

> > Understanding Barriers

York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan



*For Illustrative
Purposes Only*



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Bill Fisch



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Tim Jones
Town of Aurora



Mayor
James Young
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor
Jeffrey Holec
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor
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Mayor
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Township of King



Mayor
Tom Taylor
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
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William F. Bell
Town of Richmond Hill



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Mayor
Wayne Emmerson
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville



Regional Councillor
Bill O'Donnell
Town of Markham

Message from Regional Council

We are very pleased to present Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan to the citizens of York Region. This Plan outlines what Council will do in the next year to identify, remove and prevent barriers in order to make Regional government programs and services more accessible to people with disabilities.

Good, workable plans have many counsellors. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee has been, and continues to be, a great source of advice and support.

In addition, many residents sent us their comments on the draft Plan. They told us what accessibility means to them and their families. We heard that people want to participate in enhancing accessibility. We heard that this Plan is an important step in building accessible communities. We heard more needs to be done to remove and prevent the barriers that impact people with disabilities. We agree. Understanding Barriers incorporates much of what was heard. We thank you for helping us to better understand the barriers that are faced everyday by persons with disabilities and what we must do to make a difference.

The overwhelming response to our public consultation and Accessibility Advisory Committee recruitment process shows how much this issue matters to the residents of York Region. It clearly matters to us too.

This Plan describes our past successes. It describes actions that will be taken in the next year to remove or prevent barriers. Clearly, understanding what we can do better is a crucial part of moving ahead in a well thought-out manner. Therefore in this first year, an important focus of our work will be on gaining a better understanding of where barriers may exist in our regional programs and services. Every year through the activities outlined in this and each subsequent Plan, we will build on the work already underway to eliminate barriers. York Region intends to take a thoughtful, phased-in approach that recognizes achieving our accessibility goals at a practical pace, recognizing budgetary constraints. That's what stakeholders want. That's what we will deliver.

This and each subsequent Plan is an important component of our commitment to building the strong, caring and safe communities outlined in the Region's strategic plan, Vision 2026. Accessibility planning in York Region will progressively result in the changes necessary to reach our goal. We will not wait until the year 2026 to achieve this goal but move steadily towards it to the benefit of all York Region residents and communities.



Mayor
Donald Cousens
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor
Frank Scarpitti
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor
Gordon Landon
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor
Tony Wong
Town of Markham



Understanding Barriers

York Region's First Annual
Accessibility Plan

**For Illustrative
Purposes Only**



Message from York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Understanding Barriers is York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan. It describes in detail the many steps that will be taken by The Regional Municipality of York to enhance accessibility in the services, programs and facilities administered by the Region.

We have found it rewarding to work together to represent many different groups and interests from across the Region. We are honoured to be involved in the development of Understanding Barriers. This work is meaningful to all of us. We know from the response to the consultation process that it matters to many residents of York Region.

The development of this Plan is important both because of what it says and the clear commitment that it demonstrates by regional government in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with different types of disabilities. It is also significant because it marks the beginning of an ongoing, practical, phased-in process that will grow from one year to the next to enhance accessibility across the Region.

We are committed to using our expertise and varied backgrounds to give Regional Council advice in developing and, even more importantly, implementing effective accessibility plans. We are dedicated to ensuring that the voices of York Region's residents - especially those with disabilities - continue to be heard. While there is more to be done, York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan is a key step forward.

Respectfully Submitted
The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee



From Left to Right:
Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler (Georgina); Anwar Yussuf, citizen member; Joann Simmons, Commissioner Community Services and Housing; Kirsten Hill, citizen member; Sharon Abrahams, citizen member; Barbara Caiger, citizen member (seated); Mary Ann Proulx, citizen member; Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio (Vaughan) - Vice-Chair; Robert Hunn, citizen member (seated); Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch; Wilf Morley, citizen member; Trish Robichaud, citizen member; Regional Councillor Diane Humeniuk (Newmarket) - Chair.



Acknowledgements

Regional Council would like to thank the many people who contributed to the successful development and production of Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan.



The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee provided valuable advice and feedback in the development of Understanding Barriers. Their commitment to fostering a better understanding of the barriers that are faced by people with disabilities, and their commitment to supporting us as we make the changes that will make our services and programs more accessible, is extremely appreciated.



