

Clause No. 1 in Report No. 5 of the Community and Health Services Committee was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting on June 27, 2013.

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YORK REGION'S 2013-2021 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 30, 2013, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the new *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework* (see *Attachment 1*) and repeal the 2003 *York Region Accessibility Plan Policy Framework*.
2. Council approve *York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* (see *Attachment 2*).
3. Council approve the release strategy in Section 4 of this report to make *York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* available to the public.
4. The Regional Clerk forward 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 Region's new *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework* and steps taken to develop *York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*.

3. BACKGROUND

Ontario laws require accessibility planning

Ontario currently has two accessibility laws in place: the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

The first accessibility law to be passed was the ODA. It requires all municipalities to prepare an annual accessibility plan that includes actions it would take to identify, prevent and remove barriers within its programs, services and facilities. The ODA also requires that the accessibility plan be developed in consultation with an accessibility advisory committee and be made available to the public. The ODA applies to the Ontario Public Service and the broader public sector, including municipalities.

In 2003, Council approved the *York Region Accessibility Plan Policy Framework* to set the policy direction and provide tools for the development and monitoring of York Region's future accessibility plans under the ODA. This policy framework directs the development of annual accessibility plans across all departments and York Regional Police.

York Region has implemented over 750 actions to remove barriers

Since 2003, York Region has executed eight accessibility plans and implemented over 750 accessibility planning actions to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Highlights of achievements include:

- Launched York Region's first Accessible Forest Trail in the York Regional Forest which continues to be promoted as a best practice by the Province
- Built accessible affordable housing units, including Tom Taylor Place which offers accessible units for people with hearing disabilities
- Developed 100 per cent of York Region's transit fleet (YRT and Viva) to be accessible
- Trained over 3000 regional staff, volunteers and agents on serving customers with disabilities and achieved compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation
- Enhanced accessibility at the Administrative Centre through improved accessible parking, safer crosswalk and entrance area equipped with heated sub-surface coils to prevent ice build-up
- Developed educational materials for people with disabilities to build individual capacity for personal preparedness in the event of an emergency

Province shifts from annual to multi-year accessibility planning

The AODA became law in 2005. It sets out accessibility standards that an organization must meet in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment. The Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards were combined to form the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11* (IASR). These standards apply to both public and private sectors.

The IASR requires large broader public sector organizations with 50 or more employees to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan. This is a shift from annual accessibility planning under the ODA. The multi-year plan must meet the following requirements:

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

The AODA may eventually replace the ODA. However, until the Province repeals the ODA, all public sector organizations, including York Region, must continue to comply with both acts simultaneously.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework will direct new planning processes

York Region is now set to move forward from annual to multi-year accessibility planning. The multi-year accessibility plan will include the Region's strategy to meet the IASR requirements, while continuing to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. It is proposed that the 2003 *York Region Accessibility Plan Policy Framework* be repealed and replaced by the new *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework* (see *Attachment 1*) to reflect the legislated changes to accessibility planning under the AODA, while still also meeting the ODA requirements.

The objectives of the new framework are to:

- Implement the requirements under the AODA listed in the 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan within the required timeframe
- Create an accessible York Region by setting policies and monitoring their implementation across the organization
- Support the goals of the Region's strategic vision
- Link accessibility planning with the Regional budget and business planning cycle

The new framework shows how these objectives will be met through the development, implementation and monitoring of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Implementation strategy remains unchanged under new framework

Under the proposed *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework*, multi-year accessibility planning will continue to be implemented by the following Regional bodies:

- Community and Health Services Department – Lead corporate implementation of the AODA and monitor and report compliance to the Province
- Departmental Leads – Develop and implement actions to achieve compliance with specific standards that relate to the work of their department
- ODA/AODA Staff Committee – Lead departmental implementation of AODA and other accessibility-related initiatives (includes representatives across all departments and York Regional Police)

Ontario's accessibility laws require York Region to have an accessibility advisory committee that will advise on AODA implementation and compliance activities. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) will continue to play a key advisory role to York Region and York Regional Police.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan lists actions for the 2013 to 2021 time period

York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was developed under the new framework and outlines York Region and York Regional Police's long-term accessibility strategy (see *Attachment 2*).

The AODA has the goal to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the implementation of accessibility standards, with compliance dates from 2011 to 2021. As required, York Region has completed the AODA requirements to January 1, 2013, and, in some cases, is well ahead of compliance dates to 2017.

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

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 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
- **Built Environment** – Make regional facilities and outside spaces more accessible

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

AODA requires consultation with people with disabilities

The AODA requires that the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. Feedback on the Region's Plan was collected from these groups through public meetings, focus groups, social media and an online survey and is included in the final plan as outlined in *Attachment 3*.

General consensus was that the plan was easy to understand, with suggestions for enhanced readability such as bold headings, more spacing and graphics, as well as text boxes of key information throughout. For easier navigation, the on-line posting of the Plan will have an interactive table of contents and to enhance awareness the Plan now highlights the range of disabilities that exist, both visible and invisible.

2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be available to the public

The AODA requires that municipal accessibility plans be made available to the public and provided in accessible formats upon request (e.g. large print, CD and other formats). Pending Council approval, the 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be made available to the public through the following release strategy:

- Post the Plan on York Region's website
- Share the Plan with individuals, agencies, disability organizations, York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, Municipal Staff Reference Group, local municipalities and their Accessibility Advisory Committees
- Collect ongoing public feedback on the Plan through an on-line survey

York Region must report on AODA compliance activities

Ontario requires organizations to report AODA compliance on a scheduled basis. The first compliance report (termed "Accessibility Report" by the Province) was filed by March 31, 2010 regarding compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation.

Recent amendments to the IASR included a compliance reporting schedule. The next AODA compliance report must be filed by December 31, 2013 and every two years thereafter. York Region and York Regional Police will submit a combined report which will include reporting on actions in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

In addition to the Province's compliance report, the Region must develop and post an annual status report on measures taken to implement the Plan and make it available in accessible formats upon request.

Link to key Council-approved plans

Accessibility planning in York Region meets the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and supports the Region's strategic direction and priorities of *Vision 2051*, the *2011-2015 Strategic Plan* and the Community and Health Services Department's *Multi-Year Plan*.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan also supports the principles of York Region's Accessibility Policy approved by Council in November 2012. The Policy establishes the Region's core accessibility principles and guides the work to make Regional services accessible.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no provincial funding to support the implementation of regulations under the AODA.

Ongoing costs to administer and manage the corporate wide implementation of the ODA and AODA are approved through departmental business plans and budgets, and integrated as part of general operations.

