

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair and Members of the
York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Joann Simmons, Commissioner
Community Services and Housing

DATE: March 24, 2004

RE: **Options for Working with Local AACs**

Members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) requested at their meeting on January 21, 2004 that regional staff prepare options regarding ways in which the York Region AAC may work with the Accessibility Advisory Committees from the nine area municipalities in York Region.

This memorandum outlines both short-term and long-term options for discussion by the York Region AAC. In developing these options both the volunteer efforts of York Region AAC members and the capacity of regional staff to support the York Region AAC in this role were considered.

Short-term

1. Many members of the York Region AAC also participate on the AAC of their local municipality. In order to share information about initiatives underway at the local level, a standing item could be added to every York Region AAC meeting agenda asking these members to provide a verbal update of what is happening at the local level.
2. A request could also be sent to all of the local municipalities asking that a copy of their AAC agenda and minutes from each of their meetings is sent to the Region for information. Any information of interest to the York Region AAC could be shared by the Chair and Vice-Chair at York Region AAC meetings.

Long-term

1. The York Region AAC could propose that an annual meeting be held of the ten municipal AAC Chairs. The purpose of the meeting would be to share information about accessibility planning in each of the municipalities and to determine areas of common

concern and interest. If approved, it is suggested that the first meeting of the 10 AAC Chairs be held in Fall 2004. Future AAC Chair meetings could rotate and be hosted by each of the local municipalities.

2. York Region and the York Region AAC may consider hosting a one-day workshop for all of the members of the Region's 10 AACs. The timing of the workshop would coincide with the proclamation of the new legislation. The workshop could include both an information session of what is included in the new legislation as well as a discussion of the potential impact on municipalities.

Conclusion

Regional staff have also held meetings with staff involved in accessibility planning from all nine local municipalities, school boards and hospitals to share information. This group has agreed to continue to meet twice a year and share information to develop common approaches.

By establishing linkages with the local AACs, the York Region AAC will become better informed of initiatives underway across the Region to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. This will benefit accessibility planning at both the regional and local levels.

Joann Simmons, Commissioner
Community Services and Housing Department