

YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YRAAC)
Summary of Feedback: DRAFT 2008 Departmental Accessibility Plans

Questions, Comments or Suggestions	Staff Recommendation/Response	Given your response, does your Departmental Plan need amending? Yes/No? Please provide associated costs, if any
General Feedback		
Suggestion to do in depth review of Health Status Report and Census data to project the needs of persons with disabilities living in York Region.	This type of information is monitored and analysed regularly by Community and Health Services staff. The department recently released York Region Fact Sheets which will be forwarded electronically to YRAAC members. The Department will also be reviewing the 2006 Census and any disability related data and presenting to the YRAAC in 2008.	No
Request for summary of the progress York Region has made since its first accessibility plan.	Each accessibility plan contains a progress report on the previous year's accessibility initiatives. Please refer to previous plans.	No
Community and Health Services Department		
Housing York Inc. completed a survey of Housing York residents – what is the percentage of accessible housing now? Is it still 5% of all the housing available?	As of December 31, 2007, the Region administers 379 accessible housing units. This represents approximately 6% of the total affordable rental portfolio.	No
How will Community and Health Services identify the clients to participate in the Travel Training Pilot Program without breaching confidentiality?	The Pilot will be advertised asking for volunteers to come forward.	No

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Community and Health Services Department (cont'd)		
Why are there people with disabilities in receipt of Ontario Works (OW)? Why are they not in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)?	There are generally two approaches when applying for ODSP. The most common approach is via Ontario Works. Applicants may receive OW income support while their ODSP application is being considered. Sometimes, individuals do not qualify for OW due to their level of income. In these situations, individuals may apply directly to ODSP. There are also cases where a client on OW chooses not to apply for ODSP, or where a disability issue may be suspected (such as mental health) but not yet diagnosed.	No
How long does it take for a person in receipt of OW to receive ODSP after referral?	The Provincial social assistance technology does not currently allow us to extract data from the system to track the time frame from ODSP referral to grant date. Anecdotally, staff in our Georgina office where we have centralized our ODSP pending cases to enhance customer service, have noted it can take anywhere from approximately 4 to 12 months and in exceptional circumstances up to 2 years.	No

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Community and Health Services Department (cont'd)		
How long does it take for a person in receipt of OW to receive ODSP after referral? (cont'd)	Provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services staff have informed us that the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) assesses applications for ODSP based upon the date the file is received. They have indicated an adjudication standard of 90 days from receipt of the completed Disability Determination Package (DDP). The length of time to grant can be influenced by requests for further medical information, or where the case is deemed ineligible and the client chooses to appeal.	
Request for Ability Edge information to be distributed to the YRAAC.	Community and Health Services staff will forward the link to web site to YRAAC members.	No
Request for statistics on employment recruitment activities of OW clients.	In 2007, OW staff helped over 1,200 participants find employment and exit Ontario Works. This number is inclusive of all OW clients regardless of reason for assistance.	No
Request for committee members to receive copies of the Community and Health Services internal ODA Newsletter.	Staff will forward copies of newsletters developed in 2008 to YRAAC members.	No

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Corporate Communications		
Request to investigate and report back to the YRAAC on the possibility of changing the Region's website from a two layer website to a one layer website? Could this item be included as an initiative in Corporate Communications 2008 Accessibility Plan? Note: CNIB's website is the best example of this.	Staff will investigate and report back findings to the YRAAC in early 2008. This has been added as an initiative to the 2008 Corporate Communications Accessibility Plan.	Yes
Corporate Services Department		
How are staff doing their jobs differently resulting from the "Just Ask" inclusivity training? How is success measured?	Human Resource Services will be distributing a Level 3 evaluation which measures the change in behavior and performance as per the American Society for Training and Development using the Kirkpatrick model for evaluation. The results of this evaluation are expected to be in by the end of the first quarter, 2008.	No
Gratitude expressed by member for hearing the YRAAC's concerns and suggestions regarding the proposed plans for the parking lot and acting on them. Appreciation for the great work on north entrance parking lot and inclusion of accessible seating in the halls was also noted.	No response necessary.	No

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Corporate Services Department (cont'd)		
Is the installation of an accessible washroom at the north end of the Administrative Centre included in the 2008 plan? Request for a report back concerning this project.	Staff provided a report at the November 28, 2007 YRAAC meeting indicating a preliminary budget estimate of \$125,000 to add a unisex accessible washroom in the Great Hall of the Administrative Centre. The accessible washroom at the north end of the Administrative Centre is not feasible, therefore it was not added to the 2008 plan.	No
Comment: When considering any renovations to the existing washrooms at the north end of the Administrative Centre it would be good to consider a unisex washroom. Many persons with mobility issues require assistance to use the facilities and unisex washroom would allow for this.	Staff will take this into consideration.	No
Suggestion for better signage indicating the location of the nearest accessible washroom in the Great Hall of the Administrative Centre.	Provisions have already been made to include new signage in the Great Hall of the Administrative Centre to clearly identify the location of the closest accessible washrooms.	No
Will the ramp between the Administrative Centre and the Gates of York be completed this year? Councillor Wheeler requested to review the plans for this ramp.	Staff provided report at the November 28, 2007 YRAAC meeting indicating that plans are to have the ramp installation started before the end of the year and completed in January 2008, weather permitting. The plan for the ramp was attached to this report.	No