The cost to administer the specific requirements under the AODA to date is approximately \$193,000. These costs were related to transportation and customer service requirements and were approved as part of department operating budgets. As the implementation of standards under the IASR continues to rollout, budgetary impacts will be further assessed and reported to Council.

Since 2003, the Region has approved a total of approximately \$144.9 million in funding for implementation of over 750 ODA and AODA initiatives. This amount has been offset by approximately \$50 million in provincial and federal funding. These costs were mainly related to transportation, housing and regional facility capital improvements. In most cases accessibility criteria were incorporated into already-planned initiatives, making accessibility a portion of total reported costs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Staff continue to meet and share reports and information with the Municipal Staff Reference Group (which includes accessibility professionals from York Region, York Regional Police, local municipalities, school boards and hospitals) and local municipal accessibility advisory committees. The Region and all its municipalities share the common goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025.

7. CONCLUSION

The 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan affirms York Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities so that all people may have equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

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

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to play a critical role in making York Region accessible by providing direct input into the implementation, compliance and monitoring of all accessibility standards under the AODA.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch at Ext. 2090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework

2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

June 19, 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework sets the policy direction for the development, monitoring, review and update of York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. It replaces the Accessibility Plan Policy Framework that was adopted by Council in February 2003 to address Ontario's requirement for municipalities to prepare an annual accessibility plan.

Ontario currently has two accessibility laws in place: the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). Both acts have accessibility planning requirements. Since accessibility planning began in 2003, York Region has executed eight annual accessibility plans under the ODA with direction from the Accessibility Plan Policy Framework.

Under the AODA, this requirement shifts from annual to multi-year accessibility planning. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Framework directs York Region's response to this new legislated requirement and replaces the annual planning model. The differences between the annual and multi-year planning models are outlined in the table below.

ANNUAL AND MULTI-YEAR PLANNING MODELS: DIFFERENCES AT A GLANCE

Annual Plans: 2003 - 2012	Multi-Year Plan: 2013 forward
Annual accessibility plans across all departments and York Regional Police in coordination with the business planning cycle	A multi-year accessibility plan across all departments and York Regional Police in coordination with the business planning cycle
Accessibility actions are organized under departments and York Regional Police, with actions developed by departments to prevent and remove barriers	Accessibility actions are organized under Ontario's accessibility standards , with actions that meet specific requirements and compliance timelines
Plan is York Region and York Regional Police's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities	Plan is York Region and York Regional Police's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
Developed and reviewed in consultation with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)	Developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with the YRAAC and people with disabilities
Annual report to Council on progress made in implementing the accessibility actions of the plan	No change
Not applicable	Annual status report on measures taken to implement the plan posted to the website and available in accessible formats upon request
Not applicable	Plan reviewed and updated at least every five years

MULTI-YEAR PLANNING: IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Under the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework, accessibility planning will continue to be implemented by the following Regional bodies:

- Community and Health Services Department – Lead corporate implementation of the AODA and monitor and report compliance to the Province
- Departmental Leads – Develop and implement actions to achieve compliance with specific standards that relate to the work of their department
- ODA/AODA Staff Committee – Lead departmental implementation of AODA and other accessibility-related initiatives (includes representatives across all departments and York Regional Police)

Ontario's accessibility laws require York Region to have an accessibility advisory committee. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) will continue to play a key role in accessibility planning. This Council-appointed committee advises York Region and York Regional Police on AODA implementation and compliance activities.

MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework is designed to meet the Province's legislated accessibility planning requirements while supporting York Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies. This document summarizes the background, assumptions, implementation and monitoring processes that the Framework is founded on.

LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) was the first accessibility law to be passed. It requires the development of an annual accessibility plan in consultation with an accessibility advisory committee. The ODA applies to the Ontario Public Service and broader public sector.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) became law in 2005 with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. This goal will be met by developing and implementing actions to ensure compliance with accessibility standards relating to customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

Customer service was the first standard to become law. Subsequent standards for information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces were established and combined to form the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The AODA applies to both the public and private sectors.

The accessibility standards contain specific requirements with staggered compliance dates from 2011 to 2021, including the IASR requirement to develop a multi-year accessibility plan. The AODA and regulations apply to public and private organizations, including York Region.

POLICY FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy framework are to:

- Implement the requirements under the AODA listed in the 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) within the required timeframe

- Create an accessible York Region by setting policies and monitoring their implementation across the organization
- Support the goals of the Region’s strategic vision, and
- Link accessibility planning with the Regional budget and business planning cycle

This framework shows how these objectives will be met through the development, implementation and monitoring of the MYAP.

ASSUMPTIONS THAT THE FRAMEWORK IS BASED ON

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2001

Before the AODA became law, York Region met the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) which included the development of annual accessibility plans. The Region has executed eight annual accessibility plans since accessibility planning began in 2003. These plans included departmental accessibility planning actions aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to the Region’s programs, services and facilities. Until the ODA is no longer in place as law, York Region must continue to meet the ODA annual planning requirement. It is assumed that this requirement will be met through the implementation, review and update of the MYAP going forward.

2011/2012 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

It is assumed that the 2011/2012 Accessibility Plan was the Region’s last plan established under the ODA. The plan included 163 actions aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers and also included the AODA requirements out to January 1, 2013. Going forward any actions that are still underway will be monitored through the MYAP. The MYAP will list York Region’s compliance actions starting with the July 1, 2013 AODA requirements.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

The Transportation standards under the IASR include transportation-specific accessibility planning requirements. It is assumed that the Region will continue to meet these and include them in the MYAP. This responds to Regional Council direction to incorporate these specific requirements into the overall Regional accessibility plan.

YORK REGIONAL POLICE MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

York Region’s annual accessibility plans under the ODA included York Regional Police. This partnership will continue with both organizations working together to develop, review and update a joint MYAP.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK SUPPORTS THE REGION'S STRATEGIC VISION

The Accessibility Planning Policy Framework supports York Region's strategic direction and priorities. The MYAP actions will be aligned with the Region's broader corporate goals. 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: A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN THRIVE

Looking 40 years ahead, York Region's strategic vision, *Vision 2051*, is 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 encourage a built environment, employment opportunities, transportation system and information that are accessible to everyone. This goal is included in other long-term corporate strategies such as the Region's Official Plan and the Sustainability Strategy.

2011-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE SOCIAL AND HEALTH SUPPORTS

The Region's Strategic Plan is aligned with the four-year term of Regional Council. The 2011-2015 Strategic Plan includes strategic direction to improve social and health supports. Accessibility planning supports this strategic direction by helping foster social inclusion and address the needs of a growing and diverse community.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: ESTABLISHES YORK REGION'S CORE ACCESSIBILITY PRINCIPLES

In addition to supporting the Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies, accessibility planning supports the principles of the Region's Accessibility Policy. The 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.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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."

