



Regional Clerk's Office  
Corporate Services Department

November 20, 2015

Regional Councillor Vito Spatafora  
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee  
The Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Regional Councillor Spatafora:

**Re: York Region's Review and Update of 2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

Regional Council, at its meeting held on November 19, 2015, adopted the following recommendations of Committee of the Whole regarding the report entitled "York Region's Review and Update of 2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan":

1. Council approve the *York Region 2015 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (Attachment 1).
2. Council approve the proposed updated Accessibility Policy as outlined in Attachment 2 of this report.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Municipal Staff Reference Group, local municipalities and their Accessibility Advisory Committees, The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario for their information.

A copy of Clause 17 of Committee of the Whole Report No. 17 is enclosed for your information.

Please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director of Strategies and Partnerships at 905-830-4444 ext. 72090 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Sincerely,

Denis Kelly  
Regional Clerk

/C. Martin  
Attachment

Clause 17 in Report No. 17 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on November 19, 2015.

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York Region's Review and Update of 2015-2021  
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated October 28, 2015 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the *York Region 2015 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (Attachment 1).
2. Council approve the proposed updated Accessibility Policy as outlined in Attachment 2 of this report.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Municipal Staff Reference Group, local municipalities and their Accessibility Advisory Committees, The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario for their information.

2. Purpose

This report provides an overview of the steps taken to develop the York Region 2015 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan is a legislated review and update to the York Region 2013 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan approved by Council in 2013.

### 3. Background

Ontario's law requires accessibility planning

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* sets out accessibility requirements for private and public organizations in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces. The Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards were all combined to form the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*.

The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* requires large public sector organizations with 50 or more employees to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan must meet the following requirements:

- Outline an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and its work plan to meet the requirements of the AODA
- Be developed in consultation with an accessibility advisory committee and people with disabilities and made available to the public
- An organization must report annually on the plan's progress
- The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every five years

The draft York Region 2015 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Attachment 1) includes all actions to date. York Region, York Regional Police and Police Services Board prepare one combined plan.

York Region Council has approved 9 accessibility plans and taken over 750 actions to remove barriers

The review and update of York Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan builds on the accomplishments of the previous accessibility plans. Highlights of achievements from this plan include:

- Developed an accessible and user friendly web mapping application with advice from members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and people with disabilities.
- Increased ease and access for cross-boundary travel on specialized transit services across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area by signing the Metrolinx Memorandum of Understanding.

- Launched York Regional Police Text-with-911 service allowing registered participants to communicate directly with a 911 call taker using text messaging. This service enhances access to emergency services for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing or experience communication disabilities.
- Partnered with the Province of Ontario to develop an online accessibility self-assessment tool that will help measure an organization's accessibility status and track organizational change over time.
- Launched a mental health initiative to provide more integrated and effective supports for clients who are living with mental illness.

#### 4. Analysis and Options

The Plan's actions are organized by AODA standards and compliance dates

York Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines its long-term strategy to improve accessibility within its programs, goods, services and facilities through the implementation of the AODA.

The plan's actions are organized under the following five AODA standards and corresponding goals:

- **Customer Service** – Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities
- **Information and Communication** – Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities
- **Employment** – Incorporate accessibility practices across all stages of employment including recruitment, selection and supporting Regional employees with disabilities
- **Transportation** – Make it easier to move around the Region by considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities
- **Design of Public Spaces** – Make regional public spaces more accessible

These goals affirm the Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. York Region has developed strategies to meet compliance with each of the AODA actions that are supported by detailed work plans.

York Region's Review and Update of 2015-2021  
Multi Year Accessibility Plan

The plan was developed in consultation with people with disabilities and members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The AODA requires that the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan be developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with people with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. Feedback was collected from these groups through nine public consultations, website posting (over 170 visits), social media (over 100 interactions), an online survey and consultation with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. Comments received during the consultation are outlined in Attachment 3.

York Region has met all AODA reporting requirements to date

York Region has completed all AODA requirements to January 1, 2015 and, in some cases, is well ahead of compliance dates to 2017. The accessibility report was submitted to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in advance of the December 31, 2015 deadline.

New AODA standards become law January 1, 2016

New AODA accessibility standards for the Design of Public Spaces become law January 1, 2016. The standards include accessibility requirements for:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor, public-use eating areas like rest stops or picnic grounds
- Outdoor play spaces such as playgrounds in parks and communities
- Traffic paths including sidewalks and pedestrian signals
- Accessible parking

The standards apply to public spaces that are new or undergoing planned significant alterations. The Region has incorporated the Design of Public Spaces requirements in design criteria for projects initiated after 2012 and will continue this practice.

Accessibility Policy must be updated to reflect new standards

The accessibility policy establishes the Region's core accessibility principles and outlines corporate roles and responsibilities to continue to comply with the AODA. With the enactment of the new Design of Public Spaces Standards the Accessibility Policy needs to be amended to include this standard. Changes are highlighted in the Accessibility Policy found in Attachment 3.

York Region continues to be an accessibility leader in Ontario

In 2014, York Region received funding to develop an online Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool for Organizations under the 2014-2015 EnAbling Change Program of the Government of Ontario.

A second phase of this project has been approved by the Government of Ontario under the 2015-2016 EnAbling Change Program to complete a web-based tool and develop and implement a marketing strategy. This phase is expected to be completed in 2016.

York Region continues to be an accessibility best practice leader for municipal organizations across Ontario. Recently, York Region was awarded the 2015 Excellence Canada – Ontario Accessibility Award. The award recognizes and congratulates organizations that both meet and exceed the legislated standards of the AODA and have shown a commitment to providing excellent accessibility initiatives to accommodate people with disabilities. This is the second time York Region has been honoured with this prestigious award from People Access, a division of Excellence Canada.

York Region is developing a plan to increase inclusionary practices for children with special needs in licenced child care programs. The implementation plan supports the social development of all children by ensuring classrooms are inclusive for those with special needs. While not specifically required by the AODA, this initiative does meet the intent of the Act and demonstrates York Region's commitment to making our services and programs accessible.

