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### REVISIONS TO THE 2003 YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

**The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, December 17, 2003, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:**

#### 1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The amendments to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be approved as outlined in *Attachment 1* to this report.

#### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present amendments to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference based on advice received from the members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)* was proclaimed on September 30, 2002. Its intent is to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities through the identification, removal and prevention of physical and other barriers. The *ODA* includes specific requirements for all municipalities. One requirement is the development of an accessibility plan every year. *Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan* was approved by Regional Council on September 18, 2003.

An additional requirement is that all municipalities with populations over 10,000 people must establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). As outlined in the *ODA*, the AAC advises Council in each year about the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the accessibility plan. The *ODA* also requires that a majority of AAC members are people with disabilities. The AAC is the only provincially legislated committee that advises Regional Council. The York Region AAC provides its advice to Council through the Community Services and Housing Committee.

##### 3.1 The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The first York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee was appointed by Regional Council on March 27, 2003. The York Region AAC played a key role in the development of *Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan*. The members of the Committee provided a series of recommendations that were incorporated into the consultation draft of the Plan and actively promoted and participated in the public consultation process. The AAC also provided advice and feedback into the final version of *Understanding Barriers*.

Through the strategic approach adopted by Council and the dedication and commitment of the York Region AAC, *Understanding Barriers* has been successfully developed and is considered a Provincial model in terms of style and content. The result is that York Region is seen as a leader in the Province in accessibility planning.

Similar to other committees, the term of the York Region AAC coincides with Regional Council's term. As such, the second York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee was appointed by Regional Council on December 11, 2003.

The AAC includes a total of 11 members – eight citizen members, two members of Council and the Regional Chair as an ex-officio member. Under the *ODA*, the AAC must include a majority of persons with disabilities. In order to ensure a balance of a broad range of perspectives on the York Region AAC, Council expanded the *ODA* requirements to better reflect the make-up of the Region. As such, it was directed that the York Region AAC also include people from organizations that represent people with disabilities as well as citizens-at-large who are familiar with the issues and challenges that impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Regional Council also directed that one member of the Community Services and Housing Committee be appointed to the York Region AAC.

Representation on the AAC was also sought from across the Region, including large urban, small urban and rural communities. The membership of the York Region AAC successfully fulfils each of these requirements.

The members of the York Region AAC are:

- Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio
- Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler
- Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch (ex-officio)
- Sharon Abrahams, citizen member
- Barbara Caiger, citizen member
- Kirsten Hill, citizen member
- Robert Hunn, citizen member
- Wilf Morley, citizen member
- Mary Ann Proulx, citizen member
- Trish Robichaud, citizen member
- Anwar Yussuf, citizen member

All of the eight original citizen members of the York Region AAC expressed an interest in continuing to serve on the Committee and have been reappointed. The members of the York Region AAC will select a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at their first meeting in 2004.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

The York Region AAC provides a valuable link to individuals and organizations that represent or provide services to people with disabilities in the Region. Several members

of the York Region AAC are also members of or involved in the AAC in their local municipality. This has enabled an important information exchange between the Region and the local municipalities in identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

#### **4.1 Amendments to the York Region AAC Terms of Reference**

Section 13 of the 2003 York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference includes an evaluation and review component. This section was included in the AAC Terms of Reference to enable the Committee and Council to review the terms of reference to identify any adjustments that were needed once the first year of accessibility planning was complete. Accordingly the York Region AAC met to review their terms of reference this past fall. Overall, the AAC members were satisfied with the scope and content of the Terms of Reference for their Committee and were very pleased with the support that Council and regional staff have provided in the last year. As such many sections of the AAC Terms of Reference will not be amended.

Below is a summary of the recommended changes suggested by the AAC to the Terms of Reference.

##### **4.1.1 Title**

The current title is The 2003 York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference. It is suggested to remove the year from the title to differentiate these terms of reference from the previous set.

#### **4.1.2 Mandate (Section 1)**

The York Region AAC suggested adding the following to their mandate: *The York Region AAC shall also advise Regional Council on the implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan.*

This is a responsibility of the AAC as outlined in the *ODA*. It is recommended that this be added to the Terms of Reference.

