

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Transportation Services

DATE: April 12, 2010

RE: **York Regional Forest Trail Accessibility Update**

Staff and partners have been advancing the consideration of the accessibility of trails for persons with disabilities in the York Regional Forest. In February 2009, the Accessibility Advisory Committee requested that staff assess providing one or two fully accessible trails in the York Regional Forest.

In August 2009, a York Regional Forest Trails Accessibility Sub-committee was formed with members from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the York Regional Forest Advisory Team, a trails accessibility consultant and Regional staff (Natural Heritage and Forestry, and Community and Health Services) to provide detailed input into the assessment process. This Sub-committee met in August 2009 to discuss the project and participated in a field tour in October 2009. The field tour included visits to an existing accessible trail on the Oak Ridges Trail and a candidate site for an accessible trail in the York Regional Forest. The comments and suggestions received were integral to the selection of a preferred accessible trail location and the detailed assessment of the trail.

Based on the input received from the Sub-committee, staff identified the Hollidge Tract as the preferred location for a fully accessible trail. Using the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (“AODA”) draft Built Environment Standard and the comments from the Sub-committee, staff with the assistance of an accessibility consultant completed a detailed assessment of the proposed trail. The AODA draft Built Environment Standard was used as the standard for a fully accessible trail.

The results of this assessment were used to develop five options for providing enhancements to trail accessibility (*Table 1*).

Table 1
Summary of Trail Accessibility Improvement Options

Option #	Enhancements	Cost
1	None	0
2	Accessibility signage	\$10,000
3	Signage and two accessible parking spaces	\$17,000
4	Signage, parking, some trail improvements	\$55,000
5	Signage, parking and a fully accessible trail	\$85,000

These options will be presented to Regional Council for consideration in May 2010. Staff are recommending that Regional Council endorse Option Five, a one-kilometre fully accessible trail at the Hollidge Tract. Options Two, Three and Four provide a variety of improvements to accessibility, however there will still be barriers to persons with disabilities. Option Five provides the most improvement in accessibility and will meet the standard for a fully accessible trail.

To ensure that persons with disabilities are aware of the accessible trail, the Region will undertake marketing of the trail through a variety of initiatives, including website updates and Regional Forest publications.

The input and support received from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the York Regional Forest Trails Accessibility Sub-committee has played a key role in the development and success of this initiative.

Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Transportation Services

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Copy to: Lois Davies, Program Manager, AODA/ODA, Community and Health Services Department