The Region's leadership is further reflected in the recent appointment of Regional employee Lois Davies, Manager Social Policy and Accessibility (Acting), to the Government of Ontario's Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standards Development Committee. The Committee provides advice to the government on how to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

Ms. Davies was also recently honoured with the inaugural David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility. Lois received the Employee Engagement Award which recognizes an employee or volunteer who has created opportunities or broken down barriers for fellow employees or volunteers with disabilities.

Link to key Council-approved plans

Accessibility planning in York Region includes the requirements of the AODA and supports the Region's strategic direction and priorities of the 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan – From Vision to Results and Vision 2051.

## 5. Financial Implications

Under the previous *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*, the Region approved approximately \$144.7 million for the implementation of ODA initiatives. This amount was offset by approximately \$50 million in provincial and federal funding for various transportation and other capital related experience. These costs were mainly related to transportation, housing and regional facility capital improvements. In most cases accessibility features were incorporated into already-planned initiatives.

When the AODA was first enacted, Regional Council approved \$193,000 to implement the requirements including \$133,000 for the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation and \$60,000 for the Transportation Standard's courtesy seating requirement. Since then, ongoing costs to administer and manage the corporate wide implementation of the AODA are approved through departmental business plans and budgets, and integrated as part of general operations. No additional costs outside of approved budgets were reported with this plan to implement AODA requirements.

Funding provided under the Province's EnAbling Change Program to develop the Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool totals \$119,000. Any remaining costs related to this project are integrated into the department's approved operating budget.

## 6. Local Municipal Impact

Staff continue to meet and share reports with the Municipal Staff Reference Group composed of accessibility professionals from the broader public sector in York Region including York Regional Police, school boards, hospitals and local municipalities. The Region and all its municipalities share the common goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025.

## 7. Conclusion

The 2015 – 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan affirms York Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities so that all people may have access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

York Region's Review and Update of 2015-2021  
Multi Year Accessibility Plan

With the ongoing implementation of the AODA, the Region continues to integrate accessibility planning into business practices and processes across all departments.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director of Strategies and Partnerships at ext. 72090.

October 28, 2015

Attachments (3)

#6381990

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request





# York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

*An Update to the York Region 2013 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*



**Accessible formats or communication supports for this document are available upon request. Please email [AODA@york.ca](mailto:AODA@york.ca) or call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72060 or TTY (for the deaf, deafened or hard of hearing) at 1-866-512-6228.**

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Frank Scarpitti  
City of Markham



Regional Councillor  
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Regional Councillor  
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Regional Councillor  
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Mayor  
David Barrow  
Town of Richmond Hill



Mayor  
Maurizio Bevilacqua  
City of Vaughan



Chairman & CEO  
Wayne Emmerson



Regional Councillor  
Vito Spatafora  
Town of Richmond Hill

### Message from York Regional Council

For more than a decade, York Regional Council has focused on creating an accessible York Region for residents of all abilities.

The 10th anniversary of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) was celebrated in 2015. The AODA is an important piece of legislation with the ultimate goal of creating an Ontario where it is possible for all people to realize their full potential.

The Region has been proactive with its approach through identifying, removing and preventing barriers through accessibility planning. The *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* highlights the accessibility work ahead of us to address the needs of our growing and diverse community.

Accessibility is rooted in many of our key strategies, including *Vision 2051*, the *2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan* and our *Accessibility Policy*. These strategies affirm the Region's commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming community where all people can access the same programs, services and facilities.

With help and input from our York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and York Regional Police we will continue to make accessibility a part of the way we do business every day.



Regional Councillor  
Michael Di Biase  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Mario Ferri  
City of Vaughan



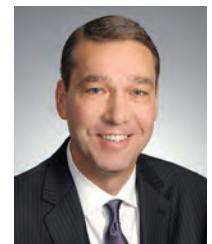
Regional Councillor  
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Regional Councillor  
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Regional Councillor  
Danny Wheeler  
Town of Georgina



Mayor  
Geoffrey Dawe  
Town of Aurora



Mayor  
Virginia Hackson  
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor  
Steve Pellegrini  
Township of King



Mayor  
Justin Altmann  
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

# Message from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

We know everyone is likely to be affected by disability at some point in their lives – whether personally or indirectly through the experiences of family, friends or coworkers. Better access helps everyone. It improves the quality of life of our entire community.

As the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, we advise Regional Council and York Regional Police on behalf of the community about accessibility initiatives to create a barrier-free York Region.

Our committee represents different backgrounds and abilities that offer many perspectives to improve accessibility for all York Region residents. To us, accessibility means giving people of all abilities the opportunity to participate fully in life.

This updated *York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* builds on the accomplishments of York Region’s previous accessibility plans and AODA implementation activities. This plan outlines how we are:

- making regional programs, services and facilities more accessible, and
- helping to create an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Our Region is enriched by the contributions of people of all abilities. Our community is strengthened when everyone is included. It is our privilege to continue to advise Regional Council on removing barriers, changing attitudes and creating more awareness around the importance of accessibility in York Region.

*The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee*

## Did you know?

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) aims to have an accessible Ontario by 2025 through the implementation of mandatory accessibility standards in the areas of:

- **Customer Service**
- **Information and Communications**
- **Employment**
- **Transportation**
- **Design of Public Spaces**

Both public and private sector organizations must implement these standards in phases.

# Background

## The 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - Review and Update

Creating communities where every person can participate is important for people, businesses and community life. For this reason, it is important that York Region continues planning for the future so that programs, services and facilities are accessible and welcoming for everyone.

The *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* outlines strategies and actions approved by York Regional Council to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The plan also details our strategy for meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

York Region and York Regional Police provide annual updates on the actions taken to improve accessibility and implement requirements by the Government of Ontario. Accessibility Status Reports were provided in 2013 and 2014. This plan includes all actions to date and is an update to the *York Region 2013 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* approved by Regional Council in 2013.