The members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee are:

- Regional Councillor Diane Humeniuk (Newmarket) - Chair
- Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio (Vaughan) - Vice-Chair
- Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler (Georgina)
- 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



The province did not fund the legislative requirements for municipalities to put their annual plans in place. Meeting those requirements was only made possible due to the dedication of staff who worked on this, in addition to their regular work. Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch personally championed this project. York Region CAO, Michael Garrett, all Regional Commissioners and York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge supported this inter-departmental team effort.



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Lina Bigioni, Executive Assistant to the Regional Chair and Manager of Corporate Events, for her advice and guidance throughout this process.

We also gratefully acknowledge exemplary work of the core team that led the work - Joann Simmons, Commissioner of Community Services and Housing who provided overall direction and guidance; Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director

Policy and Program Support Services Division who with Lisa Gonsalves, Policy Advisor, Office of the Regional Chair, led the project and the development of this Plan; and Monica Bryce, Senior Policy Analyst.

Very special thanks goes to the members of the ODA Staff Committee. This Plan is a result of the expertise and commitment of the following individuals from across the Regional Municipality of York: Tom Appleby, Laura Atkins-Paul, Diane Bladek-Willett, Beverley Cassidy-Moffatt, Barry Crowe, Angela Dinatolo, Richard Doust, Kelly Fenchak, Tony Fernandes, Joanne Fowler, Don Gordon, Nancy Harris, Andrea Howat, Joy Hulton, John Jacob, Denis Kelly, Jill Klywak, Wendy Lewis, Leonard Ng, Vito Palmeri, Craig Piper, Val Sequeira, Russ Smye, Krista South, Susan Taylor, Darwin Trojan, Sandra Vessel and Meg West.

Special thanks also to staff members Charlene Garside, Kevin Girard and Liz Weldon in the production of both the print and electronic versions of Understanding Barriers.

We would also like to thank each of the staff named below for their expertise and advice:

Jim Davidson, Commissioner Corporate Services
Deputy Chief Bruce Herridge, York Regional Police
Sharon Doyle, York Region Transit Mobility Plus
Bonnie Anderson, Corporate Services
Sylvia Patterson, Michelle Canale, Barb Carleton, Lina DeMarco, Beth Kemmers, Tina Kilbourne, Robin Nadorozny, Kathryn Nevins and Van Vilaysinh from the Community Services and Housing Department
Tina Pettrilli and Nancy Roy from the Health Services Department,
Marc Gallant and Laura Merrall, Corporate Communications Services
Susan Neill, Office of the Regional Clerk.





Understanding Barriers - Let Us Know What You Think!

Your comments are important to us. Please let us know what you think about *Understanding Barriers*. Your comments will help us in developing future accessibility plans.

Please mail or fax us.

Mail: Policy and Program Support Services Division
Community Services and Housing Department
The Regional Municipality of York
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You may also give us your comments by email.

AccessYork@region.york.on.ca

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- Use the following citation when referencing this document:
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- Acknowledge that York Region is providing a copy of its material for reference purposes only, and that the organization is responsible and liable for compliance with the ODA.

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> > Regional Overview



Introduction

Accessibility Planning in York Region

Introduction

The Regional Municipality of York was created on January 1, 1971, and is located in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It is one of six regional governments in Ontario and covers a total area of 1,762 square kilometres. The Region is made up of nine area municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, and Whitchurch-Stouffville. This combination of large urban, small urban, and rural areas allows residents to easily enjoy the many benefits of city living as well as the green, wide-open spaces of country living.

Population Trends

As of December 31, 2002, the total population of York Region was 830,000. Each year, the Region adds 40,000 new residents, making it the fastest growing region in Ontario. More than two-thirds (73%) of York Region residents live in the three southern municipalities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan.

York Region is culturally diverse. Over time, immigrants to Canada are accounting for a larger proportion of the Region's total population (35.8% in 1996; 39.1% in 2001). York Region also has the highest percentage of baby boomers than any other area of the GTA, as well as the largest percentage of people born between 1980 and 1996 (known as the baby boom echo). By the year 2026, York Region's population is expected to reach 1.28 million.

The number of York Region residents 65 years of age and over in 2001 (68,000) is expected to more than triple by 2026, to 263,000. This will have a direct impact on the services and programs residents expect and require from all levels of government including regional government.

