

YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YRAAC)
Summary of Feedback: DRAFT 2007 Departmental Accessibility Plans

Questions, Comments or Suggestions	Staff Recommendation
General Feedback	
Can we track the numbers/percentages of people we have reached by making our programs, services and facilities accessible?	Currently, the actual numbers of people reached is not tracked but general statistics are kept on the number of people that have a disability in York Region. The types of disabilities and barrier types that our accessibility planning initiatives addresses are tracked. The initiatives are tracked by themes and the progress recorded. We survey to assess the importance of disability issues in York Region. This information is reported in our accessibility plans.
Can we assign measurable numbers in the future to measure our success?	Yes. Where feasible, the Region's plans will quantify activities related to accessibility planning initiatives.
Can the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) give feedback as a committee to the province regarding the customer service standards, rather than as individuals?	This is a provincial process, but the more comments the better. YRAAC members were encouraged to submit their individual feedback directly to the Province by the December 20, 2006 deadline.
The plan should identify the percent of staff that have attended inclusivity training.	Approximately 14%, or 387, regional staff have attended this training. The plan will be amended to reflect this figure.
What have the Region's accessibility plans cost to date?	In total, from 2004 – 2006 the Region spent approximately 13.7M to make York Region more accessible. The cost of each of the Region's plans were: 1) Understanding Barriers (2004) 1.6M; 2) Moving Forward (2005) 1.1M; and 3) Removing Barriers (2006) 11.0M. Approximately 81% or 11.1M of the costs are linked to service improvements for York Region Transit including the purchase of new buses, 7% or \$0.9M for Long Term Care and Supportive Housing, and 12% or 1.6M for Renovations and other types of enhancements.

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Community Services and Housing Department	
What are the opening dates for Leeder Place?	The project was delayed due to an approval issue and we hope to open by summer 2007.
How will Community Services and Housing improve communications with Ontario Works clients?	Communication will be improved through focus groups and talking to clients about their service needs. We felt we needed to ask more questions, and be more responsive to the needs of the clients.
What is the waiting period for someone applying for housing?	The waiting list varies geographically, e.g. seniors housing is 2-5 years minimum across the region. Some buildings have a higher demand. For families in the south, the waiting list is eight years plus; in the north it is 18 months to 2 ½ years depending on many factors. Singles are the most difficult group because we have little stock for single-person housing. The wait list for singles is 10 years plus.
If a person applied for housing two years ago, can they request to find out where they are on the wait list?	A person can request to find out where they are located on the housing wait list, however they will only be told a range of where they are on the waiting list rather than their exact position. This is due to the fact that waiting lists can shift often to accommodate priority situations, such as is given to victims of violence. Prior to 2001, waiting lists were managed separately by the property managers. After 2001, the Region was required to create a common waiting list structure. Since the Region assumed this responsibility, the numbers on the waitlist have increased corresponding with the rapid growth of the Region. In other words, those who applied in the past had a shorter wait period because there less people applying for housing. Currently the Region receives over 2000 applications a year and the Region provides housing for approximately 5000 people.

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Community Services and Housing Department	
What kinds of features are included in the units designated for persons with hearing loss in Tom Taylor Place?	The Region has worked in partnership with Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) in the planning and design of Tom Taylor Place. Together with the Canadian Hearing Society the Region has identified ways to create an environment supportive of their clients. The building will have physical features (e.g. strobe light alarms, communication system) as suggested by CHS. By incorporating these enhancements we hope to create a cohesive community for persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. This will be achieved by designating 5 -7 units together in a mini-community. Clients can be referred through CHS and CHS can continue to support them.
Who will get the three modified units? Are they modified for physical or visual impairments?	Units must go to those who require modifications. Under the Ontario Building Code a percentage of units must be barrier free, and under the Rent Subsidy Act they must be given to someone who requires these types of modifications. In terms of accommodations for persons who are blind or have low vision, we have not done anything in this area yet. It would be helpful to sit down with Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and discuss these types of needs.
Is Tom Taylor Place for families and singles?	It will house both singles and families. The largest unit is two bedrooms.
Assuming that appliances are provided at Tom Taylor Place, will work be done with CNIB to help ensure that there are accessible appliances for units with persons who are blind or have low vision? It was also suggested that when painting these units, to consider using contrasting colours for persons with low vision.	The plan will be amended to include partnering with the CNIB on further modifications for persons who are blind or have low vision.