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Corporate Services Department (cont'd)		
Suggestion to relocate pipes underneath washroom sinks to behind the walls enabling easier access to sinks.	Corporate Services staff will consider this suggestion for future projects.	No
Environmental Services Department		
Request to see Corporate Accessible Meeting Guidelines used in accessibility audits of Public Seminar locations.	Community and Health Services staff will send guidelines to the YRAAC members.	No
Do the plans for the proposed Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan use the Ontario Building Code guidelines for accessibility? The ODA guidelines often fall short of the needs of people with disabilities.	Property Services will assist to ensure accessibility components are included in the plans. All improvements will meet the building code and in some cases, may exceed the building code.	No
Request to exceed building code requirements in plans for proposed Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan and to ensure that the plans include door widths and turning radiuses to accommodate older versions of scooters and other mobility devices that are wider than the newer models.	Staff will bring this to the attention of Property Services when reviewing the plans for accessibility components for the Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan.	No

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Environmental Services Department (cont'd)		
Will the facility in Vaughan include accessibility features for people with sensory disabilities such as strips on the stairs, contrasting colours, etc?	The designs are not yet complete and will not go to tender until Spring 2008. These types of features will be added.	No
Request for the YRAAC to review site plans for the proposed Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan before going to tender.	Environmental Services Staff will bring the site plan and barrier free design for the proposed Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan to the YRAAC for review prior to tender.	No
Request use of the term “Universal Access” within the plans to describe accessibility.	The term “Universal Access” refers to the ability of all people to have equal opportunity and access to a service or product from which they can benefit. This term is often used in relation to technology. The term “Universal Design” refers to facility designs that accommodate the widest range of potential users. Staff will use this terminology where appropriate.	No
Finance Department		
Gratitude expressed by member for making Regional web site one of the easiest to navigate.	No action required.	No
Planning and Development Services Department		
Will builders include the concept of “visitability” in their plans for new homes to promote accessibility for people with mobility challenges?	Access, mobility and “visitability” will be incorporated into the new design criteria under the sustainability strategy.	No

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Planning and Development Services Department (cont'd)		
Is there a benchmark to measure “reasonable access” against?	This will be included into the new design criteria. The Department will report back to this committee in 2008 to present the framework for this new design and would welcome the YRAAC’s feedback.	No
Transportation Services Department		
Has the pilot of the Travel Training Program been launched as of yet?	No – not yet. The new Accessible Services Planner was hired in December 2007. Final review of training material is underway. Designation of accessible routes being undertaken. Pilot candidates to be identified for April 2008 start. Actual pilot program to be started Spring of 2008 and will be ongoing through end of 2008.	No
Are stops announced on our buses? What is being done in light of the recent Human Rights decision so that York Region does not leave itself vulnerable?	There is an automated system on Viva which audibly announces stops and projects the stops on a screen electronically. The Branch is moving to implement the same on other YRT routes. During 2008, drivers will audibly announce major stops. The Branch has provided information regarding the current process to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, which is gathering information from transit systems across the Province in an attempt to standardize the process.	No
What is IVR?	<u>I</u> nteractive <u>V</u> oice <u>R</u> esponse – customers can phone in and get audible information automated over the phone.	No

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Transportation Services Department (cont'd)		
Can a person book Mobility Plus by email? And if so, will they receive a confirmation back by email? Is this included in your plan for 2008?	Registrants may book their trip using the website only and an acknowledgement of the booking is sent by e-mail, To confirm, registrants have to call after 3 pm of the day before their trip.	No
Will there be similar access via website? Is this planned for 2008?	Yes. Web booking is currently available for trips which are two business days ahead. Mobility Plus is moving towards enhancing the software to process the booking without manual input, which will enable registrants to book their trips one day in advance and receive confirmation by e mail. This is included in the 2008 Accessibility Plan.	Yes
Transportation Services Department (cont'd)		
Are there plans to make the forest trails in York Region accessible for persons with disabilities? Plan needs to include more focus on forests. Staff should research to find out what other jurisdictions in North America are doing to make their forests/trails accessible. Suggestion to contact head of Oak Ridges Moraine Association to coordinate efforts. Suggestion to contact consultant John Hicks who has done this kind of work for the Province. East Gwillimbury has also done work in this area.	Yes, there is a plan to make some trails accessible for persons with disabilities. York Region forestry has received 'ODA Inclusion and Accessibility - Just Ask' training, has researched the subject, and has an accessibility partnership pilot in place with the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) regarding the Universal Trails Assessment Process (UTAP) for a trail in the Forest. The region has a signed agreement in place with ORTA and is a member of the Oak Ridges Trail Advisory Committee. In addition, the region provides (by registration) forest education programs/tours for those with physical and mental disabilities.	Yes