Overall, York Region residents enjoy the longest life expectancy in the Province, a higher than average level of education and income, and lower than average rates of unemployment, obesity, and incidence of cancer.



Persons with Disabilities in York Region

According to the *York Region Health Status Report 2002: A Measure of Health*: in 1996/97, the prevalence of long-term disability among York Region residents age 12 to 64 was lower than the Ontario average (5% versus 8%, respectively). However, among York Region residents 65 and over, the prevalence of long-term disability (24%) was higher than the Ontario average (21%).

York Region's Response to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

The *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is a provincial act that requires both regional and local municipalities as well as hospitals, school boards, colleges and universities to prepare annual accessibility plans. The ODA exists to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities in Ontario through the identification, removal and prevention of physical and other barriers.

Like all municipalities in Ontario, York Region will meet the requirements of the ODA by preparing and implementing an annual Accessibility Plan.

The implementation of the ODA impacts on many levels of government. A brief summary of the various items that the three different levels of government - provincial, The Regional Municipality of York and York Region's area municipalities are responsible for in their accessibility planning is outlined in this section.

The Provincial government has a wide range of responsibilities that impact on every aspect of life in the Province of Ontario. Overall the provincial government sets legislation and establishes province-wide standards for various programs and services (such as Ontario Works and municipal planning) and directly delivers other services and programs (such as the Ontario Disability Support Program).

The *Municipal Act, 2001* is the provincial legislation that outlines the areas of regional and local area municipal responsibility.

In general, The Regional Municipality of York provides those services and programs that are best delivered across wide areas, or those requiring large-scale coordination.

The following list illustrates the specific types of services provided at the Regional and Area municipal levels.

The Regional Municipality of York	Area Municipalities
· Police · Emergency Medical Services (Ambulance/Paramedics) · Public Health Services · Long-Term Care · Social Assistance · Housing and Residential Services · Family and Children's Services · Regional Planning/Growth Management · Regional Economic Development and Tourism · Arterial Roads · Transit · Water Treatment and Delivery · Waste Disposal · Sewage Treatment · Human Services Planning · Regional Emergency Preparedness · Court Administration	· Fire Protection · Local Planning · Local Economic Development · Building and Plumbing · By-law Enforcement · Licensing · Local Roads · Waste Collection · Local Roads · Local Sewage · Tax Collection · Parks, Recreation & Heritage · Libraries · Local Emergency Planning



The ODA states that each accessibility plan shall address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities in the municipality's by-laws and in its policies, programs, practices and services. York Region is well positioned to meet the new requirements of the ODA. In its long-term strategic plan, *Vision 2026, Creating Strong Caring Safe Communities*, the Region identified accessibility as a guiding principle ("*Providing programs, services and facilities that are available to all, regardless of location or personal mobility*") and established the following goal:

In 2026, York Region residents will live, work, play and learn in healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods that are vibrant, exciting and people-friendly. Residents will continue to enjoy the high quality of life that attracted them to York and will have a strong sense of belonging and commitment to their communities.

Work is already underway to implement *Vision 2026*. Examples of important corporate initiatives that demonstrate the Region's commitment to eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities include:

- York Region's Official Plan
- Human Services Strategy
- York Region Transit 5-Year Service Plans
- Transportation Master Plan
- Housing Supply Strategy
- York Region Rapid Transit Plan

While York Region has already started to address physical barriers, the ODA has helped the Region take a broader view of disabilities and focus more of its efforts on other types of barriers, such as policies, practices and attitudes. Using *Vision 2026* as the broad framework, the Region has developed a strategic response to the ODA and taken steps to ensure that its accessibility planning reflects the Region's vision and meets the needs and realities of residents.