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS AND BUDGETS

Planning for and incorporating accessibility actions in departmental plans and budgets will help departments move these corporate goals forward while implementing the AODA requirements.

2013 - 2021 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The MYAP will outline York Region's long-term strategy to improve accessibility within Regional programs, goods, services and facilities through the implementation of the AODA requirements. It will include an overall work plan with key deliverables and timelines from 2013 – 2021.

Assigned Departmental Leads will identify within the AODA work plan specific accessibility actions to meet the AODA requirements.

The ODA/AODA Staff Committee will advise on the development, review and update of the MYAP.

CONTENT

The actions of the 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 Services** – Make it easier to move around the Region by considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, and
- **Built Environment** – Make Regional facilities and 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 and supports meeting compliance.

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 an annual status report.

CONSULTATIONS

The IASR requires that the MYAP is developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee.

York Region will collect feedback about the MYAP from people with disabilities and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. This will be done through use of public meetings, focus groups, social media and an on-line survey when developing, reviewing and updating the MYAP. This will help York Region to respond effectively to the needs of people with disabilities who use its programs, goods, services and facilities.

As required by the AODA, the Transportation and Community Planning Department will also hold its own annual consultations with people with disabilities on the transportation-specific section of the accessibility plan. The Department will collect the feedback for consideration in the development of the final plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The implementation of the MYAP will be completed in two phases.

1. Policy Development Phase – Departmental Leads

Each Departmental Lead will lead the policy development activities needed to meet the accessibility actions outlined in the MYAP. This may include a corporate policy, procedure or guideline (from here on referred to as ‘policy’).

2. Implementation Phase – ODA/AODA Staff Committee

Once a policy is developed, the ODA/AODA Staff Committee members will be responsible for promoting organizational change within their departments by making the policy operational. For example, a department can ensure that the corporate policy is applied to its own processes/practices through training and education of its staff, clients and/or customers.

The ODA/AODA Staff Committee members will report on these types of activities at the time of the review and update of the MYAP.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Under the IASR, York Region must:

- Review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years, and
- Prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the MYAP actions

The Region will monitor and evaluate the MYAP to ensure compliance with the IASR, support of Regional strategies and to measure organizational change.

MYAP REVIEW AND UPDATE

York Region will review and update the plan linked to the Regional budget and business planning cycle. This will support long-term planning, proper distribution of resources and timely Council approval.

- **Community and Health Services Department** will lead the review and update

- **Departmental Leads** will provide a status update on the policy development phase for each MYAP action and provide costing information
- **ODA/AODA Staff Committee** members will complete an assessment tool that will be used to collect details on steps taken to implement the accessibility actions within their department
- **Community and Health Services Department** will develop the assessment tool and related templates and will analyse the information gathered. This information will be used as part of the review and update of the MYAP. The Department will report to Regional Council about the MYAP review and update

STATUS REPORT

York Region will develop and post annual status reports on the progress of actions included in the MYAP.

- **Community and Health Services Department** will lead the annual status report development
- **Departmental Leads** will provide the Community and Health Services Department with a status update on each action they lead, indicating whether the action is completed, underway or in a planning stage
- **Community and Health Services Department** will analyse the information submitted by Departmental Leads and will develop and post the annual status report. The Department will provide Regional Council with status updates
- Annual status reports will be posted on the Region’s public website www.york.ca and provided in accessible formats upon request

PROVINCIAL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

York Region will complete and submit the Province’s Accessibility Report. Ontario requires organizations to report AODA compliance on a scheduled basis. Reports are filed on-line using the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario’s Report Tool and will include reporting on actions in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- **Community and Health Services Department** will lead the Accessibility Report development and submission
- **Departmental Leads** will provide the Community and Health Services Department with updates on each action they lead, as required
- **Community and Health Services Department** will analyse the information submitted by Departmental Leads and will develop and submit the Accessibility Report to the Province. The Department will provide Regional Council with compliance reporting updates

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS

Many different groups are involved in York Region’s accessibility planning process. Each

has an important role to help the Region to meet its requirements under the AODA.

The following provides a brief description of the roles of the groups involved in the development of the MYAP.

DEPARTMENTAL LEADS

The Departmental Leads identified below are responsible for developing and implementing actions to meet the AODA requirements.

- Customer Service Regulation – Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (Corporate Initiatives)
- Transportation Standards – Transportation and Community Planning (Transit)
- Information and Communications Standards – Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (Corporate Communications)
- Built Environment Standards – Corporate Services (Property Services)
- Employment Standards – Corporate Services (Human Resources)
- York Regional Police – All obligated accessibility standards

Responsibilities

- Review and update the MYAP work plan
- Determine the cost to implement the requirements
- Coordinate and monitor the timely implementation of the **Policy Development Phase** of MYAP actions through review and update of the Region's by-laws, policies, programs, practices, services and facilities
- Identify and engage **technical subject experts** to advise on the implementation of the MYAP actions, when necessary
- Ensure that MYAP actions support corporate goals and strategies
- Develop communication plans to promote education and raise awareness
- Provide updates for the review and update of the MYAP and the annual status reports, and
- Contribute to compliance reporting requirements, as required

ODA/AODA STAFF COMMITTEE

The ODA/AODA Staff Committee members are responsible to review and advise on the Region's MYAP and to lead their department in implementing the AODA requirements.

Responsibilities

- Consider AODA requirements and compliance dates when developing departmental budgets and strategic plans

- Promote organizational change within each department by applying the actions taken by Departmental Leads to departmental processes/practices
- Monitor and report back during the MYAP review and update through the assessment tool on how departmental polices/practices supported the requirements within the plan, and
- Offer strategic policy advice and direction to the Community and Health Services Department and Departmental Leads on the development, implementation and monitoring of the MYAP

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT (CORPORATE AODA LEAD)

The Community and Health Services Department, together with Regional Departments, is responsible for the corporate coordination of the actions taken to implement the AODA requirements. This includes the development of the MYAP, policies, processes and monitoring and reporting

Responsibilities

- Lead the corporate actions taken to implement the AODA requirements in York Region and monitor and report compliance to the Province
- Collect departmental actions and draft the MYAP
- Conduct consultations with York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and people with disabilities on the development, review and update of the MYAP
- Obtain Regional Council approval of the MYAP
- Develop and implement an assessment tool to measure the effectiveness of the organization's implementation activities
- Support Departmental Leads and the ODA/AODA Staff Committee during the policy development and implementation phases
- Review and update the MYAP
- Collect information and draft annual status reports, and
- Report to Regional Council on the review and update of the MYAP and annual status updates

YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YRAAC)

- Advise Council on the Region's implementation of the accessibility standards under the AODA

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

- Provide strategic direction and advice on linkages to corporate goals and strategies

REGIONAL COUNCIL

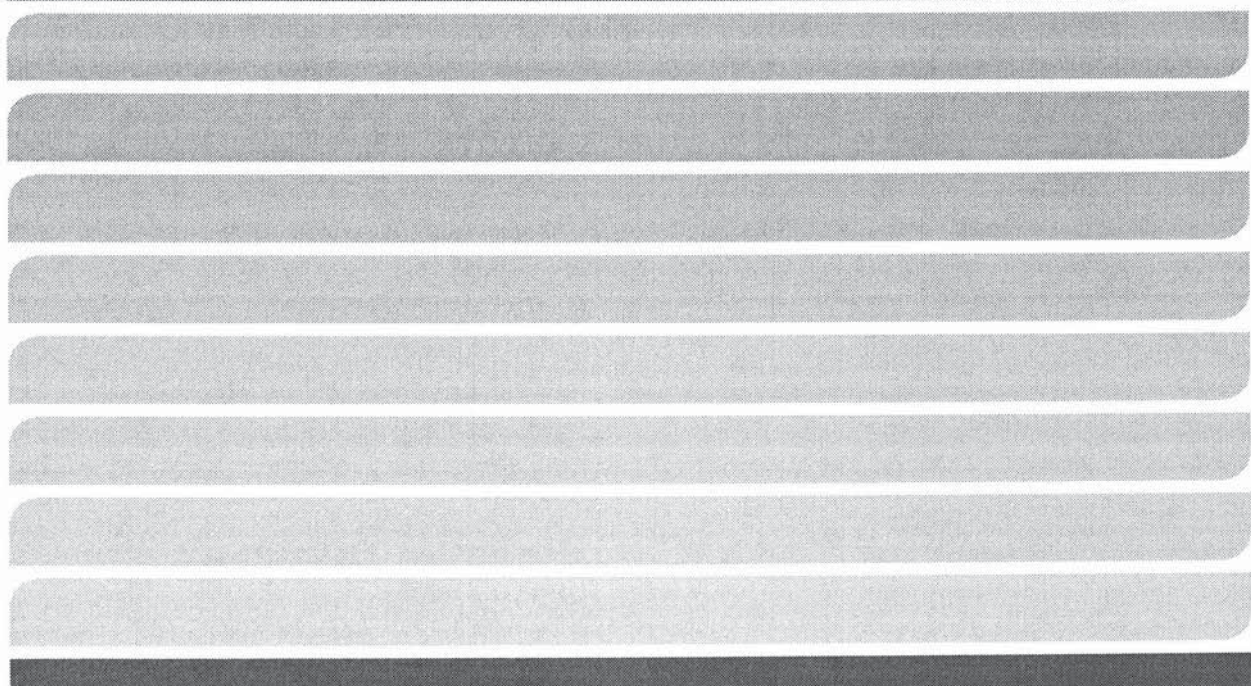
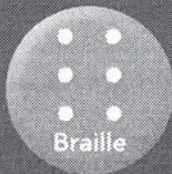
- Review and approve York Region's MYAP

CONCLUSION

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Policy Framework sets the policy direction for the development, monitoring, review and update of York Region's 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Framework is designed to meet the legislated accessibility planning requirements of both the ODA and AODA while supporting York Region's strategic direction and long-term strategies. Accessibility planning affirms the Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities so that all people may have equitable access to Regional programs, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.



York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

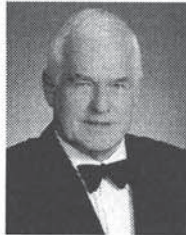




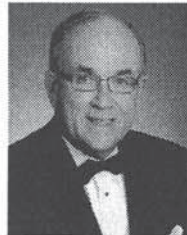
Mayor
Frank Scarpitti
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jack Heath
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jim Jones
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Gordon Landon
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Joe Li
City of Markham



Mayor
David Barrow
Town of Richmond Hill



Mayor
Maurizio Bevilacqua
City of Vaughan



Chairman and CEO
Bill Fisch



Regional Councillor
Vito Spatafora
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Gino Rosati
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Brenda Hogg
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Michael Di Biase
City of Vaughan



Mayor
Tony Van Bynen
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
Deb Schulte
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
John Taylor
Town of Newmarket



Mayor
Robert Grossi
Town of Georgina



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
Wayne Emmerson
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Message from York Regional Council

Accessibility gives people of all abilities the opportunity to participate fully in life. York Regional Council is dedicated to accessibility for everyone and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in The Regional Municipality of York.

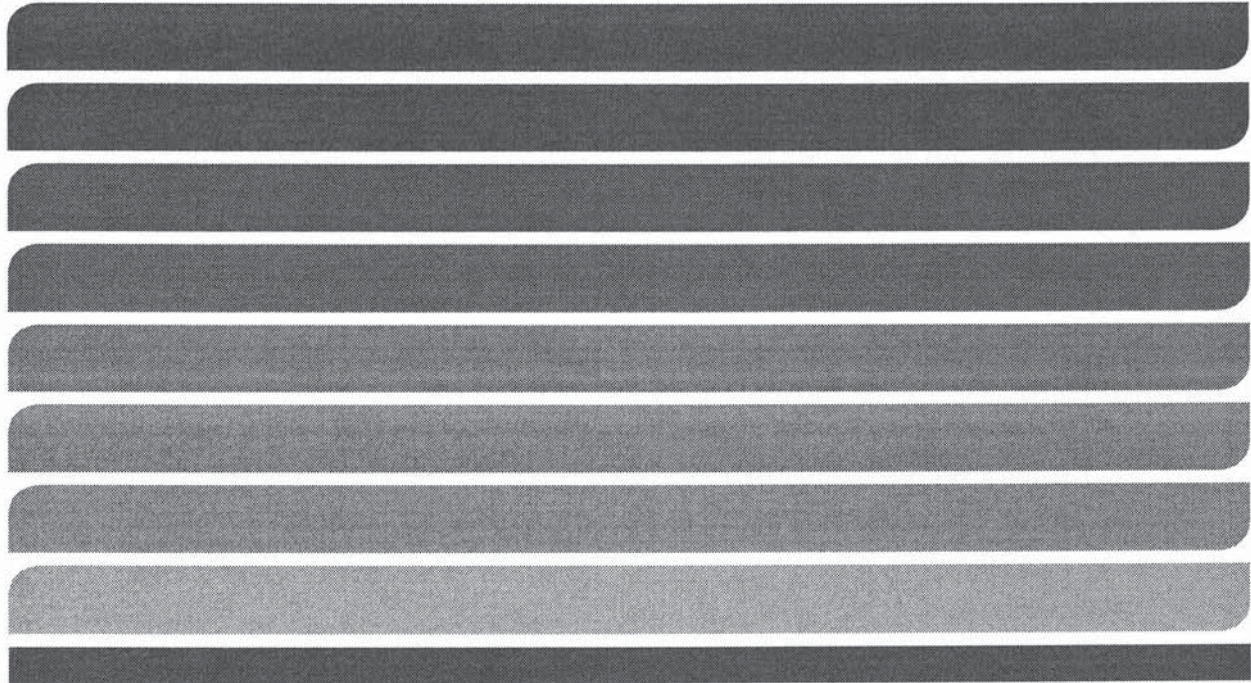
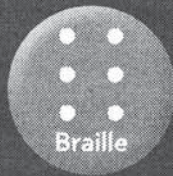
The *York Region 2013–2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* continues our efforts to improve our services, facilities and programs so they may be more accessible for everyone who lives, works and plays in York Region. This plan lays out our multi-year commitment to meet the Province of Ontario's accessibility standards in the years ahead.