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Community Services and Housing Department	
One of the Barrier Identification initiatives talks about partnering with YRT to have selected clients participate in the YRT Travel Training Program. What kind of clients are you referring to and how will the partnership benefit them?	We are referring to any of our clients who would qualify for Mobility Plus services but may be able to use conventional bus services to access services provided by Community Services and Housing Department.
Has any consideration been given to private/public partnerships between companies that make accessibility devices and the Region. This would provide those businesses with advertising opportunities and would allow the region to equip more units.	No consideration has been given to private/public partnerships at this point. Usually, the requirements are specified through the architect and then are built into the plan. This suggestion for partnership will be considered.
Is the mental health/learning disability training mentioned in your plan the same training being given to Ontario Works staff?	Yes, and it will continue.
Corporate Communications	
Does the Content Management Software (CMS) address issues with PDF files?	No. CMS is an internal piece of software used for posting information to the Regional web site. It has no capacity to address issues with PDF files.
Will Acrobat 7 be used Region wide?	Not at this time.
Will the Region look at existing documents that are currently on the Region's website?	We will identify a specific year to go back to, and see how many hits the website is receiving for that particular year. For example, if there are a number of hits from 2004 we will review all documents that date back to 2004.
Is it possible to track the number of hits to the Region's intranet and internet?	Yes. Both intranet and internet can be tracked.
Change fourth line in mandate to read "Internet and Intranet" because your highlights focus on both.	Plan will be amended so that the mandate will include "Internet and Intranet".
Corporate Services	
What are the costs of installing and maintaining automatic faucets and automatic flush toilets? The costs to maintain these can be very high. Are staff concerned about the costs? If so, maybe the Region should only consider installing in fewer washrooms?	Staff will investigate the reliability and maintenance history of automatic faucets and flush toilets and will evaluate these findings before installing more in other Regional facilities.

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Corporate Services continued	
Are power doors on Council Chambers necessary?	Since there isn't always someone (security) available to open the doors for persons who need assistance, we are recommending that we install power doors in Council Chambers.
The washroom outside the Corporate Learning Centre, South Services Centre has two 90 degree turns which are difficult and at times impossible for a person using a wheelchair or scooter to navigate.	Renovations to this bathroom are included in the 2007 Departmental Accessibility Plan.
What are the costs for all accessibility changes to Regional facilities?	All costs related to 2007 accessibility planning initiatives will be reported to Regional Council as part of the review and formal approval of the Region's 2007 Accessibility plan. The development of the Region's accessibility plans were integrated with the Region's Business Planning and Budget Cycle. The plan is released following budget approval.
Is there a formal written policy to ensure that we exceed the Building Code when renovating or building regional facilities? Suggestion was made for the Region to adopt a formal policy.	The Ontario Building Code does make provisions in new buildings for accessibility and we do have some flexibility to go beyond these provisions. It becomes difficult with existing buildings that may not include accessibility features. In these cases, it is very expensive to re-model and make the buildings accessible. There is no formal policy at this point ensuring that York Region exceeds the building code, however Property Services is very aware of accessibility issues; as evidenced in the accessibility improvements we have made thus far.

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Corporate Services continued	
Is there a way to make changes to older buildings to accommodate the turning radius of mobility equipment?	This would need to be investigated on a case by case basis.
What will the new Building Code include?	There are proposed changes by the province to enhance accessibility in new buildings. It is a lengthy process because it has to be linked to federal government changes to the national building code. Staff will report back.
What size are the accessible parking spots in the North entrance going to be?	We gave direction to the architect to design spaces taking into consideration modern wheelchairs and scooters. The YRAAC said that many vehicles parking in accessible spots have devices coming from the side, not the back of a vehicle. We directed the architect to design with this in mind. The draft plan has spaces 50% larger than existing ones eg. wider, more space in the front. We also installed a drop off area in the front circle with a ramp to the Great Hall.
Will there be any changes to elevation at the North parking lot entrance?	Yes. We will make cuts into the sidewalk. These modifications are considerable e.g. removing dividers in order to create more parking. Elevations should be the same, with gradual rise through main entrance.
Is the accessibility consultant involved in the changes being planned for the North parking lot entrance?	An architect has been hired and the accessibility consultant will review all plans. We intend to get the YRAAC's feedback on what is planned for the north entrance.
How close to compliance is the slope of the South entrance ramp? What happens at the bottom of the ramp?	The consultant has reviewed it and noted that while the slope met the code, it is too steep and should be redesigned if and when any work is done on it in future.