To lay the foundation for a progressive accessibility planning process, Regional Council's first step was to appoint an Interim Accessibility Advisory Council (IAAC). Members of the IAAC included Regional Councillor Diane Humeniuk from Newmarket (Chair), Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler from Georgina (Vice-Chair), Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio from Vaughan, and Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch (ex-officio). Supported by Council, this Committee:

- Developed a Terms of Reference for the future York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)
- Developed a recruitment strategy for members to the York Region AAC and recommended appointments to the York Region AAC
- Established a framework for accessibility planning that will continue to be used as the ODA is implemented in York Region
- Established a cross-sector municipal reference group including school boards, hospitals, and local municipalities to share information and avoid gaps and duplication
- Established a staff committee of senior staff from across the Region under the leadership of the Community Services and Housing Department to develop, review, implement, and evaluate the Region's Accessibility Plan. The ODA Staff Committee also provides advisory staff support to the York Region AAC and plays a crucial role in the development of each Department's individual accessibility plan by spearheading the accessibility planning process within each Department.

The Interim Accessibility Advisory Committee was dissolved on March 27, 2003, when the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee was established.



The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a committee of Regional Council which reports to Council through the Community Services and Housing Committee. As required by the ODA, the York Region AAC plays a critical role in advising Council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its annual Accessibility Plan. Regional Council will also seek the AAC's advice as it establishes criteria for the Region's procurement practices and building requirements. After these criteria are established, the Region will continue to seek the AAC's advice in these and other areas.

The members of the York Region AAC are:

- Regional Councillor Diane Humeniuk (Newmarket) - Chair
- Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio (Vaughan) - Vice-Chair
- Regional Councillor Danny Wheeler (Georgina)
- Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch (ex-officio)
- Sharon Abrahams, Citizen member
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- 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

Accessibility Planning in York Region

Through accessibility planning and with the advice of the AAC, York Region will strategically identify, remove, and prevent many different types of barriers over time.

The York Region Accessibility Plan Policy Framework

The York Region Accessibility Plan Policy Framework, approved by Regional Council in February 2003, provides strategic direction for the development of the Region's annual Accessibility Plans. The Accessibility Plan Policy Framework:

- Details how York Region will continue to promote and enhance accessibility through its annual Accessibility Plans
- Provides clear policy direction for departmental contributions to the accessibility planning process
- Provides tools individual departments can use to create consistent and strategic annual plans.



York Region's First Accessibility Plan - Core Principles

York Region supports the ODA and will meet its obligations under the Act. However, the Region recognizes that all accessibility plans must reflect a balance of stakeholder priorities as well as the Region's ability to achieve incremental changes within Regional priorities and budgeted resources.

With its first Accessibility Plan, the Region will take a comprehensive look at its bylaws, services, policies, procedures, practices, and programs to determine which ones need to be accessible to everyone. This first Plan provides the baseline and establishes where the Region is in the accessibility process. It includes:

- Accessibility achievements
- A description of how barriers will be identified
- A description of barriers to be removed/prevented.

The first Plan also:

- Focuses primarily on establishing barrier identification processes, which would then be used to identify existing barriers in the core businesses of each regional department
- Examines and establishes criteria for the Region's procurement practices with a focus on procurement processes and evaluation
- Examines and establishes criteria for the Region's building requirements as outlined in the ODA.

Getting Involved: Developing Understanding Barriers

Consultation on the development of Understanding Barriers: York Region's First Annual Accessibility Plan included a variety of activities designed to gather input and feedback from people across the Region.

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) played a key role in the development of this Plan. The AAC actively participated in the public consultation process and provided a series of recommendations that were incorporated into the consultation draft of Understanding Barriers. The AAC also provided feedback into this final version of the Plan.

Residents of York Region and representatives of organizations and agencies that provide services to people with disabilities in the Region were invited to provide comments on the draft Plan. Public consultation on the draft of Understanding Barriers was held between May 22, 2003 and June 20, 2003. The consultation draft of the Plan was made widely available across the Region and posted on the Region's website. Over 400 copies of the draft Plan were distributed and nearly 600 hits were recorded on the website during the consultation period. Written and verbal comments were also received from members of the public. Comments could be submitted directly to the Region using a standard comment form, through telephone contact or by attending a consultation session at the York Region Administrative Centre on Tuesday June 17, 2003.



Members of the public who attended the consultation session were representative of the Region's diverse population. Over 50 residents from across York Region with ages ranging from approximately 12 - 80, and from varied backgrounds were present. Participants included: people with a range of disabilities; people from various organizations that represent or provide services to people with disabilities in York Region; members representing some area municipal accessible advisory committees as well as a representative from local school boards. The consultation provided an opportunity for staff and members of the York Region AAC to learn and hear directly from individuals who use the Region's programs and services about ways to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities across the Region.