In November 2012, we approved a new corporate *Accessibility Policy*. The policy endorses the importance of providing equitable access to Regional services and facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of our residents.

We will continue to work closely with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee to enhance and build upon the efforts of York Region and York Regional Police to foster an inclusive community for everyone to enjoy.



York Region 2013–2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



Message from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Fostering an inclusive and accessible York Region is an important undertaking. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee is proud of the role we play, on the community's behalf, to advise Regional Council and York Regional Police on the many accessibility activities that are underway.

The *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* is the road map that sets out how we will reach Ontario's requirements in the years ahead. Our committee has the unique task to review and offer feedback on how this work is done. Representing different backgrounds and types of disabilities, we will continue to make sure our many perspectives help improve accessibility for all people.

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee looks forward to supporting York Region and York Regional Police in achieving the goals of this plan and the vision of a community where everyone can participate fully in life.



York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Front Row: Cindy Gorlewski, Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler, Brian Lynch, Lilian Hulme-Smith, Steve Foglia (Vice-Chair)

Back Row: Regional Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch, Regional Councillor Vito Spatafora (Chair), Frank Maggisano, Leslie Bolt, Donna Hardaker, Linda Jones, Bob Creighton

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Accessible formats or communication supports for this document are available upon request. Please email AODA@york.ca or call **1-877-464-9675, ext. 2060**.

Background

The York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses and community life. By 2036, it is expected that one in five Ontarians will have a disability. For this reason, it is important that York Region continues planning for the future so that services and facilities are accessible and welcoming for everyone.

The *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* outlines strategies and actions approved by Regional Council to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services and facilities. The plan also details our strategy for meeting the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). York Region and York Regional Police will provide annual updates on the measures taken in improving accessibility and implementing Provincial requirements.

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 which combines urban centres and rural areas and is 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 transit, water and wastewater, solid waste management, public health, housing, social services, policing, emergency medical services (EMS) 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, about 15.5 per cent or 1.85 million people have a disability. This is one in seven people¹. That number is expected to grow significantly in the next 20 years as the population ages². The York Region population as of December 2012 was approximately 1.1 million people, including an estimate of almost 168,000 people with disabilities³. By 2031, the population of York Region will grow to 1.5 million people and an estimate of almost 279,000 residents will live with a disability⁴. As the York Region population continues to grow in size and age, this number will continue to grow. This growth shows how important the actions in the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* are to making our Region more accessible.

1 Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2008. Accessed March 19, 2013 from http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/index.aspx

2 Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 and Ministry of Finance, Ontario Population Projections, 2008 to 2036, Fall 2009

3 Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 and York Region Long Range Planning Branch, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Population Estimates and Projections, 2012

4 Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 and York Region Long Range Planning Branch, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Population Projections 2012

Ontario Laws Require Accessibility Plans

Ontario currently has two accessibility laws in place – the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

The first accessibility law to be passed was the ODA. The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in Ontario by identifying, removing and preventing barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to participate fully in society.

The ODA requires all municipalities in the province to prepare an annual accessibility plan that includes actions it will take to identify, prevent and address barriers within its programs, services and facilities. Municipalities also need to report on the progress of the actions in the previous accessibility plan.

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 over 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 built environment. These are called standards. The Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards were all combined to form 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. It must also be reviewed and updated at least every five years.

This document is the York Region multi-year accessibility plan for 2013 to 2021. It is designed to include the requirements of both accessibility laws.

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 (Built Environment)

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

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).

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 both the ODA and 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: A place where everyone can thrive

Looking 40 years ahead, the vision for York Region in 2051 is to create a place where everyone can thrive. In *Vision 2051*, the York Region population will enjoy an environment that fosters healthy living and is safe, accessible, inclusive and supportive. To support this goal, the Region will encourage a built environment, employment opportunities, transportation system, information and communications that are accessible to everyone. This goal is included in other long-term corporate strategies such as the *York Region Official Plan* and *Sustainability Strategy*.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan: Improve Social and Health Supports

The Region *Strategic Plan* is aligned with the four-year term of Regional Council. The *2011-2015 Strategic Plan* includes strategic direction to improve social and health supports. Accessibility planning supports this strategic direction by fostering social inclusion and addressing the needs of a growing and diverse community.

Accessibility Policy: Establishes York Region core accessibility principles

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

Statement of Commitment: Affirms the York Region commitment to accessibility

Accessibility planning also supports the York Region "statement of commitment" to accessibility that is part of the *Accessibility Policy*. This statement affirms the 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 ODA/AODA Staff Committee, Regional staff from across all departments and York Regional Police.

The ODA/AODA Staff Committee is a Regional committee made up of staff 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.

Did you know?

The **York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee** 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 www.york.ca.



York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)

Ontario 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 parts of the Region. Members can be on the committee for four years, which is the same length of term as Regional Council. At the end of the term, a new committee is formed from the community through an application process.