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Corporate Services continued	
Has the slope been smoothed out at the North entrance?	Yes. The work has been completed.
Are there any plans to install raised toilet seats in accessible washroom stalls?	We have completed the installation of the handrails in the accessible washrooms. Staff will investigate the suggestion for raised toilet seats.
Are there any plans to make the washroom directly outside of the Seminar Room accessible?	Not at this time. It is very small and difficult to renovate to make accessible. It might be possible and more feasible to combine the existing washrooms and make one accessible washroom for both genders.
Who is responsible for changes to counter heights in the cafeteria – Corporate Services or the company running the cafeteria?	Property Services. At first we modified the servers at the request of the service provider. The whole salad bar area equipment is built-in and it would be quite costly to change it. There are discussions now with the service provider in terms of renewing the contract and a plan to conduct a customer survey for those who use the cafeteria. We will discuss the issue of counter heights with the service provider.
Are the menus in the cafeteria available in large print or Braille?	Large print copies of the menus are displayed on the serving counters.
It was suggested that staff look into a separate Braille menu for customers who are blind.	Staff will investigate this suggestion.

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Finance Department	
How will Finance support Corporate Communications in their initiative to increase the level of accessibility of Regional Web pages?	Finance will provide support to Corporate Communications by assisting them in looking into new technologies to make the website more accessible and in developing a corporate strategic plan to make it more accessible. The Information Technology Branch plays a support role where there is an identified need.
Will Finance provide the dollars?	The costs will be assessed once a solution is determined and will be incorporated into the initiating department's budget.
Health Services Department	
Why did the number of units renovated at Hadley Grange have to be cut back?	Hadley Grange renovations were approved in principle. Fourteen units were to be renovated and the project hasn't been approved for final action for the last several years. Unfortunately, as time passed, costs have risen and new laws require special engineering architects to be involved which could raise costs. However, we will do as many units as possible, probably about seven in total, and will lobby for additional funds for the remaining units.
It was suggested that door widths and turning radius' in all public health buildings should exceed the requirements of the building code to accommodate mobility devices used by persons living in or using these facilities. It is very difficult to access public buildings especially older ones. A few inches can make a huge difference.	This suggestion will be taken into consideration.
In your plan you mention an accessibility audit of Public Health offices. What are you looking for and when will the changes happen?	We will look at architectural changes where feasible and include them in future budgets. If we acquire new space in the future, we want a checklist to make sure we include accessibility features.

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Health Services Department continued	
Do the Health Fact Sheets come in different languages?	Yes. We access AT&T for language services as well. We will expand where necessary to make everything more accessible.
Planning and Development Services Department	
Who is responsible for the York Region Business Directory? It is a great resource but it contains thousands of names that are difficult to see due to the type and size of print used.	The York Region Business Directory is provided by the Long Range and Strategic Planning Branch, Planning and Development Services Department. The York Region Business Directory is available in an electronic version that allows for an adjustment in the font type and size. Using this version, the user can enlarge the font to any desired size and choose all available Microsoft fonts. The current layout of the print version of the directory is designed to provide a comprehensive listing of businesses, while maintaining an appropriate physical size and printing cost.

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Planning and Development Services Department continued	
What kind of relationship is there between departments to ensure people with disabilities have services interconnected? In terms of strategic planning, is there an overview?	In practical terms, Council has a set of principles for new Regional housing projects (e.g. it must be within reasonable access to public transit, as at Tom Taylor Place) Also, there is consultation between the Region and municipality (e.g. in Vaughan between city and regional staff). We work across the corporation on these issues cooperatively, although much of it is not formal. In terms of the big picture, the future planning in York Region is focusing on sustainability and is based on the three cornerstones of a healthy environment, a vibrant economy, and sufficient human services. These components drive the detailed individual plans of our departments and are reflected in the Region's long term strategic plan, Vision 2026 as well as the Region's Official Plan and other key documents, such as the Transportation Master Plan, Water and Wastewater Master Plan, and the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan Studies.
Transportation and Works Department	
How much have we improved the connection between our buses and the TTC in terms of Mobility Plus?	Last year a pilot program for Mobility Plus to go within Toronto (30 different locations) was approved. This eliminated forced transfers as much as possible. We will report our findings on this in 2007. It should be noted, if a person isn't going to one of the 35 designated destinations, a transfer is required.
If you go south of Steeles Avenue is there a second fare?	Yes. It is a new zone.
Could we be provided with a list of the 30 locations? Is there a brochure?	There isn't a brochure however; staff will provide a list of these locations to the YRAAC (see page 13 and 14 of this document).

