Ex, % of employees to have disabilities (outcome) need to outline targets to meet with penalties for not applying rules. Penalties should be re: not achieving their goals + not using proper steps (prescriptive)
- Education in schools, colleges, universities, businesses, through media – sensitivity training for employers, unions, employees (by persons with disabilities) – all organizational sizes not just large organizations (over 50 employees) – a National Week of Awareness
- Accommodations should be law – government needs to show organizations what to do
- Training opportunities and education for organizations with methods for feedback
- Mandatory training for public & private employers and mandate the funding
- Promote using mainstream and social media
- Strong advertising campaign to promote awareness
- Raise awareness through organizations, brochures
- Make laws accessible, easy to find, simplify the systems
- Viral law – make it interesting/cool
- Lead by example – no bullying campaigns – leadership on cultural change
- Invite deaf speakers to public events in community
- Exposure to different disabilities
- Normalizing disabilities in professional environments
- Ensure people are always lifted up, not put down.
- Access to high speed internet
- Encourage business to accommodate people with disabilities
- Shaming technique - aXs now mapping system is an app that shows accessible locations
- Non-compliance fines
- Funding, grants, subsidies for projects/employers/employees with disabilities
- Education, training
- Random audits
- Federal Tax breaks & incentives for businesses to hire people with disabilities
- A) Prescriptive approach = outlining steps (rules or criteria) –Worry is if there is a lack of support to achieve the outcomes



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

B) Outcomes approach = outlining outcomes to be provided. –Worry is they'll find ways to get around it

A+B) to work there should be prescription with swift consequences. It's almost a one –size fits all. Therefore should focus on B. ex: % of employees to hire with disabilities. (outcome) need outline of targets to meet with penalties for those not applying the rules. Penalties should be for not achieving their goals & not using the proper steps. (prescriptive)

- Create incentives for businesses who make their organization accessible
- Tell positive stories – businesses may have new markets and make more money
- Setting better examples for politicians
- Systemic approach to moving forward on accessibility – too many groups working independently
- Standardize process for kids in school
- Education is key
- Community awards for businesses that become accessible
- Penalties/fines don't seem to work
- Government needs to improve effectiveness in enforcing existing laws and dealing with violations and non-compliance issues
- Mandatory training for employees, annual report - provide incentives to companies
- Should not be punitive, but reward efforts
- OHRC very difficult to deal with – guilty until proven innocent, documentation requirements,
- Random audits
- Financial penalties for non-conformers – large enough to matter
- Equivalent tool like Crime Stoppers – call in 311

**Question 3: How can the government raise awareness, change attitudes and show leadership to increase inclusion, participation and equality of opportunity?**

- Employ more people with disabilities
- Show respect by attitude, don't make assumptions, listen and be understanding
- Alternatives for communications – public forums, online, paper
- Put those in positions of authority who understand the issues
- Alternative formats for filing government paperwork
- Representative of each type of disability involved throughout the development of legislation



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Mutual respect, openness to assist
- Change language – exceptionalism vs disability
- Implement UNCRPD
- Create more opportunities to discuss experiences, participate in making positive changes, hold more forums like this
- Federal leadership – tackle income security with other levels of gov't – do it for seniors & children, do it for plwd
- Coordinate services and provide appropriate advocates and support personnel to assist as needed
- Partnerships across organizations, business, government – coordinated efforts for mutual support
- change the minister's title to Minister of Employment and Disability
- Clearer understanding of what the Federal Government's role/responsibility is to people with disabilities
- Government education and awareness of accessibility
- Training for staff at CRA, City Hall, Hospital, government funded agencies using interpreters and other tools – training that accounts for all disabilities
- Government reps take advantage of "shadowing" opportunities to understand struggles
- Courses/classes (compliance training manual) AODA draw on disabled people to present/ train
- A way for disabled people to deliver their own issues
- Presentation (ODSP): you have to take extremes when describing your case in order to generate disability → reduces trust & "forces" people not to apply for employment in fear of losing eligibility
- Adequate funding – take action on what you say
- Funding collaborations/partnerships at all levels of government, particularly with local levels
- Provide opportunities for participation – school, sports, other areas – support persons to advocate for themselves
- Adequate Transportation
- Web of support – medical teams, support team, help for young families in early stages of diagnosis – support workers to help navigate the system – free services for psychological analysis, care, reduce length of diagnosis process



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- Provide more hands on/practical programs for persons with disabilities
- Include education in school curriculum
- Mental health services, retirement homes for the deaf
- increase education regarding disabilities
- set standards for Centers for Independent Living
- Education in schools, experiential opportunities to increase understanding, lead by example, follow through on commitments
- Building codes for new builds to ensure accessibility
- Percentage of public transit must be accessible (including taxis, buses etc)
- Use local champions to educate others
- Demonstrate value added of accommodation
- Look at lessons learned and promote what works
- Task force for each community
- Research, explore international research
- Government take responsibility to look at root of issues
- Recognition of hidden and physical disabilities
- Visuals/stories that show the skill level of people with disabilities – address myths surrounding disability
- Show the public the social and economic benefits of inclusion
- Systematic education, media attention
- More disabled people on TV (modelling in the public realm) CRTC
- Educate with “time in your shoes” type stories/training and campaigns
- Promoting best practices
- Promoting champion communities – tell stories
- Scientific evidence does not change attitudes, Stories DO! There has to be an emotional connection to the person/story
- Projects funded with federal dollars must meet best practice for accessibility standards
- Focus on being leaders by implementing high level of accessibility within federal organizations
- Use local champions to educate others
- Model it in your own program/practices



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Maryam Monsef*

Member of Parliament  
Peterborough-Kawartha

- All municipalities should strike an inclusive advisory committee with people with lived experience
- Set a specific percentage of employees with disabilities within government and for private businesses
- Make decision-making process more transparent – eg. Sports and disability application for funding – why application does not fit the mandate?
- Activities that are designed to heighten awareness to be delivered by people with disabilities – show the broad talent of this population
- Change the claw back system for people on ODSP who gain employment
- MPs and MPPs with disabilities
- Town halls and grassroots events to educate
- Increase Ministerial presence
- Make it more widely known
- Who to call when you can't get into a building
- Improved sidewalks
- Snow/ice –water
- Summer – cracks +rough
- \*Handy Van\*
- Shelter at every public stop
- Set standards for Centers for Independent Living
- Change the minister's title to Minister of Employment and Disability
- Increase education regarding disabilities
- Clearer understanding of what the Federal Government's role/responsibility is to people with disabilities
- More disabled people on TV (modelling in the public realm- CRTC)
- Learning has to start @ the very beginning – we don't need it to only be a lifelong lesson → prescribe activities in schools
- Com. Forums to spread the word
- Showcasing the successes of disabled people, ex: magazines (but should be mainstreamed) encourage mainstream press to include success stories
- Compliance classes (compliance training manual AODA) to draw on disabled people to present/train. –a way for disabled people to deliver their own issues