The YRAAC provides valuable feedback and advice to Council and staff. Members often participate in additional accessibility-related activities as well. Since the last accessibility plan the YRAAC has:

- Provided advice on the development of this accessibility plan
- Contributed to two editions of the Accessibility News newsletter for York Region staff with articles on accessibility planning and actions speaking louder than words
- Participated in the 2012 Annual Regional Emergency Planning Exercise, providing important insight into the needs of people with disabilities and special needs in an emergency
- Organized and hosted a networking breakfast meeting for municipal accessibility advisory committees in York Region to exchange information and share ideas
- Helped with York Region's National Access Awareness Week public celebration in June 2012. This event was produced in partnership with York Region, York Regional Police, local municipalities, hospitals and school boards
- Participated in the production of the Province of Ontario YouTube video that highlights the York Region accessible trail as a best practice model
- Advised Metrolinx on proposed plans for an integrated transit system at a community consultation meeting
- Reviewed and provided feedback on the Region draft accessibility design guidelines for the Built Environment
- Participated in the One Voice Network Employability Marketplace that brought together people with disabilities and employers
- Advised on the street furniture prototypes of the York Region Transit Coordinated Street Project



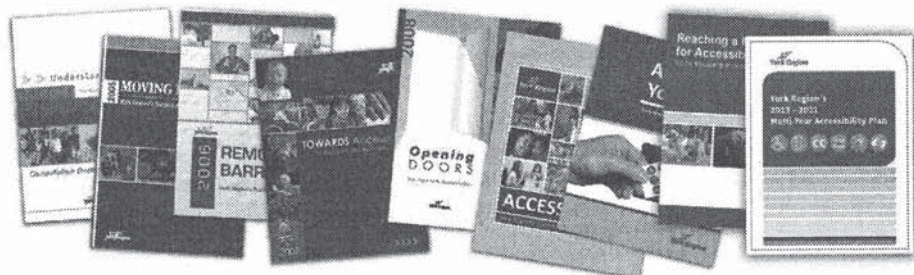
Update on the 2011/2012 Accessibility Plan Actions

The York Region 2011/2012 Accessibility Plan, *Reaching a New Standard for Accessibility*, had 163 actions that described how departments and York Regional Police would work together to improve accessibility. It is important to keep track of these actions and make sure that they are finished while developing this new plan. Of the 163 actions, 131 are complete, 29 underway and three are planned. The annual status report helps monitor and report on the completion of all activities.

Sixty-five of the actions in the 2011/2012 Accessibility Plan were aimed at meeting the AODA compliance requirements for 2011, 2012 and 2013. Ten of the actions were added after the plan was approved in 2012, showing how accessibility has become a way of doing business at the Region.

Some of the new actions that were added to the 2011/2012 Accessibility Plan include:

- Creating a new accessible pathway at the Community Safety Village to increase access to facilities and services for children with disabilities
- Improving accessible parking features at the Maple Health Centre to increase access and safety for residents and family members
- Adding training requirements to consultant agreements to make sure suppliers are compliant with the AODA
- Upgrading bathrooms in select social housing buildings to provide greater independence and safety for residents
- Offering talking and/or picture boards to Maple Health Centre residents who do not use words to communicate to help them communicate with visitors and staff
- Upgrading walkways at three social housing buildings to increase safety
- Installing information boards for residents at the Maple Health Centre to increase their access to facility information



Did you know?

The **Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation** was the first standard under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* to become law. York Region complies with the regulation and remains committed to offering excellent accessible customer service to our customers with disabilities.

Did you know?

The **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)** under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* became law in 2011 with staggered compliance dates to 2021. Its purpose is to make the employment, information and communications, public spaces and transportation operations of organizations more accessible for people with disabilities.

Highlights of Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

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

- York Region and York Regional Police received the Excellence Canada – Ontario Accessibility Award from People Access, which recognizes excellence in implementing the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation of the AODA
- Hosted another successful National Access Awareness Week celebration in partnership with York Regional Police, local municipalities, school boards and hospitals
- Highlighted in the Province of Ontario YouTube video that features the York Regional Forest accessible trail as a best practice model
- Launched the myRide Travel Training support program that prepares people to make safe, independent journeys using YRT/Viva.

Including accessibility in the everyday work the Region does has become the way of doing business. With the *2013-2021 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.

AODA Progress to Date

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 built environment, with staggered compliance dates to 2021.

The following outlines the AODA requirements by the year achieved:

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)

2011

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

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 YRT/Viva services

2013

- Established a corporate *Accessibility Policy* to guide the work we do to meet the requirements of the regulation
- 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

Work towards completing the AODA requirements has not ended with the 2013 requirements. The following outlines the AODA requirements that have been achieved before the required compliance date:

2014

- Incorporated accessibility training into the training program for Mobility Plus and YRT/Viva service providers
- Offer same day booking (where available) on Mobility Plus without restrictions on the number of trips an eligible person may request (ongoing)
- Adhere to an eligibility application process for a person to be eligible for specialized transportation services (ongoing)

2017

- Provide on-board audio announcements on all YRT and Viva vehicles (ongoing)
- Implemented three categories for a person to be eligible for specialized transportation services: unconditional, temporary and conditional (ongoing)


Did you know?

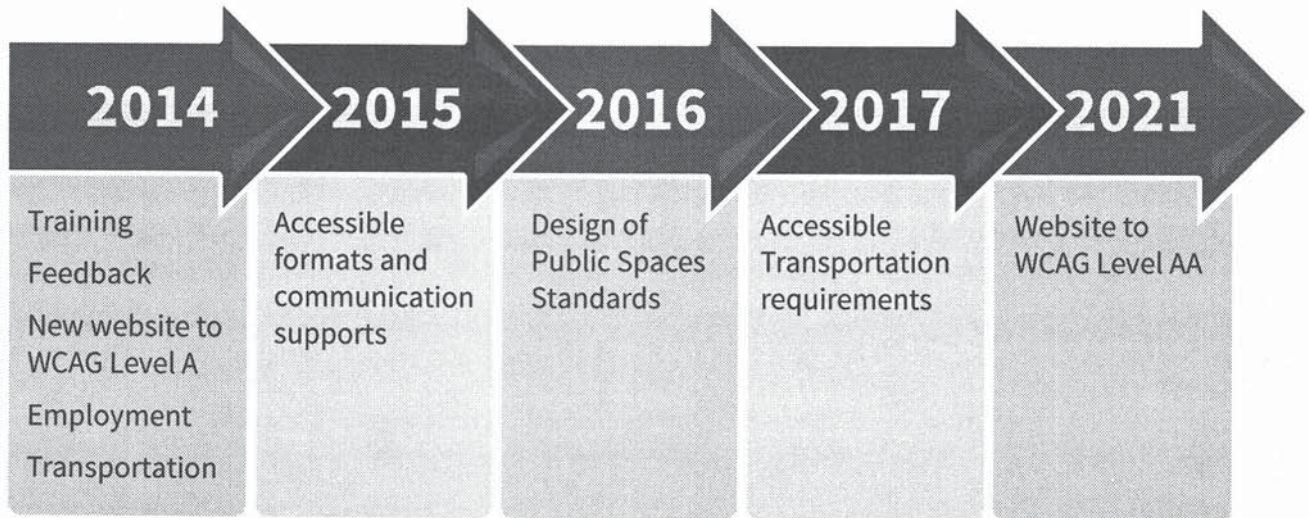
Not all disabilities can be seen. **Invisible disabilities** are disabilities that are not obvious to the onlooker, but can limit a person's daily activities. They can include chronic illnesses or pain and conditions such as mental illness, learning differences, hearing or vision disabilities. Accessibility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

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.

