

MEMORANDUM

TO: Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Donald F. Gordon
General Manager, York Region Transit

DATE: March 14, 2006

RE: Response to AAC's Questions Regarding York Region Transit

Please find below responses to the questions raised at the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of January 29th, 2006 regarding York Region Transit:

What are the timelines for the development and implementation of the eligibility appeal process?

The timeline set for the internal review of the application process, including a review of the application and appeal documentation (application form, appeal form, terms of reference for appeal panel, etc) is approximately 2 months (mid-March to mid-May). Once the internal review is completed, the next step is to involve consultation with interested stakeholders such as the AAC. The timeline to have the appeal process underway is July 1st. Once all details are finalized, information will be provided to the public (i.e. newsletter, brochure, etc) concerning both the application and appeal process.

How will the panelists on the appeals board be paid? If they are paid by the Region, how much impartiality will they receive?

Advertising will be conducted to obtain panelists for the Appeal Panel. Selection criteria will be developed to ensure a broad range of community representation based on interest. The members will not be paid but will volunteer their time. Transit rides will be provided to them to attend meetings/appeals, as necessary.

Will YRT staff have membership on the appeals board? If so, isn't this a conflict to have someone who was involved in the outcome of the original decision on the application to also take part on the appeals board?

The Manager of Mobility Plus will sit on the three member panel to hear appeals. There is not felt to be a conflict since this position is not currently involved in the initial evaluation of an applicant's eligibility for Mobility Plus service. The position will also ensure, as a quality check, that all applicants are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner, and that the members have appropriate documentation for review in advance so that decisions are rendered as quickly as possible.

Are there still plans to provide free conventional bus service to persons with disabilities who are able to use this service instead of mobility transit?

Plans are still underway to provide free conventional transit rides for Mobility Plus clients. This is based on the development and execution of a "Travel Training Program" which will commence development mid-April for initial launch and trial in September 2006.

Request for clarification – Are attendant care providers required to pay a bus fare when accompanying their client on regular transit?

Effective October 3, 2005 attendant care providers are not required to pay a transit fare when attending to a Mobility Plus client on Mobility Plus service. No similar arrangement is currently in place for those with disabilities using conventional transit. Part of the "Travel Training Program" will be a recommendation to provide a free ride to those Mobility Plus clients who wish to use accessible conventional transit for their rides. Those attending to the client would also enjoy the free ride privilege.

What can be done to make buses (including Viva) accessible for persons with walkers? The aisles do not appear wide enough to push a walker through and there isn't a place to store a folded walker while the person is seated.

All new conventional buses, including the VIVA buses, are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant vehicles and have been for a period of ten years. However, work is underway through the transit industry with mobility aid suppliers to ensure mobility device accommodation. The buses do have flip-up seats for wheelchair accessibility which can be used to store a mobility device while the customer is in transit. Alternatively, many low-floor model buses have storage areas above the front wheels.

If you require clarification regarding any of the above explanations, or have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Copy to: Brian Drew, Manager, Mobility Plus