## York Region at a Glance

The Regional Municipality of York is one of six regional governments in Ontario. York Region is made up of nine local municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville. It is a diverse region made up of both urban centres and rural areas. It is located in the northern part of the Greater Toronto Area.

York Region provides services and programs that are delivered across wide areas or with large-scale coordination. Some of those services include both conventional and specialized transit services, water and wastewater, solid waste management, public health, housing, social services, policing, paramedic services and courts. The nine local municipalities provide services that are more local in nature such as fire services, garbage and recycling collection, libraries, zoning licences and permits, local water and sewage, and local roads.

In Ontario, 1.85 million people (15.5 per cent) have a disability. That is one in seven people. It is estimated that by 2036, 20 per cent of

### Did you know?

The **York Region Accessibility Policy** affirms the Region's commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming community where all people benefit from the same services and opportunities:

*The Regional Municipality of York is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence (Accessibility Policy).*

Ontarians will have a disability and people with disabilities will represent 40 per cent of the total income in Ontario<sup>1</sup>.

Approximately 1.15<sup>2</sup> million people currently live in York Region, including an estimated 149,500 residents aged 15 and over<sup>3</sup> who are living with a disability<sup>4</sup>. By 2036, it is estimated that York Region will have 259,600 residents aged 15 and over living with a disability<sup>5</sup>. As York Region's population continues to grow in size and age, this number will continue to grow. This growth shows how important the actions listed in this plan are in making our programs, services and facilities more accessible.

## Ontario Laws Require Accessibility Plans

Accessibility planning began under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA). As required by the ODA, each department at York Region, including York Regional Police, made its own annual accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers in its programs, services and facilities. The actions listed in these departmental plans were combined to form an annual accessibility plan. Since accessibility planning began in 2003, York Region and York Regional Police have addressed more than 750 accessibility actions to make our programs, services and facilities more accessible.

The AODA became law in 2005. It sets out accessibility requirements that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces. These are called standards. The Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards were all combined under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

One of the IASR requirements is to prepare a multi-year accessibility plan. This is a shift from annual accessibility planning under the ODA. The multi-year plan must include an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements in the standards. Each year the organization must report on the progress in implementing the plan.

This document is York Region's first review and update of its multi-year accessibility plan. It is designed to include the requirements of both accessibility laws (ODA and AODA) and meet the requirement to review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years.

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1 Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2015. Accessed April 20, 2015 from [http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding\\_accessibility/](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/).

2 The Regional Municipality of York, Corporate Services Long Range and Strategic Planning Branch, Population Estimates, 2015.

3 2012, Statistics Canada introduced the new Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) to replace the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) used in 2006. As the CSD target population comprised of all Canadians aged 15 or older who were living in private dwellings in 2011. Thus, the institutionalized population, e.g., older adults living in long-term care facilities, and those under the age of 15 are excluded. Because of the age groups chosen, the estimated number of people living with a disability is generally smaller than those from the PALS. These factors should be considered when interpreting data from the CSD.

4 Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012 and Ontario Ministry of Finance Ontario Population Projections, 2013 to 2041 (Accessed on April 20, 2015 from <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/>).

5 Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012 and Ontario Ministry of Finance Ontario Population Projections, 2013 to 2041 (Accessed on April 20, 2015 from <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/>).

## Accessibility Planning Supports York Region's Strategic Vision

The Region uses strategic planning initiatives to create programs and deliver services that meet the needs of rapid population growth and an increasingly diverse community.

Accessibility planning in York Region includes the requirements of the AODA and supports the Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies. Creating a community that is inclusive and accessible for everyone links with the goals set out in the following Regional strategies and policies:

- *Vision 2051*
- *2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan - From Vision To Results*
- Accessibility Policy
- Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

### **Vision 2051: A Place Where Everyone Can Thrive**

Looking almost 40 years ahead, York Region's strategic vision, *Vision 2051*, aims to create a place where everyone can thrive. In *Vision 2051*, York Region's population will enjoy an environment that fosters healthy living and is safe, accessible, inclusive and supportive. To support this goal, the Region will continue to make its programs, services and facilities accessible to everyone. This goal is included in other long-term corporate strategies such as the Region's Official Plan.

### **2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan: Improve Social and Health Supports**

The Region's Strategic Plan is aligned with the four-year term of Regional Council. The *2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan* includes strategic direction to support community health and well-being. Accessibility planning supports this strategic direction by fostering social inclusion and addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

#### Did you know?

**The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)** advises Regional Council and York Regional Police on making it easier for people with disabilities to use the Region's many programs and services. Members come from different backgrounds and most members must be people with a disability. Meetings are open to the public and are held at the York Region Administrative Centre. For details visit [York.ca/AccessibilityPlanning](http://York.ca/AccessibilityPlanning)

#### Did you know?

York Regional Police **Text-with-911** service allows registered participants to communicate directly with a 911 call taker using text messaging. This service enhances access to emergency services for people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or experience communication disabilities.



## Accessibility Policy: Establishes York Region’s Core Accessibility Principles

In addition to supporting the Region’s strategic direction and long-term strategies, this planning supports the principles of the Region’s Accessibility Policy. The Accessibility Policy groups the requirements of all AODA standards under one policy. The policy establishes York Region’s core accessibility principles and guides the work we do to make Regional services accessible to everyone. Accessibility planning is one of the Region’s core accessibility principles.

## Statement of Commitment: Affirms York Region’s Commitment to Accessibility

Accessibility planning also supports York Region’s “statement of commitment” to accessibility that is part of the Accessibility Policy. This statement affirms the Region’s commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming community where all people benefit from the same services and opportunities, as follows:

“The Regional Municipality of York is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person’s dignity and independence.”

## Accessibility Planning Involves Many Stakeholders

York Regional Council encourages involvement from different people and groups in the accessibility planning process. Developing this plan involved many groups and people from across York Region who provided their time and expertise, including the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, members of the AODA Staff Committee, Regional employees from across all departments and York Regional Police.