AODA Compliance Timeline – 2013-2021

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 requirements from the Province to make an accessible Ontario.



The York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Development

The *York Region 2013-2021 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 2013 to 2021.

The overall accessibility process is governed by the *Region Accessibility Planning Policy Framework*. This Council-endorsed framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of the many groups involved in developing the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*.

The AODA requires that the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* is developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. York Region and York Regional Police collected feedback about the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility 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. A similar process will be used when the plan is reviewed and updated.

The Transportation and Community Planning Department 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 the plan.

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

The actions of the *York Region 2013-2021 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
- **Built Environment** – Make regional facilities and outside spaces more accessible

These goals correspond to the standards included in the AODA and represent the Region 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 the annual status report.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The AODA requires York Region and York Regional Police to review and update the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* at least every five years. An annual status report must also be prepared on the progress of measures taken to implement the actions in the plan.

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.

Additional evaluation and reporting efforts include:

- Annual review of the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and preparation of a status report
- Annual report prepared for the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and Regional Council to identify progress made towards the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* implementation. This will be posted on the Region website and available in accessible formats or with communication supports upon request
- Accessibility (compliance) reports submitted as required to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario which regulates compliance for all Ontario organizations
- Assessment tool developed to measure the effectiveness of the organization's implementation activities

York Region 2013–2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Work Plan

York Region and York Regional Police have developed work plans and strategies to meet the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* of the AODA. 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.

General

Requirement	Action
January 1, 2014	
Training on the IASR and Human Rights Code	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, deliver and monitor training on the IASR and Human Rights Code for all employees, volunteers and suppliers of goods, services and facilities on behalf of York Region and York Regional Police. A process to make sure contractors receive the required training will also be developed • Update existing training courses to include procedures to meet the requirements of the IASR, where appropriate

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 attitude, technology and policies. Accessibility planning helps prevent, identify and remove those barriers.



Information and Communications

Requirement	Action
January 1, 2014	
Accessible feedback process	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current feedback processes to make sure that the way people offer feedback about programs and services is accessible, with accessible formats or communication supports available upon request • Include opportunities for improvement in future customer service initiatives • Inform staff and the public about the availability of accessible feedback processes
January 1, 2014	
Accessible websites and web content: New websites and web content to WCAG 2.0 Level A	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy to ensure new websites created after January 1, 2014 and web content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A* • Establish website accessibility standards for York Region staff that reflect the requirements of the IASR • Offer accessibility training for staff involved in website development • Inform staff about the accessibility standards and features on the websites
January 1, 2015	
Accessible formats and communication supports	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish corporate standards to provide accessible formats of information or communications supports, upon request • Develop guidelines to help staff achieve these corporate accessible information standards • Inform staff and the public about the availability of information in accessible formats or with communication supports, upon request
January 1, 2021	
Accessible websites and web content: All websites and web content to WCAG 2.0 Level AA	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

*World Wide Web Consortium 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

Employment

Requirement	Action
January 1, 2014	
Accessible employment practices	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, document and monitor employment policies and processes where required to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accommodations in the recruitment, assessment and selection process – Employee supports and accommodation plans – Return-to-work processes with related accommodation plans – Accommodations in the performance management, career development, advancement and redeployment processes • Inform staff and the public about employment policies that provide supports to persons with disabilities

Transportation

Requirement	Action
July 1, 2013	
Service disruptions	<p>York Region will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an internal operating procedure to make available alternate accessible arrangements to transfer people with disabilities to their route destination using conventional transit in the event of a service disruption
January 1, 2014	
Fares for support persons	<p>York Region will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the fare policy to formally waive fare charges for a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability, where the person with a disability needs a support person
January 1, 2017	
Pre-boarding announcements	<p>York Region will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement electronic pre-board announcements on all YRT and Viva vehicles

The following accessibility performance measures are required to be included in the Transportation specific section of the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*:

<p>Process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process includes, but is not limited to, the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Customer feedback/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 – 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
<p>Demographic and ridership projections for specialized transportation services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YRT undertakes a demand analysis for Mobility Plus as part of the five-year service plan. The current five-year service plan will be updated in 2014. The five-year service plan for Mobility Plus includes ridership projection as well as measures to reduce waiting times
<p>Steps to reduce waiting times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>Accessibility equipment failures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>Development of accessible design criteria to be considered in the construction, renovation or replacement of bus stops and shelters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YRT/Viva ensures that there is a staff representative at every York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. YRT/Viva continues to provide updates and solicit feedback on transit-related matters, including the design of bus stops and facilities, when required • YRT/Viva continues to upgrade stops and terminals using accessible design criteria to increase accessibility

Did you know?

Each of the **accessibility actions** in the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* is a requirement of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*. In addition to achieving these actions, 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 an annual status report.

Built Environment

Requirement	Action
January 1, 2016	
Accessible public spaces	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Update procurement procedures and guidelines, where needed, to reflect the requirements for public spaces • Inform staff about the public spaces requirements

The following maintenance procedures are required to be included in the Built Environment specific section of the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*:

Maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update procedures for the preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements required in the Design of Public Spaces Standards • Review and update procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when these accessible elements are not working
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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.

Creating an Accessible York Region

Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Accessibility means giving people of all abilities the opportunity to participate fully in everyday life. Creating communities where every person who lives or visits can participate fully 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 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and accessibility matters in general. To request a copy of the plan in another accessible format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

Email: AODA@york.ca
Mail: The Regional Municipality of York
 17250 Yonge Street
 Community and Health Services
 Attention: ODA/AODA Program Unit
 Newmarket ON L3Y 6Z1
Telephone: 1-877-464-9675, ext. 2060
TTY: TTY (for the hearing impaired) 905-762-0401
Fax: 905-895-6616

To view this plan online visit www.york.ca

“How may I best help you?”