While participants appreciated what has already been done to make transit, buildings and the community more accessible, they believe that more can be done to improve life for people with disabilities. The public appreciated having the opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan. Participants also want the opportunity to stay involved in the accessibility planning process.

The strong participation at the consultation session demonstrates a strong interest in accessibility issues in the Region. It became evident through the consultation process that people with disabilities have a desire to be involved in accessibility planning in York Region.

A summary of the comments received during the consultation process is available on the Region's website www.region.york.on.ca.

Accessibility Plan Highlights

The Regional Municipality of York's first Accessibility Plan is comprised of individual accessibility plans for Regional services and corporate management departments. The following sections of the Plan highlight some of the initiatives that the Region has already implemented and initiatives that the Region plans to undertake in 2004 to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. They provide a summary of:

- York Region's achievements and planned initiatives in 2003 in making its programs and services more accessible
- Core business service areas that will be reviewed in 2004 to identify barriers to accessibility
- How and where barriers to the Region's programs and services will be removed/prevented in 2004.



> > York Region's Accessibility Plan - Executive Summary



Accessibility Achievements

Next Steps: Identifying Barriers

Next Steps: Addressing Barriers

Conclusion

Accessibility Achievements

As part of its commitment to create strong, caring, safe communities, York Region has already implemented a number of initiatives designed to make the community, regional government and services more accessible. These initiatives have been implemented across many of the Region's programs and services, as well as within its workplace. The following describes York Region's achievements, including the Region's past achievements and planned initiatives in 2003 in making its communities more accessible.

Making Travel in the Region Safer and Easier

To participate in the community, all residents, including people with disabilities, must be able to travel easily and safely. When building roads and sidewalks, approving new developments, and providing transportation services, York Region has taken several steps to make the community more accessible.

Public Transit Services

- In 2001, Regional Council adopted the York Region Transit 5-Year Service Plans for both conventional and Mobility Plus transit services. Approximately 45% of the Region's conventional buses are now equipped with low floors and ramps that make it easier for seniors and people with physical disabilities to board. All new buses are wheelchair accessible and come equipped with special access features, such as grab rails, and special designated seating



- Mobility Plus, York Region's specialized transit service, has revised its eligibility criteria, allowing greater access to this service and updated its application process, removing administrative barriers.
- All new specialized vehicles have low floors and are equipped with ramps. Drivers receive special training so they can help passengers board and make sure they are secure and can travel safely.
- To help customers travel more easily, Mobility Plus introduced a no-transfer policy for trips that cross municipal boundaries and a fare zone system. Riders can now travel throughout York Region on the same vehicle at a reasonable cost.
- Mobility Plus has also established designated pick-up and drop-off points at major destinations in York Region, such as hospitals and malls, to make the system easier for customers to use.
- New standardized bus stop designs incorporate accessibility features such as, a two-metre walkway connecting the sidewalk and passenger standing areas along regional and municipal arterial roads.
- Transit planners review development applications to ensure that access to transit services and facilities is considered.

Road Services

- The Region's standards for drop curbs have been modified to eliminate the 25-mm "lip", which was a barrier for people in wheelchairs.

- Standards for sidewalks have also been modified to include directional grooves that warn pedestrians with visual impairments when they are approaching intersections.
- Working with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), the Transportation and Works Department has installed audible traffic control signals at certain intersections that help people who are blind or visually impaired cross safely. At other intersections, countdown signals tell people how much time is left before the light will change, so they can decide whether to cross or wait for the next light.
- To make it easier for people to find their way around, York Region has changed the lettering on its street signs, making it larger and easier to read.

Making Regional Services More Accessible

York Region has also taken effective steps to make health, community, housing, police, and waste services more accessible and more responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.

Long-Term Care Services

- Long-Term Care facilities operated by the Region have been retrofitted with power doors, stronger and more energy efficient lighting, and ergonomic furniture. All these changes are designed to make it easier for seniors, who may have problems with eyesight, co-ordination, physical strength, and agility.