### Did you know?

Accessibility standards for the **Design of Public Spaces** are the most recent standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) to become law. The standards include accessibility requirements for:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor, public-use eating areas like rest stops or picnic grounds
- Outdoor play spaces such as playgrounds in parks and communities
- Traffic paths including sidewalks and pedestrian signals
- Accessible parking

The standards apply to public spaces that are new or redeveloped as of January 1, 2016.

The AODA Staff Committee is made up of York Region employees from across all departments including York Regional Police. Committee members advise on the development of the accessibility plan and carry out the actions within their own departments. Members provide skills, knowledge and time to help the Region encourage the principles of dignity, independence and equality within the community.

The Region has also formed external partnerships with local municipalities, schools, hospitals, stakeholder organizations and the public to support the accessibility planning process.

## York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)

Ontario's accessibility laws require York Region to have an accessibility advisory committee to advise Council on preparing accessibility plans and achieve the actions within the plan. It is legislated that a majority of members must be people with disabilities. York Region has had an accessibility advisory committee since 2003.

Members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) come from different backgrounds, types of disabilities and municipalities of the Region. Members can be on the committee for four years, which is the same term length as Regional Council. At the end of each term, a new committee is formed from the community through an application process.

The YRAAC provides valuable feedback and advice to York Regional Council and employees. Members often participate in additional accessibility-related activities as well. Since the last accessibility plan was approved in 2013, the YRAAC has:

- Participated in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Annual Regional Emergency Planning Exercises, providing important insight into the needs of people with disabilities and special needs in an emergency
- Provided advice on:
  - this accessibility plan
  - York Region Customer Experience Plan
  - York Regional Police 2014-2016 Business Plan
  - the revision of YRT/Viva's Mobility Plus application form
  - the York Region Accommodation Guidelines for employees with disabilities
  - the York Region Accessibility Guidelines for York

### Did you know?

The **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)** under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) became law in 2001 with staggered compliance dates to 2021. Its purpose is to make the employment, information and communications, public spaces and transportation operations in organizations more accessible for people with disabilities.

### Did you know?

Not all disabilities can be seen. **Invisible disabilities** are disabilities that are not obvious to the onlooker, but can limit a person's daily activities. They can include chronic illnesses or pain and conditions such as mental illness, learning differences, hearing or vision disabilities. Accessibility planning helps break barriers that people with all types of disabilities may face.

### Regional Forest Trails

- the York Region Administrative Centre Annex preliminary site plan
- Participated in focus groups to:
  - inform an accessibility self assessment tool for organizations developed in partnership with the Government of Ontario
  - test York Region's new York Maps application on different mobile devices
  - advise on design and construction of accessible pedestrian crossing at intersections as part of the Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.
- Hosted a visit from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario Assistant Deputy Minister, including site tours
- Served as accessibility ambassadors at the 2013 Accessibility Awards and 2013 Special Olympics
- Helped with York Region's National Access Awareness Week public celebration in June 2013 and 2014. These events were produced in partnership with York Region, York Regional Police, local municipalities, hospitals and school boards
- Participated in a Metrolinx video promoting accessible travel options and connectivity
- Took part in a provincial forum for Access Advisory Committees from across Ontario



## Highlights of Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Since the Region's last accessibility plan, several exciting milestones have been achieved, including:

- On behalf of the Ministry of Transportation, provided and operated the Call One Call Centre for spectators requiring accessible transit services to or from venues at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games
- Increased ease and access for cross-boundary travel by signing the Metrolinx Memorandum of Understanding, allowing transfers and trip booking with other specialized service providers in the Greater Toronto Area, without applying for eligibility with them
- Developed an accessible and user-friendly web mapping application with input from a focus

group of people with varying abilities

- Expanded on legislated requirements by developing the *Building and Facilities Design Standards and Guidelines* to ensure consistent accessibility features in all future Region building projects
- Celebrated the 10th anniversary of the AODA and had the York Regional Forest accessible trail included in the Government of Ontario's celebration video
- Hosted additional National Access Awareness Week celebrations in partnership with York Regional Police, local municipalities, school boards and hospitals
- Launched York Regional Police Text-with-911 service allowing registered participants to communicate directly with a 911 call taker using text messaging. This service enhances access to emergency services for people who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or experience communication disabilities
- Partnered with the Province of Ontario to develop an online accessibility self-assessment tool that will help measure an organization's accessibility status and track organizational change over time
- Launched a mental health initiative to provide more integrated and effective supports for clients who are living with mental illness. To address mental health issues holistically, York Region will partner closely with others in the community to continue to build capacity including building resilience in our communities
- Worked with Community Living York South to adapt the YorkSafe Food Handler Certification course for people with intellectual disabilities, increasing access to food safety certification
- Partnered with Communication Disabilities Access Canada to provide lunch and learn sessions for staff on how to best provide customer service to people with communication and language disabilities
- Approved a plan to increase inclusionary practices for children in licensed child care programs. The Plan supports the development of all children by ensuring classrooms are inclusive for those with special needs

Including accessibility in the Region's everyday work has become the way of doing business. With the *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*, York Region and York Regional Police will continue to strive for excellence to meet Ontario's requirements and enhance accessibility in our communities.



## Did you know?

**Accessibility** is a general term used to describe the degree of ease that something can be used and enjoyed by someone with a disability. It implies conscious planning, design and effort to ensure it is barrier-free to people with a disability and, by extension, highly usable and practical for all people.

## Did you know?

A **barrier** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. A barrier can be physical or due to architectural design. Sometimes the way we communicate causes barriers, as can attitudes, technology and policies. Accessibility planning helps prevent, identify and remove those barriers.

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## AODA Progress to Date

The AODA sets out accessibility requirements that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces, with staggered compliance dates to 2021.