The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) (AODA)
 sets accessibility standards for customer service, information and
 communications, employment, transportation and the built environment



York Region
Community and Health Services

www.york.ca

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Overall Comments and Feedback	Response (if applicable)
<p>Background: The <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</i> (AODA) requires the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to be developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. York Region and York Regional Police collected feedback about the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan from people with disabilities, the community and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. This was accomplished through public meetings, focus groups, social media and an online survey conducted during the Plan’s development phase. Comments and feedback received during the consultation period were documented and considered in the development of the final plan. This chart summarizes feedback that was received.</p> <p>Feedback is organized under two headings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback about actions in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan by AODA standard 2. Responses to five common questions that participants were asked 	
1. Feedback about Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Actions by AODA Standard	
General Standards	
None received.	
Information and Communications Standards	
Website: Does the website strategy include applications for Tablet and Smart Phones?	Region’s new portal (with planned launch in 2013) will have full functionality with Tablets and Smart Phones. However, the devices must also have accessibility features and that is up to manufacturers.
How will people know that accessible formats are available upon request?	York Region has a long-standing practice of providing accessible information and communication supports upon request. As required by the AODA, the Region’s emergency and public safety information includes contact information for people to request accessible formats, with a process and supports in place for staff to respond. As of 2015, this expands to all communication materials that the Region produces. A communication strategy will promote this availability to the public.

Employment Standards	
Will there be some sort of audit mechanism to determine if employment processes are effective?	Though not legislated, York Region will develop an assessment tool that Regional departments will use on a scheduled basis to assess progress with the actions of the MYAP and requirements of the AODA. This review will be used to develop an annual compliance report to Council and status report for posting on the website.
Will the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee have an opportunity to review the results of any reviews of the employment actions in the MYAP?	The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee has the role to advise Council on implementing the requirements of the AODA. Reviews of progress made to achieve all actions in the MYAP will be presented to the Committee, including the employment actions.
Transportation Standards	
Do transportation service disruptions include emergency-related disruptions in service?	Transportation service disruptions do not include emergency-related disruptions in service. In an emergency, municipal emergency plans are mobilized and take precedence over routine operations.
In addition to audio, will exterior pre-boarding announcements of route, direction, destination or next major stop be posted visually as well, to assist passengers with a hearing disability?	Exterior pre-boarding announcements will be audio only, however the route is posted visually on the front and side exteriors of the vehicle.
Built Environment Standards	
Do the requirements for the design of public spaces apply to the common/public spaces in private sector properties too?	The Design of Public Spaces Standards apply to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped in both the public and private sector, with different compliance dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Ontario – 2015 • Designated Public Sector Organizations – 2017 • Large Organizations – 2017 • Small Organizations (less than 50 employees) – 2018
2. Answers to five common questions that participants were asked	
Question #1: Is the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan easy to read and follow?	
General consensus that the plain language of the MYAP is easy to read and understand. It gives a good overview for people who are not familiar with accessibility planning.	

Overall Comments and Feedback	Response (if applicable)
Enhance accessibility for people with intellectual disabilities with the use of plain language, bold headings, more spacing and graphics. Include an executive summary and boxes of key information throughout to assist comprehension.	Accessibility features to enhance comprehension for people with intellectual disabilities will be included in the final version of the MYAP.
The font on the graphic that presents the 2013-2021 requirements of the AODA is small and may be difficult for people with a vision disability to read.	The final version of the MYAP will include graphics with larger fonts for readability. The consultation version of the document was text-only and did not include final graphics or photos.
For the on-line posting of MYAP, consider making the table of contents interactive to make the document easier to navigate and have text versions of the tables as an alt tag.	These accessibility features will be incorporated in the on-line posting of the MYAP.
To make information easy for people with different abilities to access, consider having quick summaries of each key grouping of accessibility actions, posted separate from the MYAP document itself. For example, “How is transportation becoming accessible?” with a highlight of actions, at-a-glance.	This will be considered in the on-line posting of the MYAP.
Question #2: Does the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan provide the information you want to know?	
It is important to clarify that all types of disabilities are addressed in the MYAP, particularly invisible disabilities which many people are unaware of.	The MYAP is founded on the AODA definition of disability which includes all types of disabilities. The definition will be highlighted as an information box in the MYAP.
The MYAP does not include specific details about how each action will be achieved.	The MYAP is designed to present actions to 2021 at a broad level to allow for the development of specific practices and procedures to achieve the action over time. Behind each action is a detailed work plan to make the action operational. Annual compliance and status reports will report on progress and implementation activities.
Question #3: Are we moving in the right direction to meet the legislated requirements to make services more accessible?	
Clarify the public areas that the Design of Public Spaces applies to and what the Region is required to do.	The MYAP will highlight details about the Design of Public Spaces Standards.
What is the recourse for people who feel that their accessibility needs have not been met?	York Region is committed to offering accessible customer service. Feedback and response processes are in place to ensure customers receive the service they need. Individuals cannot file accessibility complaints under the AODA, though non-compliant organizations may be fined by the Province. Individual complaints can be filed with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

Question #4: What do you see as being the most important when it comes to accessibility and why?

<p>Education and awareness about different types of disabilities and the supports that are available will increase access to programs and services; education is needed to help people understand that accessibility is much more than ramps and electric door openers.</p>	<p>Comments will support future public awareness and accessibility initiatives.</p>
<p>We will all experience accessibility issues at some point in our lives. Accessibility is about creating equity.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Accessible transportation and access to our community are key to ensuring people with disabilities have the ability to get around as others do.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Access to accessible on-line information and service components helps those who have difficulty leaving home access programs and services. This includes on-line scheduling of appointments, interactive forms and Facebook groups for information sharing.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Mental illness and anxiety disabilities can prohibit people from accessing the services they need. Small changes that reduce anxiety can result in great improvements in a person’s quality of life. Communication of the accessibility services available would help accomplish this.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Information needs to be developed with the needs of different users in mind. Plain language and images help people with intellectual disabilities better understand the message.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

Question #5: Are there any actions missing in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan?

<p>How will people be informed about the accessibility actions of the MYAP?</p>	<p>A communication strategy will inform the public and Regional staff about the accessibility actions of the MYAP. This strategy will include social media, events, website and collaboration with community partners.</p>
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Other comments

<p>Are people with disabilities consulted in the design of programs and services that are designed to meet their accessibility needs?</p>	<p>The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee has the role to advise Council on implementing the requirements of the AODA. It is legislated that the majority of members be people with disabilities. This Committee is consulted on accessibility activities across all departments and York Regional Police. Focus groups with the disability community are also held, as appropriate, and the public can offer feedback at AODA@york.ca.</p>
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