



Creating an Accessible York Region

York Region Accessibility Status Report

2014

An update on actions by York Region, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities and implement the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*

2014 York Region Accessibility Status Report

Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses and community life. This *Accessibility Status Report* is the annual update of the measures taken in improving accessibility and implementing the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) by the Regional Municipality of York, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board.

This report highlights actions to comply with the AODA requirements that became law on January 1, 2014. It builds on the *2013 Accessibility Status Report* that outlined actions to comply with the requirements from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2013.

The report also provides updates on the implementation of the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*. The plan details our strategy for meeting the requirements of Ontario's accessibility legislation. It also outlines strategies and actions approved by York Regional Council to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services and facilities.



Many thanks to the 2010-2014 York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) for advising on these and other compliance activities. The 2014-2018 YRAAC will build on this strong foundation going forward.

This committee advises Regional Council, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board 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.

AODA Compliance Timeline

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (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. This timeline shows the AODA requirements, including those that are completed and now part of ongoing, day-to-day operations.

2010-2013 Requirements Completed

- ✓ Accessible customer service
- ✓ Accessibility policies
- ✓ Accessible purchases
- ✓ Accessible information
- ✓ Emergency response plans for employees
- ✓ Transportation

NEW!

2014 Requirements Completed

- ✓ Training
- ✓ Accessible feedback
- ✓ New websites to WCAG Level A*
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Transportation

Future Requirements

2015

Accessible formats and communication supports

Barrier free requirements within Ontario's *Building Code*

2016

Design of Public Spaces Standards

2017

Accessible transportation requirements

2021

Website to WCAG Level AA*

*Note: World Wide Consortium Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities, with Level AA building on the requirements of Level A.

2014 Compliance Actions Completed

The following section highlights actions by York Region, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board to comply with the requirements that became law on January 1, 2014. They are organized under the accessibility standards of the AODA.

General

Training of employees, volunteers and contractors

Employees, volunteers and contractors are trained on the requirements of the AODA's *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* and Ontario's *Human Rights Code* as it relates to people with disabilities.



Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Enhancing access to emergency services for members of the deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired community, the York Regional Police *text-to-911* service allows registered participants to communicate directly with a 911 call taker using text messaging.

AccessYork

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Making Regional services more accessible and user-friendly, the new **Access York** corporate contact centre offers “no wrong door” access to Regional services.



Information and Communications

Accessible feedback processes

Processes for receiving and responding to feedback continue to be accessible to people with disabilities by providing accessible formats or communication supports upon request.

Accessible websites and web content

The redesigned York Region website meets and exceeds World Wide Web Consortium Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A. York Region, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board continue to work towards meeting Level AA in advance of the 2021 AODA deadline.

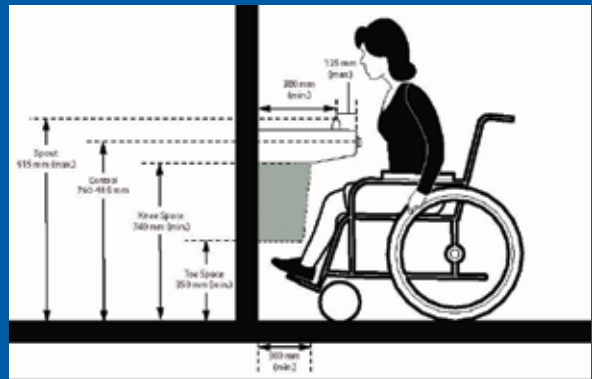


Figure 20: Drinking Fountain Design and Layout - Elevation View

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Expanding on legislated requirements, the *Building and Facilities Design Standards and Guidelines* ensures consistent accessibility features are incorporated in all future Region building projects.

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Inspiring best practices for accessible web design, York Region's web designers attended the *Registered Graphic Designers Web Design Accessibility Conference* to create websites that are accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities.



Employment

Recruitment (general)

Employees and the public are notified about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process.

Recruitment, assessment or selection process

Job applicants who are invited for an interview are notified that accommodations are available upon request and are consulted to identify the supports they may need in the interview.

Notice to successful applicants

When making offers of employment, successful applicants are notified of Region policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Informing employees of supports

Employees are informed of the accommodation supports that are available to Region employees with disabilities throughout the employment cycle.

Accessible formats and communication supports for employees

Accessible formats or communication supports are provided upon request, with job-related requests included in an employee's individual accommodation plan.



To request a copy of the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* or the *2013 Accessibility Status Report*, see the contact information on page 10 of this report.



Documented individual accommodation plans

Building on employment obligations already honoured under Ontario's *Human Rights Code*, a comprehensive written process guides the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

Return to work process

A documented return to work process is in place for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations.