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Transportation Services Department (cont'd)		
Do contracted drivers receive inclusivity/disability awareness training? Who is responsible for their training? Will this be updated in relation to the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) Customer Service Regulation?	Private sector vehicle operators' training requirements include modules in sensitivity and inclusivity. York Region is responsible to ensure that the training programs' content meets our needs and we are also responsible for ensuring that the training process meets contractual obligations. The contracted services providers are responsible for the training of their operators. Yes, operator training programs are currently under review and York Region will ensure that training meets requirements identified both under the Customer Service regulation and the proposed Transportation Standard (once adopted).	Yes
Is there a standard related to intersection accessibility improvements?	The Region uses Ontario Provincial Standards (OPS) when completing road improvements. The development of these standards has attempted to incorporate universal access requirements at intersections.	No
Are contracted drivers required to wear uniforms? Do they have identification?	Yes, except for drivers of taxis. All drivers carry identification including a picture. It must be displayed on the outside of the driver's jacket.	No

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Transportation Services Department (cont'd)		
Who is responsible for the countdown signals at intersections – area municipalities or Region? What is the process to have an intersection qualify for countdown signals?	The Region is responsible for intersections on Regional roads. All other intersections are the responsibility of the local municipality. The Region has retrofitted signalized crossings at locations which have over 100 pedestrians crossing within an eight hour period. All new signalized or reconstructed signals within the urban area include pedestrian countdown signals when constructed.	No
Do YRT stations have accessible loading capability? Noted that GO Transit does not (Stouffville resident who uses a wheelchair was denied access on the GO bus).	All YRT buses have low floors and can board people almost anywhere. GO buses are usually bigger highway coaches. Staff committed to looking into situation with GO Transit.	No
Comment that “Family of Services Approach” is a good concept, and hopes that people receive this type of service.	No action required.	No

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York Regional Police (YRP)		
Is the “Just Ask” inclusivity training offered to police and civilian staff?	The “Just Ask” training is available to both administrative staff and officers.	No
With regard to your 2007 Plan, how many of your members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee attended “Just Ask” inclusivity training?	Eight members received training.	No
Request for report back on how many police officers speak and/or write a different language?	In excess of 50 languages are spoken by our members. Most can read and write in their other language. Diversity on the force has increased from 6% - 14.4% in four years.	No
What attention is given to Mental Illness in YRP’s requalification training? What does an officer do when they are not aware before attending a call that the person they are dealing with a person who has a Mental Illness?	Last year YRP partnered with Canadian Mental Health Association and formed the Mental Health Support Unit to assist front line officers. This team is staffed by non-police experts. This group also presents at the annual requalification training for front line officers. When an officer does not know ahead of time that the call that they are attending involves a person with mental illness, they rely on their own support mechanism by calling out to another officer or by calling for the assistance of the Mental Health Support Team.	No

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York Regional Police (cont'd)		
Does the Safety Village have mobile cars for use by children with disabilities? If not, why?	Yes. The Community Safety Village (CSV) does have an electric toy car (Jeep) that has recently been retrofitted to provide accessibility for children with disabilities. This electric (battery) powered toy Jeep has been retrofitted with a “momentary contact” push-button installed on a cord of approximately six feet that attaches directly to the rear of the electric toy Jeep. As long as the person walking behind the Jeep has the push-button pushed in, the Jeep will go forward, and as soon as the person walking behind the Jeep releases the “momentary contact” push-button, the Jeep will stop. Staff at the CSV are monitoring demand for such vehicles to determine if retrofits are needed on additional vehicles. Since the opening of the Community Safety Village on May 14, 2005, several modifications have been made at the CSV to enhance barrier free access. These changes have come about in part from feedback from the York Region Accessibility Committee, the York Regional Police Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee and through the generous donations of many individuals, groups and agencies such as the Whitchurch-Stouffville Mobility Transit Committee.	No

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York Regional Police (cont'd)		
Does the Safety Village have mobile cars for use by children with disabilities? If not, why? (cont'd)	Changes to date include, but are not limited to, the following: • Wheelchair accessible doors at both the front and back entrances of the main building which included modifications so one button would open both doors at the same time; • Concrete was poured to ensure barrier-free access into all of the miniature buildings; • All new buildings constructed since 2005 have been built with ramps and wider door frames to ensure easier access; • Traffic lights and pedestrian crossings have audible signals for participants who are blind or have low vision; • A concrete path was poured to ensure wheelchairs have clear passage from the parking lot into the building; • Two accessible parking spots have been clearly marked; • The carpets laid in front of door entrances have been reduced in size so they no longer pose a barrier for persons who are blind or have low vision;	

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York Regional Police (cont'd)		
Does the Safety Village have mobile cars for use by children with disabilities? If not, why? (cont'd)	• A strobe fire alarm was installed in Sparky's apartment for persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing to use during smoke simulation exercises; • Purchase of 10,000 education brochures entitled "Fire Safety for Individuals with Special Needs" for distribution to participants; • Purchase an interactive "Hazard House" that instructs students on all areas of injury prevention in the home that is better suited for education of students with special needs; • Purchase of an eight person golf cart used to drive children with special needs and support staff through the Village during traffic safety and bicycle safety programs; and • Public washroom signs at the CSV are now displayed with Braille lettering (for boys and girls).	