The following outlines the AODA requirements by the year achieved:

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### 2010

- Met all requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation* including:
  - Created an *Accessible Customer Service Policy*
  - Trained all employees, volunteers and those providing service to the public on our behalf (ongoing)

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### 2011

- Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into Mobility Plus and YRT/Viva services

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### 2012

- Offered emergency or public safety information in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request (ongoing)
- Offered emergency response plans to employees with disabilities upon request (ongoing)
- Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into Mobility Plus and York Region Transit /Viva (YRT/Viva) services

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### 2013

- Established a corporate Accessibility Policy to guide the Region's accessibility work
- Created a multi-year accessibility plan that outlines long-term strategies to achieve AODA requirements and improve accessibility within programs, services and facilities
- Included accessibility criteria in purchases and acquisitions including self-service kiosks (ongoing)
- Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into Mobility Plus and YRT/Viva services

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### 2014

- Trained employees, volunteers and contractors on the requirements of the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and Ontario's Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities
- Ensured processes for receiving and responding to feedback continue to be accessible to people with disabilities by providing accessible formats or communication supports upon request

- Met and exceeded the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines<sup>6</sup> (WCAG) 2.0 Level A by redesigning the York Region website and:
  - Establishing corporate website accessibility standards
  - Offering accessibility training for York Region employees involved in website development
- Developed and documented accessible employment practices and policies across all stages of the employment life cycle
- Incorporated specific accessibility criteria into Mobility Plus and YRT/Viva services




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## 2015

- Established corporate standards for providing accessible formats of information or communication supports upon request by:
  - Developing guidelines and training to help employees
  - Letting the public know about the options of accessible information and communication supports available to them.

## Work towards completing the AODA requirements has not ended with the 2015 requirements

The following AODA requirements have been achieved before the required compliance date:

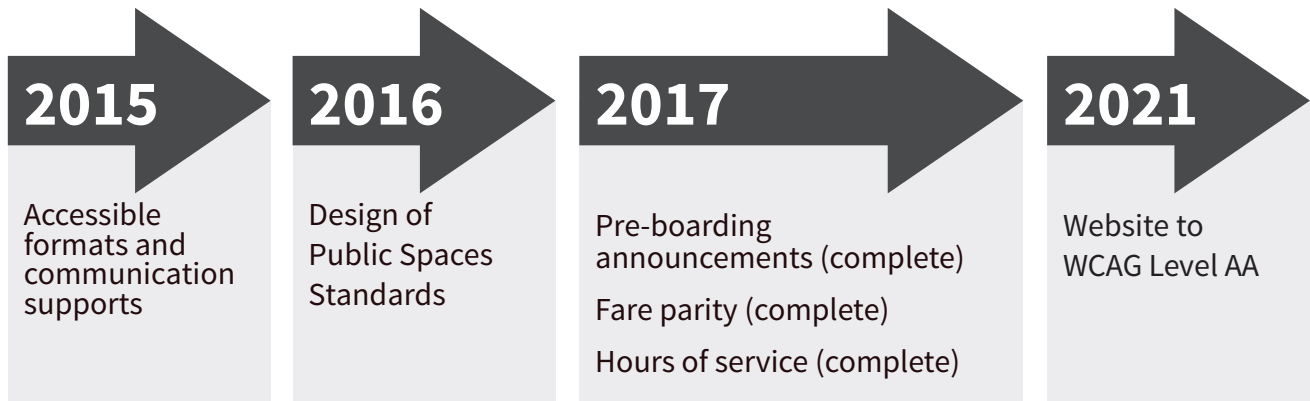
- Incorporated the requirements of the Design of Public Space Standard into future capital projects (Due January 1, 2016)
- Provided on-board and pre-boarding audio announcements on all YRT/Viva vehicles (Due January 1, 2017)
- Offered three categories for a person to be eligible for specialized transportation services: unconditional, temporary and conditional (Due January 1, 2017)

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<sup>6</sup> Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities. WCAG 2.0 A and Level A refer to a series of technical checkpoints to make websites more accessible.

## AODA Compliance Timeline from 2015 to 2021

Compliance activities continue as York Region and York Regional Police work towards meeting AODA requirements now and in the future. This timeline shows the upcoming provincial requirements to make an accessible Ontario.



### Did you know?

Each of the **accessibility actions** in the *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* is a requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). In addition to achieving these actions, York Region and York Regional Police will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers that people with disabilities may face when accessing goods, programs, services or facilities. These additional accessibility initiatives will be highlighted in an annual status report.



# York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Development

The *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* outlines York Region and York Regional Police's long-term strategy to improve accessibility within programs, goods, services and facilities through the implementation of the AODA. It includes an overall work plan with key deliverables and timelines from 2015 to 2021.

The overall accessibility process is governed by the Region's Accessibility Planning Policy Framework. This Council-endorsed framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of the many groups involved in developing the plan.

The AODA requires that the plan is developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with people with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. York Region and York Regional Police collected feedback about the plan from people with disabilities, the community and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. This requirement was met through the use of public meetings, social media and an online survey conducted during the plan's development phase.

York Region Transportation Services also holds its own annual consultations with people with disabilities on the transportation-specific section of the plan, as required by the AODA. The department collected feedback and included it for consideration in the development of this plan.

## The Plan's Actions are Organized Under the Standards of the AODA

The actions outlined in the *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* are specific AODA requirements. These actions are organized under the accessibility standards of the AODA to support one of the following accessibility goals:

- **Customer Service** – Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities
- **Information and Communications** – Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities
- **Employment** – Incorporate accessibility practices across all stages of employment including recruitment, selection and supporting Regional employees with disabilities
- **Transportation** – Make it easier to move around the Region by considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities
- **Design of Public Spaces** – Make Regional public spaces more accessible

These goals correspond to the standards included in the AODA and represent the Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. This link ensures consistency across the actions of the plan and supports achieving compliance with the AODA.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the AODA, the Region will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers that people with disabilities may face when accessing Regional goods, programs, services or facilities. These additional accessibility initiatives will be highlighted in annual status reports.



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## Monitoring and Evaluation

The AODA requires York Region and York Regional Police to review and update the plan at least every five years. An annual status report outlining the progress of the actions in the plan must also be prepared. Both of these documents are posted on the Region's website at York.ca and can be made available in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request.

Obtaining feedback is an important part of the evaluation process. The Region and York Regional Police will continue to review and create strategies to engage key stakeholders in providing accessibility related feedback, including people with disabilities.