#### **4.1.3 Duties (Section 4)**

The York Region AAC suggests adding to their duties under subsection 4.2 Other Duties the following item:

- c) Notify and make recommendations regarding accessibility issues to other jurisdictions and organizations on issues that fall outside of the Region's scope and mandate.

Through the public consultation held in the development of the Region's Accessibility Plan, several issues were identified that resulted in barriers for people with disabilities that were outside of the Region's scope and mandate. Council directed that the Region share this information with the appropriate jurisdiction for their information and to assist in their own accessibility planning process. It is recommended that the Terms of Reference be amended so that this practice may continue.

#### **4.1.4 Membership Selection and Term (Section 6)**

It is recommended that this section be amended to take out all references to the term of the 2003 York Region AAC and address only the selection and term of the current Committee. As such both subsections 6.1 and 6.3 will be deleted from the Terms of Reference. Subsection 6.2 will now become 6.1 and be amended to read:

- 6.1 York Region AACs will serve for three consecutive one-year terms and at the pleasure of Regional Council. Members may be reappointed for an additional three consecutive one-year terms. The length of tenure of a Committee member cannot be longer than six consecutive years.

#### **4.1.5 Frequency of Meetings (Section 10)**

This section of the Terms of Reference states that all meetings will be held at the Region's Administrative Centre. In their discussions AAC members suggested that the Terms of Reference be amended to include the Administrative Centre's address and the potential to hold meetings in other locations. It is further suggested by regional staff that appropriate notice to the public of any location change also be added.

As such, it is suggested that this section be amended as follows:

All meetings would be held at the Region's Administrative Centre (*17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket*) *except as otherwise directed by the Committee. Appropriate notice of any location changes for York Region AAC meetings must be made publicly available.*

#### **4.1.6 Procedure (Section 12)**

A small change is also required to this section of the Terms of Reference in order to fully incorporate the change to Section 10. This section will be amended as follows: All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Region's Procedure By-law *except as otherwise provided herein*.

#### **4.1.7 Evaluation and Review (Section 13)**

It is recommended that this section be changed to delete the reference to the re-evaluation of the Terms of Reference in September 2003 since this has already taken place. The first sentence of this section will be amended to read: *The Terms of Reference for the York Region AAC will be re-evaluated in the third year of every Council term. Regional Council will have the prerogative of making changes to the Terms of Reference as required.*

#### **4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026**

All aspects of the implementation of the *ODA*, including the work of the York Region AAC have been grounded in the strategic direction and goals established in Vision 2026. Through the ongoing efforts of the AAC to fulfil their mandate and assist Council in improving opportunities for persons with disabilities in York Region, the Region will continuously move closer to accomplishing the goals set out in Vision 2026.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As outlined in the York Region AAC Terms of Reference, members of the York Region AAC serve without remuneration, with the exception of those members who are persons with disabilities. Members who are persons with disabilities will be provided with the resources related to their disability and that are deemed necessary for them to fully participate in the Committee (e.g. transportation, sign language interpretation, support care services etc.).

All costs associated with the implementation of the *ODA*, including support to the York Region AAC, are included in the proposed 2004 Budget.

### **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

Each of the nine area municipalities has also established an AAC in keeping with *ODA* requirements. Also in February 2003, a Municipal Staff Reference Group was established that included representatives from each of the area municipalities, hospitals and school boards. The purpose of this group is to share information and experiences related to accessibility planning and *ODA* implementation. As *ODA* implementation continues in 2004, efforts will be made to find ways to enable all of the AAC's in the Region to share information and work together on common issues and concerns.

**7. CONCLUSION**

Since the members of the York Region AAC were originally appointed, they have provided important insights and feedback into the Region's accessibility planning process. Over the course of the next year, the York Region AAC will continue to play an important role in the preparation and implementation of the Region's accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

*(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing has been forwarded to each Member of Council with the January 14, 2003 Community Services and Housing Committee agenda and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)*