- The Region has made investments to ensure health services are accessible to people with disabilities and are sensitive to their needs. The redeveloped Newmarket Health Centre provides 100 fully accessible resident rooms equipped with accessible washrooms, electrically operated beds, ceiling lifts, and transfer poles. Its elevators have been upgraded, more parking has been designated for people with disabilities, and the height of the dining tables can be adjusted to meet residents' needs.
- Other changes at York Region's health care facilities are designed to meet the needs of people with cognitive disabilities. For example, the Newmarket and Maple Health Centres and the Maple and Keswick Gardens Day Centres now have secure garden areas with wide circular paths, raised gardens, and wheelchair accessible gazebos which give seniors access to the outdoors but prevent wandering. The facilities are also using visual aids, such as pictures on doors instead of names, to help residents identify their rooms. They have also added Snozelon rooms, where soft lighting, waterfalls, a tranquil setting, aromatherapy and massage help residents relax and provide sensory stimulation.

Community Services

- The Community Services and Housing Department has developed partnerships with employment assistance programs for people with disabilities and can refer people with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities to these programs.

Housing Services

- Through its Housing Supply Strategy, York Region is providing more affordable, accessible rental housing for seniors, frail elderly, and adults with disabilities. The redevelopment of the Newmarket Health Centre's east wing will provide 58 new rental units.

Health Services

- Emergency vehicles have been redesigned to be more visible in the community, and now have better exterior emergency lights and a louder back up alarm so that people who are blind or visually impaired or are Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing will be aware when emergency vehicles are on the roads. To help those who use the ambulances, the Region has installed a lowered step on the side door and better grab handles inside.

York Regional Police

- York Regional Police has revised its policies, procedures, and training to ensure that officers are more sensitive to the needs of people with sensory or cognitive disabilities, and are able to assist them.
- York Regional Police have also developed new policies and training to help officers respond appropriately to people who are emotionally disturbed.
- The Region's police vehicles now use the same colour scheme as police services in the rest of the province, making it easier for all citizens to recognize them.
- The police communications centre has a Teletypewriter (TTY) line for people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.

Recycling Services

- The Region's contractor at the household hazardous waste facility will unload waste from the vehicle for all residents.



Making Regional Facilities, Information and Activities More Accessible

York Region's goal is to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to participate in Regional government. This means making buildings, information, and activities more accessible.

Regional Facilities

The Region has taken several steps to modify buildings and make them more accessible. For example:

- Power assisted and electro-magnetic hold doors have been installed in the Committee and Seminar rooms.
- In Council Chambers, councillors' desks have been cut to accommodate wheelchairs, microphone controls have been relocated, and moveable microphones have been installed.
- At the Regional Administrative Centre, the information kiosk has been redesigned to ensure people in wheelchairs can use it, the height of desks at public access Internet terminals can be adjusted, and a heated wheelchair ramp has been constructed at the loading dock rear door.
- Reception counters at the South Services Centre and the Georgina Social Services Building were lowered and redesigned to make it easier for people with physical disabilities to talk to the receptionist.
- The payment counter at the Court Administration Office at the Tannery in Newmarket has been modified to allow customers wheelchair access.

- Wider, power-assisted washroom doors have been installed at the South Services Centre and the Georgina Social Services Building.
- The Transportation and Works reception desk was relocated to be closer to the main entrance at the Administrative Centre.
- The parking and approach areas at the Region's satellite office located at 62 Bayview Avenue in Newmarket were resurfaced to provide a safer, more level entrance to the building.
- York Regional Police have designated more wheelchair accessible parking spaces, modified entranceways to existing buildings, and introduced Braille signage. All new facilities must incorporate these accessibility features.

Information about Regional Services

Changes to the physical environment alone are not enough to ensure that all citizens can participate. York Region has also looked closely at its processes and information to remove barriers. For example:

- The Community Services and Housing Department collects information on 48 disability-related services in the community and publishes this information in YorkLink (York Region's Community Services Directory). YorkLink also specifies the agencies that are accessible to people with physical or sensory disabilities.
- KidsLine provides callers with information on and referrals to services for children with disabilities.
- In its workshops and presentations, the Region's Health Services Department is now tailoring the way it delivers information to meet the community's needs, including:



- using larger print, more readable fonts, and more illustrations in printed materials
- using microphones at workshops
- providing sign language services on request
- implementing contrast/colour techniques to help people who have problems with depth perception.