Accessibility (compliance) reports are submitted as required to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, which regulates compliance for all Ontario organizations. Going beyond compliance, York Region and York Regional Police will use an assessment tool to measure the effectiveness of the organization's implementation activities.

## York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

### Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Work Plan

York Region and York Regional Police will continue to develop plans and strategies to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

The following charts highlight the details and planned actions to comply with the individual standards within the regulation to 2021, with the date the action must be achieved by. Behind each requirement are detailed work plans to make the requirement operational.

# Information and Communications

Requirement	Action
<b>January 1, 2021</b>	
<p><b>Accessible websites and web content: All websites and web content must meet WCAG Level AA standard</b></p>	<p><b>York Region and York Regional Police will:</b>            Develop a strategy to ensure all websites and web content conform to WCAG Guidelines 2.0 Level AA.*            Provide accessible formats of content published before 2012, upon request.</p> <p>*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities. WCAG 2.0 A and AA refer to a series of technical checkpoints to make websites more accessible, with Level AA building on the checkpoints of Level A.</p>

# Transportation

<b>The following accessibility performance measures are required to be included in the Transportation specific section of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</b>	
<p><b>Process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback</b></p>	<p>The process includes, but is not limited to, the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer feedback and complaints are received by YRT/Viva and Mobility Plus staff representatives, tracked in the complaint tracking system and forwarded to the appropriate functional area for investigation and resolution, and customer follow-up, where requested.</li> <li>• Monthly reports summarize the number of complaints received and categorize them according to functional area. Customer feedback is used to identify opportunities for service improvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Demographic and ridership projections for specialized transportation services</b></p>	<p>YRT undertakes a demand analysis for Mobility Plus as part of the five year service plan. The five-year service plan for Mobility Plus includes ridership projection as well as measures to reduce waiting times.</p>
<p><b>Steps to reduce waiting times</b></p>	<p>As part of the five-year service plan for Mobility Plus, YRT identifies steps to reduce waiting times, including maintaining contractual obligations for on-time service delivery and providing same-day service.</p>

## Transportation (Continued)

<b>Accessibility equipment failures</b>	<p>Measures to identify, prevent and address accessible equipment failure are documented in the operating contract between YRT/Viva and the operating contractors. These include pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip inspections and regularly scheduled maintenance of vehicles.</p>
<b>Development of accessible design criteria to be considered in the construction, renovation or replacement of bus stops and shelters</b>	<p>YRT/Viva ensures that there is a staff representative at every YRAAC meeting. YRT/Viva continues to provide updates and gather feedback on transit-related matters, including the design of bus stops and facilities, when required.</p> <p>YRT/Viva continues to upgrade stops and terminals using accessible design criteria to increase accessibility.</p>

## Design of Public Spaces

Requirement	Action
<b>January 1, 2016</b>	
<b>Accessible public spaces</b>	<p><b>York Region and York Regional Police will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update current processes to make sure the accessibility requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standards are applied, where applicable, to new or redeveloped projects.</li> <li>• Update procurement procedures and guidelines, where needed, to reflect the requirements for public spaces.</li> <li>• Inform staff about the public spaces requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The following maintenance procedures are required to be included in the Design of Public Spaces specific section of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</b></p>	
<b>Maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces</b>	<p><b>York Region and York Regional Police will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update procedures for the preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements required in the Design of Public Spaces Standards.</li> <li>• Review and update procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when these accessible elements are not working.</li> </ul>

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## Creating an Accessible York Region

Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone and that means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate in everyday life. Creating communities where every person who lives or visits can participate makes good sense for people, for businesses, for communities... for all of us.

## Let Us Know What You Think

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the *York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and accessibility matters in general. To request a copy of the plan in another format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

**Email:**

AODA@york.ca

**Mail:**

Community and Health Services  
Attention: Accessibility Unit  
The Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket ON L3Y 6Z1

**Telephone:**

1-877-464-9675 ext. 72060

**TTY (for the deaf, deafened or hard of hearing):**

1-866-512-6228

**Fax:**

905-895-6616

To view this plan online visit [York.ca /AccessibilityPlanning](http://York.ca/AccessibilityPlanning)



York Region  
Community and Health Services

[www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)





Status: **Draft**  
Approved By: **Council**

## The Regional Municipality of York

### Accessibility Policy

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**Policy No.:** 4490879

**Original Approval Date:** November 15, 2012

**Policy Last Updated:** November 15, 2012

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#### Policy Statement:

The Regional Municipality of York is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence.

#### Application:

To all York Region Employees, Volunteers and Agents who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of York Region, or who help develop policies for the organization.

#### Purpose:

This policy identifies how York Region achieves and maintains accessibility by meeting the requirements of the accessibility standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (ASCS), the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (IASR) and future regulations as amended.

## Definitions:

### **Accessibility:**

For the purposes of this policy, the degree of ease that goods, services and facilities can be used by a person with a disability (see Disability).

### **Accessibility Plan:**

A document approved by Regional Council and made available to the public that includes:

- (a) the Region's strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities and meet its requirements under the enacted regulations of the AODA, and
- (b) all other information and actions required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and AODA.

### **Accessibility Policy:**

Functions as an overarching policy for the requirements of the accessibility standards developed under the AODA. Adopted by Regional Council in 2012 it includes Accessible Customer Service as one of the Region's core accessibility principles and incorporates the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

### **Accessibility Standard:**

Minimum requirements that persons and organizations must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

### **Accessible Customer Service Policy:**

Developed to meet a requirement of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation*, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and adopted by Regional Council in 2009 it governs how York Region offers goods and services to people with disabilities.

### **Accessible Formats:**

May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by people with disabilities.

**Agent:**

A third party individual or organization who deals directly with members of the public to provide a program, service or facility on behalf of York Region.

**AODA:**

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as may be amended.

**Barrier:**

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, information and communications, attitudinal, technological, policy or practice barriers.