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Transportation and Works Department continued	
How difficult is it to synchronize transfer times?	It is a challenge. We try to achieve at the maximum a 30-minute window.
Will applications for Mobility Plus be available at bus stops?	Mobility Plus Application forms are available by calling our office or on-line through the York Region Transit website.
Will the buses have digital displays indicating bus stops for passengers who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing?	Yes. All buses will have both video signs noting next stop, along with audio messages.
Can we see numbers to show those riders who no longer need the Mobility Plus services due to Travel Training Program for conventional bus service?	Yes. This information can be collected once the Travel Training Program is up and running. The pilot project is scheduled for 2007, with full implementation in 2008. It should also be noted that Mobility Plus registrants may only be able to utilize conventional transit for a portion of their trips and use of conventional transit may be weather-related.
It was suggested that key decision makers are made aware of the cost savings which result from the Travel Training Program for conventional bus service (e.g. Mobility Plus riders no longer need the service after receiving training on the conventional service, therefore increasing the availability of seats on the Mobility Plus service).	See previous comments. Hard data on cost-savings would not be available until 2008.
What is VMS?	Variable Messaging Sign. This is a ticker tape sign on a bus and at VIVA stations. It scrolls across the upcoming stop, and will flash at the same time as an audio announcement.
Will VMS just be on Viva?	Right now it is just on VIVA but will be extended to the entire bus fleet.

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Transportation and Works Department continued	
Clarification requested of “increased rides per day by 30%”.	Total boardings have risen by about 30%. It can also be measured by looking at fare paying passengers, which have risen by about 12%.
York Regional Police (YRP)	
Was the partnership between YRP and CHS initiated by the police or CHS?	The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) has been very vocal with their concerns to York Regional Police. The Police have heard their concerns and are taking action by partnering with them to address these concerns.
Can anything be done at the Community Safety Village about the steep slope grade on the ramp from the parking lot to the building? It is too steep for a person in a wheelchair to go up without assistance. Does the slope comply with 12 -1 ratio in building code? Could a limited number of accessible parking spots be made at the top of the ramp, allowing closer access to the building?	Yes. Approval has been obtained to create one accessible parking spot at the top of the ramp, close to the entrance of the Community Safety Village.

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**MOBILITY PLUS CROSS-BORDER LOCATIONS
 (FOR CITY OF TORONTO)**

Hospital and Medical

Baycrest Hospital Complex
 3560 Bathurst St

Community Care (Formerly Branson Hospital)
 555 Finch Ave W

Fairview Mall
 5 Fairview Mall Drive

Finch Medical Centre
 80 Finch Ave W

Kipling Acres Nursing Home
 2233 Kipling Ave

Medical Centre
 6257 Bathurst St

Medical Centre
 20 Overbrook Pl

Medical Clinic
 1100 Sheppard Ave E

Norfinch Medical Centre
 2100 Finch Ave W

Northview Centre
 4949 Bathurst St

North York General Hospital
 4001 Leslie St

North York Medical Arts
 1333 Sheppard Ave E

North York Medical Building
 1017 Wilson Ave

St. John's Rehabilitation Centre
 285 Cummer Ave

Scarborough Grace Hospital
 3030 Birchmount Rd

Scarborough North Medical Arts
 4040 Finch Ave E

Wagman Centre
 55 Ameer Avenue

Walk In Clinic Wycliffe House
 4430 Bathurst St

William Osler Medical Complex (Formerly Etobicoke General Hospital)
 101 Humber College Blvd

York Finch Hospital (Humber River Regional Hospital)
 2111 Finch Ave W

York Finch Medical Centre
 2115 Finch Ave W

Social Service Agencies

Bathurst Jewish Community Centre
 4588 Bathurst St

Bernard Betel Centre
 1003 Steeles Ave W

Cummer Lodge
 205 Cummer Ave

Earl Bales Community Centre
 4169 Bathurst St

Federal Government Building
 4900 Yonge St

Lipa Green Building
 4600 Bathurst St

National Jewish Women's Council
 4700 Bathurst St

January 4, 2007

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Northwood Community Centre
15 Clubhouse Ct

Provincial Ministry of Health
4400 Dufferin St

Seniors' Centre
2 Buchan Ct

Vita Community Living
4301 Weston Rd

Major Educational Centres

Humber College (Main Campus)
205 Humber College Blvd

Seneca College (Newnham Campus)
1750 Finch Ave E

York University (Keele Campus)
4700 Keele St

Wheel-Trans Transfer Locations

Centerpoint Mall
6464 Yonge St

Shops On Steeles
2900 Steeles Ave E

Tim Hortons
4228 Midland Ave

Tim Hortons
3310 Steeles Ave W

William Osler Hospital
101 Humber College Blvd