Performance management

Resources are available to support managers through the performance appraisal process to ensure employees with disabilities have the supports they need to do their job.

Career development and advancement

A comprehensive professional development program for employees takes into account different learning styles and needs, and tailors programs to meet the needs addressed in individual accommodation plans.

Redeployment

If York Region employees with a disability are reassigned as an alternative to layoff, their accessibility needs and accommodation plans are reviewed and adjusted, and will follow them to their new position.

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2014!

Delivering on its commitment to offer exceptional and accessible rapid transit, the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation *VivaNext* project opened two more sections of dedicated rapidway with fully accessible centre median stations.



Transportation*

Accessibility training

Accessibility training is incorporated into the training program for YRT/Viva and Mobility Plus service providers, with annual refresher training for all operators.

Fares for support persons

YRT/Viva and Mobility Plus do not charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability. Support Persons Assistance Cards are also accepted from other transit agencies.

Eligibility application process

The Mobility Plus eligibility application process includes: temporary eligibility for applicants if needed, no application fee, information in accessible formats upon request, and an independent appeal process.

Emergency or compassionate grounds

Mobility Plus provides temporary specialized transportation services where the services are required because of an emergency or on compassionate grounds.

Booking

Mobility Plus accepts same-day bookings and provides same-day service based on availability.

Trip restrictions

Mobility Plus registrants can book any number of trips within the hours of service provided by YRT/Viva.

*Note: York Region Transit (YRT)/Viva offers conventional public transportation services and Mobility Plus offers specialized transit for people with disabilities.

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!



Addressing the Region's future road, transit and active transportation mobility needs, updates to the *Transportation Master Plan* encouraged input from the broader community through a user-friendly, interactive online tool, email and community open houses.

This is “living legislation”

York Region, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board continue to implement the requirements of the AODA and the actions outlined in the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*. Compliance does not stop with completing the requirements of the AODA by the required date. These compliance activities are now part of ongoing, daily operations.

What is next? AODA requirements for 2015 relate to providing accessible formats and communication supports for our information materials upon request. An update on actions to achieve compliance with these requirements will be posted in the *2015 Accessibility Status Report*.

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Placing a spotlight on mental illness, the *National Access Awareness Week* series of live webinars raised awareness about mental illness disabilities and the supports that are available in the workplace and community.

Creating an accessible York Region

York Region, York Regional Police and York Regional Police Services Board are committed to creating programs, services and facilities that people of all abilities can access. Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Creating communities where every person who lives, works or visits can participate fully makes good sense for all of us.



The poster for National Access Awareness Week features a yellow background with a blue border. At the top left is the York Region logo and the 'Shining Light' logo. The main title is 'National Access Awareness Week' in large, bold letters, followed by the subtitle 'Shines a Light on Mental Illness' and the dates 'JUNE 1 to 7, 2014'. The central text invites people to join the conversation and register for live lunchtime webinars. A 'Your choice!' section lists three options: attending a 'home base' session, logging in independently, or organizing a satellite group session. A purple call-to-action box says 'Visit MyPortal for details and to register!'. Five circular callouts list the webinar topics: 'Mental Health Basics' (Monday, June 2), 'Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces' (Tuesday, June 3), 'Supporting Mental Health Across the Lifespan' (Wednesday, June 4), 'Problem Solving: Handling Difficult Situations' (Thursday, June 5), and 'Resilient Minds in Tough Times' (Friday, June 6). Contact information for questions is provided at the bottom left. At the bottom right, there is a quote: 'National Access Awareness Week brings people together to create the world that is being done by wide programs and services that are accessible for people with disabilities.' and the York Region Community and Health Services logo and website.

Let us know what you think

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the *2014 York Region Accessibility Status Report*, the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and accessibility matters in general. To request a copy of the plans or status reports 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: Accessibility Unit
Newmarket ON L3Y 6Z1
Telephone: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72060
TTY: 905-762-0401 (for the hearing impaired)
Fax: 905-895-6616

All York Region Accessibility Status Reports and the *York Region 2013-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* are available online at York.ca/accessibilityplanning

Doing more to create accessible communities in 2014!

Ensuring greater access to information for all users, new training resources for Region employees now provide online and in-class training on **Creating Accessible Documents in Microsoft Word**.



York Region's Statement of Organizational Commitment provides a foundation to creating an accessible York Region: "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." (Source: Accessibility Policy)



Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2014!

Increasing its network of accessible trails, York Region opened the North Tract accessible trail using the *Accessibility Design Guidelines for York Regional Forest Trails* which meets or exceeds legislated requirements for the design of public spaces.



York Region
Community and Health Services

www.york.ca