**Communication Supports:**

May include, but is not limited to, captioning, augmentative sound devices, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Conventional Transportation Services:**

Public passenger transportation services on transit buses, motor coaches or rail-based transportation that are provided by a designated public sector transportation organization.

**Disability (as defined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*):**

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.



**Regional Department:**

For the purpose of this policy, a “Regional Department” refers to each the following:

- Community and Health Services Department
- Corporate Services Department
- Environmental Services Department
- Finance Department
- Legal and Court Services
- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
- Office of the Regional Chair
- Transportation Services Department

**Specialized Transportation Services:**

Public passenger transportation services that are provided by a designated public sector transportation organization are designed to transport persons with disabilities.

**Description:**

This Accessibility Policy functions as an overarching policy for the requirements of the accessibility standards developed under the AODA:

- Customer Service Standards (ASCR, O. Reg. 429/07)
- General Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Information and Communications Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Employment Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Transportation Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Design of Public Spaces Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)

York Region achieves compliance with the AODA through the following directives:

**1. Customer Service**

York Region is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone, including people with disabilities. When serving customers with disabilities, reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the same level of service given to other customers and service shall be provided in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. The Accessible Customer Service Policy governs how York Region offers goods and services to people with disabilities. See Reference: Accessible Customer Service Policy (No. 1385705).

## **2. Accessibility Planning**

York Region will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the AODA. The multi-year accessibility plan will outline the ways York Region will prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the standards developed under the AODA.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be:

- Reviewed and updated at least every five years, and
- Established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.

An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared. The multi-year accessibility plan and accompanying status report will be posted to the Region's website and provided in an accessible format upon request.

## **3. Procurement/Self-Service Kiosks**

Where possible, Regional Departments will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks. If it is not practicable to do so, staff will provide an explanation, upon request.

## **4. Training**

All individuals to whom this policy applies will be trained in accordance with the regulations under the AODA. York Region will keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which training is provided and the number of individuals trained.

## **5. Feedback**

York Region has processes for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the Region provides goods and services to customers. Regional Departments will ensure that these feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports upon request.

## **6. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Regional Departments will upon request provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for people with disabilities. This will be done in consultation with the person making the request, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs and (if the original product has a cost) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

## **7. Website and Web Content**

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by York Region or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the Information and Communications Standards.

## **8. Employment**

York Region will create and accessible work environment for all employees across the employment life cycle, in accordance with the requirements and timelines set out in the Employment Standards and existing requirements under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to accommodate people with disabilities.

## **9. Accessible Transportation**

The Region is committed to providing accessible public transportation services through both conventional and specialized transit services, in accordance with the Transportation Standards.

## **10. Design of Public Spaces**

York Region will incorporate accessibility features when building new, or making planned significant alterations to existing, Region-controlled public spaces, in accordance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

### Responsibilities:

Regional Council will adopt policies as required under the AODA.

York Region (including all Departments, Senior Management and Staff) will make sure that:

- All requirements of the ASCS, O. Reg. 429/07 under the AODA are met on an ongoing basis.
- All requirements of the IASR, O. Reg. 191/11 under the AODA are met on an ongoing basis in accordance with the timelines set out in the regulation.
- Departmental policies, practices and procedures are aligned with all requirements of the IASR, O. Reg. 191/11 under the AODA.
- Accessibility requirements related to the implementation of this policy are part of the annual budget and planning processes.

## Accessibility Policy

Policy Last Updated: November 15, 2012

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Regional Departmental Leads will act as corporate coordinators for designated standards under the AODA and are responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the legislated requirements of the AODA as follows:

- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Corporate Services Department: Information and Communications Standards
- Corporate Services Department: Employment Standards
- Transportation Services Department: Transportation Standards
- Corporate Services Department: Design of Public Spaces

The Community and Health Services Department will act as corporate coordinator for the AODA and is responsible for:

- The corporate coordination, development of policies and procedures, monitoring and reporting of compliance for all regulations under the AODA, including the General Standards under the IASR.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that:

- The implementation of the requirements of this policy is happening within their departments, branches and units.

AODA Staff Committee is responsible for:

- Leading their respective department in achieving compliance with the regulations under the AODA.

York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing and advising Regional Council through the Committee of the Whole on how the Region is complying with the regulations under the AODA.

All Regional Employees are expected to comply with this policy.

## Accessibility Policy

Policy Last Updated: November 15, 2012

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### Non-Compliance with Policy:

Failure to comply with the AODA Regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11. Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Agents who fail to comply with the policy may be subject to contract termination.

### Reference:

- (Add reference to report authorized by Regional Council on November 19, 2015)
- Clause 3 of Community and Health Services Committee Report No. 9, authorized by Regional Council on November 15, 2012
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*, Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the AODA
- *Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the AODA
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Building Code Act, 1992*
- Accessible Customer Service Policy (No. 1385705)
- Report No. 3 of the Community and Health Services Committee Regional Council Meeting of November 19, 2009: Accessible Customer Service Policy
- The Regional Municipality of York Multiple Format Guidelines, 2007
- The Regional Municipality of York Accessible Meeting Guidelines, 2007
- York Region Accessible Information and Communication Guidelines, 2014
- York Region Building and Facilities Design Standards and Guidelines (Accessibility Design Guidelines), 2014

### Contact:

Program Manager, Accessibility, Community and Health Services Department,  
Extension 72060

Approval Information:

<b>Council Approval Date:</b> N/A	<b>Committee Name:</b> Community and Health Services
<b>Council Minute No.:</b> 179	<b>Report No.:</b> 9
<b>Extract eDOCS #:</b> [REDACTED]	<b>Clause No.:</b> 3

Insert eDOCS # for policy and any attachments (provide full access to the "CAO Policy Manual Group" for policy and any attachments)

Insert eDOCS # for *archived policy* if any (provide full access to the "CAO Policy Manual Group" for *archived policy* and any attachments)

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

# 2015-2021 York Region Multi Year Accessibility Plan – Review & Update

## Summary of Consultation and Feedback

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<b>Background:</b>		
<p>The <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> (AODA) requires a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to be developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with people with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. York Region and York Regional Police collected feedback about the review and update of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan from people with disabilities, staff, the community and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC). Comments and feedback received during the consultation period are summarized below and considered in the development of the final plan.</p>		
<b>Overall Comments and Feedback</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Response (if applicable)</b>
<b>Question #1: Is the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan easy to read and follow?</b>		
The plan is easy to read and follow, and listing of initiatives by the year makes it easy to follow and understand.	YRAAC	No response required.
<b>Question #2: Does the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provide the information you want to know?</b>		
The plan is concise and informative.	YRAAC	No response required.

