

Comments Received from the York Region AAC and Public Consultation For York Region's Accessibility Plan

Consultation Comments for the Regional Municipality of York	
1. Overall Advice on the Region's Plan - Take a corporate leadership role by providing "Framework for Improving Accessibility" to mitigate fear of cost related to accessibility - Celebrate accessibility accomplishments - Provide Regional update - Change public attitudes towards people with disabilities, such as the attitude of "disability first, person second" - Consider that front line staff be fluent in ASL and hand-over-hand interpretation	
2. Community Services and Housing (Housing) - Modify the outside areas of the Region's rental housing units, such as accessible ramps and sidewalks from parking lots into buildings - Consider surface materials to ensure that the surface is properly maintained for walking devices or wheel chairs - Consider riser from the walkway to the door entrance. - Appropriate width of parking space and clearly marked handicap parking signage - Accommodate the changing needs of aging residents - Provide accessibility "toolkit" to private sector to develop new housing units for people with disabilities and move towards universal design. Include directions as to where to get handicapped parking signs, replacements, installation, etc. - Update housing accessibility plans to reflect the new specifications for today's needs - Consider higher accessibility requirements than those specified in the building code to enable scooters to move around, including turning radius into washrooms, door widths etc. - Provide more modified and accessible rental units, which currently is not matching the growth in the Region	
3. Community Services and Housing (Social Assistance) - Provide more accessible workstations in Social Assistance offices - Avoid asking invasive questions in OW application process - Application forms for services are often difficult to use and hard to understand.	
4. Corporate Communications Services - Find ways to have closed captioning in training tapes at public training sessions - Consider providing a "descriptive" layer for videos produced by the Region to make "watching" a video by a blind or visually impaired person more feasible.	

- Increase ways of disseminating information to people with disabilities - Review fonts and provide large print forms and materials - Provide alternative communication means other than computer and internet as many people with disabilities do not have access to them. - Use general media and a range of tools to inform public about changes, such as community pages in local newspapers, online posting for people with disabilities - Need to review and scrutinize written language
5. Corporate Services (Clerk's Office) - Coordinate a central place to communicate all of the Region's programs and services, i.e. call center, one main number to call
6. Corporate Services (Property Service) - Make all elevators in Regional buildings audible and beep at floors - Put hearing aids in Council Chamber - Continue to examine standards that are beyond the Building Code and participate in the next review of the Building Code - Make signs bigger and more visible in public buildings, especially washroom signs - Enlarge accessible public washrooms to include accessible sinks and that can accommodate a caregiver - Assist people with disabilities to move through the Regional buildings, such as providing an attendant - Ensure that building renovations will provide access for scooters - Improve accessibility of Kiosks in the Administrative Building and general accessibility at the Tannery (Newmarket).
7. Corporate Services (HR) - Train individual staff on accessibility issues to create a supportive environment - Provide training for managers on how to support employees with mental health disabilities
8. Planning and Development - New developments need to be closer to transit lines to strengthen the connection and reduce travel costs. Transit should form part of the development and be an integral part of the site plan.
9. Transportation and Works - Develop common standards for sidewalks and curb cuts among all municipalities - Place priority on making sidewalks and roads more accessible - Curb cuts need to be lower at roadside to make ramps more accessible to carts and wheel chairs - Repair sidewalks, such as cracks and bumps - Improve interlock surface to make it less uneven and bumpy

- Remove snow at curb cuts
- Change pavement at curbs; consider textured material at intersections, such as rubber textured surface
- Adjust the timing of traffic lights for crossing the street (King/Bathurst) and common standard should be set for the timing across the Region.
- Increase the placement of audible pedestrian signals so that they are not just near homes of people with visual impairments or blind

10. York Region Transit (General)

- Provide more transit services to make travel in the Region easier
- Link transit to land use planning and development
- Consider reduced fares for people with disabilities
- Shared ride system doesn't consider independence of riders
- Make transit information available online or in CD ROM format that could be available on request

11. York Region Transit (Conventional)

- Consider free transportation for deaf people as many of them are unemployed and affordability is an issue for them
- Make bus numbers more visible so that people with visual impairments can see them and avoid taking the wrong bus
- Coordinate GO Bus and regional transit systems
- Provide free rides for people with disabilities on conventional transit if they are Mobility Plus registrants.
- Set up a green lane on Yonge street and provide bus service at night
- Reduce ticket options from a strip of 10 to 5
- Allow enough space inside buses for people with mobility disabilities to move around
- Reduce the number of steps to get on the bus to make it easier for people with disabilities
- Bus design should facilitate walking on and riding on by individuals who have mobility needs but are able to use the conventional transit service.
- Drivers should call out stops and announce the next stop to help blind people, seniors and people who are new in the Region
- Clearly mark bus shelters
- Allow space for walker users to park their walkers close to their seats
- Buses should not move until passengers have a chance to get seated
- Adjust seat sizes to accommodate people who may need more room

- Expand Request Stop program which is currently available only after dark
- Courtesy seating should be made available at all times especially for people with disabilities
- Bus service is not available in certain areas

12. York Region Transit (Mobility Plus)

- Provide funding for the Deaf for taxi services
- Consider the issue related to cost structure such as fare zones with Mobility Plus
- Modify Mobility Plus criteria in relation to allowing attendants on board
- Widen eligibility criteria and review “appeal process” for Mobility Plus services
- Provide proper training for Mobility Plus drivers
- Reduce wait time for the call centre and ensure there is response between 8-9 a.m.
- Allow people with epilepsy to qualify for Mobility Plus
- Provide training to maintenance staff to help them better understand the needs of people with disabilities
- Mobility Plus service should be set up for 24 hour booking instead of 48 hours

13. York Region Police

- Lack of sign language interpretation availability with police services
- Police need to understand the importance of interpreters and should not take it for granted that the Deaf can read lips
- Add interpreting services in 9-1-1
- Improve the language used by in the York Region Police accessibility plan, e.g. change “emotionally disturbed person” into “traumatized person” or victim of a crime
- Improve sensitivity training for officers to better understand the needs of persons with disabilities
- Newmarket police station is not wheelchair accessible/all stairs

Consultation Comments for Other Jurisdictions

For Province of Ontario:

- The need for government assistance in purchasing assistive devices
- Consider the coverage of alerting devices in Assistive Devices Program (ADP)
- Provide free visual alarms for people with hearing impediments
- Consider paying for baby monitor by Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- ODSP should pay for the transit services for the Deaf

- It is difficult for the Deaf to get job training in most places.
- The need for public TTY booths at Go-Trains
- Provide training for managers on how to support employees with mental health disabilities
- Address the shortage of qualified sign language interpreters in Ontario
- The need to update the provincial Building Code
- Take stronger actions or apply higher penalties for using handicapped parking by people without disabilities

For Local Municipalities:

- The need for public TTY booths at libraries
- Take stronger actions or apply higher penalties for using handicapped parking by people without disabilities
- Disability parking fees are very high in hospitals, such as Southlake Hospital
- Provide access to more community recreation facilities, such as pools equipped with walking trails and a strip of edging. More handrails are needed in pools
- Provide training for managers on how to support employees with mental health disabilities
- Provide leisure programs, such as swimming assistance, for people with special needs