Overall Comments and Feedback	Source	Response (if applicable)
Suggestion to list action plans on transportation, job creation and business support actions in the plan.	York.ca	The <i>York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</i> outlines strategies and actions to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in accessing York Region's programs, services and facilities. This includes actions that York Region will take to implement the Transportation and Employment requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR). In addition to the Accessibility Plan, York Region's <i>Transportation Master Plan</i> outlines initiatives that improve overall transportation in the region. The <i>2014 Economic Development Action Plan</i> provides details on initiatives that support job creation and actions related to supporting local businesses. These documents can be found on the York.ca website.
<b>Question #3: Are we moving in the right direction to meet the legislated requirements to make services more accessible?</b>		
Are people with hearing loss included in the policies related to accessible employment standards?	YRAAC	All policies developed in York Region including those related to the requirements under the Employment Standards apply to all groups under the Human Rights Code, including people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.
Suggestion to increase the visibility of the font size icon on York.ca by moving it to a prominent location on the home page.	YRAAC	The font size tool is currently under review to determine if it is still relevant. It is becoming common practice not to include a font size tool in web design due to the fact that font size can be controlled by the end user on their computer. It has become redundant to create the size tool because it is only relevant to the Web site it is being housed on. Therefore, if a person depends on the font size tool for all sites, the person has to adjust the size every time he or she navigates to a different Website. If it is set it up on a user's computer, the font size will remain as set on every web page the person visits.
Suggestion to provide clarity on what the term 'communication' means.	YRAAC	The AODA defines communication as the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them where information is provided, sent or received. The definition of communication can be found on page 16 of the draft plan.



<b>Overall Comments and Feedback</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Response (if applicable)</b>
<p>Suggestion to ensure that videos produced by York Region include Closed Captioning and Descriptive Video features for increased accessibility.</p>	<p>YRAAC</p>	<p>As of January 1, 2014, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) s.14, required all new websites and content on those sites to conform to World Wide Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A, which includes transcript requirements for videos. As of January 1, 2021, websites must conform to WCAG 2.0, Level AA, which requires videos to have Closed Captioning features as well.</p> <p>Going beyond current AODA standards, York Region requires its videos produced for the general public to have a Closed Captioning script with the video file before being loaded to social media sites. In addition, YouTube offers a tool that creates closed captioning automatically for any video, however the tool is not 100% accurate and sometimes replaces key words.</p> <p>York Region is also researching descriptive video, although not required by the AODA, to examine costs, resourcing, software requirements (for adding descriptive video) and project time considerations. In the meantime descriptive audio will continue to be included in select video projects as appropriate.</p> <p>York Region also provides other formats of its information and communication materials, upon request.</p>
<b>Overall Comments and Feedback</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Response (if applicable)</b>
<p><b>Question #4: What do you see as being the most important when it comes to accessibility and why?</b></p>		

Ongoing education and awareness about accessibility is critical to change attitudes.	YRAAC	All staff received training on Accessible Customer Service and Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulations as required by the AODA. All new staff receives this training through the new employee corporate orientation. In addition to the mandatory training, various events are held across the corporation during National Access Awareness Week which are used as opportunities to educate and raise awareness about accessibility.
<b>Overall Comments and Feedback</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Response (if applicable)</b>
<b>Question #5: Are there any actions missing in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan?</b>		
Suggestion to increase education and awareness to a cross-section of the population through sharing best practices, educational presentations, and awareness events at local schools.	YRAAC	The Regional Municipality of York leads the Municipal Staff Reference Group (MSRG). This group is composed of members from the broader public sector in York Region including school boards, hospitals and local municipalities. The group meets twice a year to share best practices and information that help increase accessibility within the organizations. Staff will share this suggestion at the Fall meeting of MSRG and report back to YRAAC.
Suggestion to build accessible parks and provide accessible washrooms in public places.	York.ca	Local parks are the responsibility of the local municipality. Staff will share this suggestion at the Fall meeting of MSRG and report back to YRAAC.
Suggestion to increase accessibility in shopping malls including its entrances, ramps, and accessible washrooms.	York.ca	New accessibility amendments made to Ontario's Building Code became effective January 1, 2015. These amendments include requirements for power door operators to be provided at entrances to a wider range of buildings, and at entrances to barrier-free washrooms. The new requirements apply to most new construction and extensive renovations, including shopping malls.
<b>Other comments</b>		
Suggestion to use the word "living" as opposed to "struggling" when referring to people living with mental illness in the plan.	YRAAC	This suggestion has been actioned in the plan.

In the title page, replace “for hearing impaired” with “for deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing”.	YRAAC	This suggestion has been actioned in the plan.
Better connectivity needed between YRT bus stops and intersections.	Public Information Centre	Using the YRT/Viva Accessible Bus Stop Guidelines, Transportation Services conducts accessibility audits at bus stops bi-annually and improvements are made where necessary. If a stop is not accessible, passengers can request to be picked up or dropped off at the nearest accessible location that is agreeable to the passenger and the driver. Concerns or requests regarding particular bus stop accessibility can be made directly to YRT/Viva.
Recommendation to do more to educate people with disabilities about the “Text-with-911” feature launched by York Regional Police. For example, a presentation on how to use the “Text-with-911” feature would help those who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.	YRAAC	This suggestion has been forwarded to York Regional Police’s Training and Education Bureau for further consideration. Staff will report back to YRAAC on the outcome of this suggestion.
Include symbol for speech and language disabilities in the plan.	York.ca	This suggestion has been actioned in the plan.