- The Region has improved the speaker system in Council Chambers and provides hearing assistance devices to help people who are deafened or hard of hearing hear Council discussions.
- The Region has installed better quality audio systems in the Committee Rooms, Council Chambers, and seminar rooms.
- Hearing assist units are available in Committee Room B at the Administrative Centre.
- The maps used by the Planning Department have been redesigned with larger lettering and stronger colours to make them easier for people with visual impairments to read.
- Regional departments have made information available on-line through the Region's web site making it easier for people who cannot physically go to regional offices to access information.

Creating an Accessible Workplace

York Region is committed to enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The Region has taken several steps to make it easier for existing employees to do their jobs and to attract new employees:

- To ensure that people with disabilities are aware of job opportunities with the Region, the Corporate Services department provides a 24-hour Career Opportunity Line and York Regional Police provides an automated attendant phone system that gives callers information about job opportunities.
- At its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response stations, York Region has made the following architectural changes to make the sites more accessible: installed accessible washrooms, lounge, kitchen, and offices as well as replaced the outdoor signs with ones that are highly visible.
- To accommodate people in wheelchairs, the postage machine was relocated to the main floor of the Administration Centre and was put on a table with accessible height (e.g., 28 inches).
- The Region participates in a York Region District School Board program to provide work experience opportunities for students with cognitive impairments (i.e., Accessing Community Experience program).

Technological Improvements

The Region has redesigned its web site to make it easier for all citizens to use by:

- Adding a site map to provide a quick reference and placing a descriptor tag on each web page that gives information about the content and graphics - which makes it easier for people who are blind or visually impaired use web reading software programs to navigate the site and scan documents



- Standardizing all documents in one format to make it easier for people using voice recognition software
- Changing the colours to ensure they contrast, and avoiding combinations of colours that are problematic for people with colour blindness (e.g., red and green, blue and yellow)
- Providing executive summaries of file attachments
- Implementing a web-auditing program (the Bobby) that will be used to monitor the web site and ensure it complies with the Region's vision of accessibility.

The Region has also updated its information technology to include the following accessibility features:

- Narrator, which can read text for users who are blind or visually impaired
- Magnifier, which magnifies text for users with visual impairments
- Sticky Keys, which helps workers who have difficulty pressing two keys simultaneously
- Compatibility with more than a dozen assistive technology products, such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, on-screen keyboards, one-handed keyboards, and augmentative communication devices (e.g., Braille devices)
- A unified messaging system that is accessible to workers with visual impairments.

Policy and Process Improvements

- York Regional Police and the Region have developed return-to-work policies and practices designed to help employees with physical, sensory, and cognitive impairments return to the workforce.

- To meet the needs of an employee with poor colour vision, the Transportation and Works Department changed the method and field kit it was using for chemical testing.
- The colour and lettering of labels used in wastewater facilities has been standardized to allow employees to identify equipment by colour coding.

Next Steps: Identifying Barriers

While York Region has already done a great deal to eliminate physical, architectural, technological, information, communication, attitudinal, and policy or practice barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in the community, more can still be done. Based on its own commitment and vision of strong, caring, safe communities and the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (ODA), the Region has identified certain specific aspects of its operations that will be assessed for possible barriers.

Travel and Movement

York Region will review the following aspects of its transportation network:

Public Transit Services

- York Region plans to review its specialized transit service and to identify barriers for people with disabilities. The review will assess survey results from people who use Mobility Plus and will recommend ways to eliminate barriers and improve service.



- York Region will also conduct a review of the Region's conventional transit service, including accessible bus stops and facilities, and identify any opportunities to make these services more accessible.

Road Services

York Region is aware that the ability to move safely on its streets and sidewalks is crucial for everyone, including people with disabilities. To determine whether people with disabilities face barriers during construction or winter weather, the Region plans to identify issues and find ways to address them by:

- Identifying pedestrian needs during the planning and design stages of any road/sidewalk construction and ensuring that access is a part of construction specifications
- Working with local municipalities to discuss problems caused by winter maintenance of intersections
- Reviewing the timing of traffic control signals to determine if current timing allows enough time for seniors or people with disabilities to cross intersections
- Reviewing the Region's on-street parking by-law to assess the need to designate some on-street parking spots for people with disabilities.

Public Safety and Emergency Planning

Emergency Management Services

- The Emergency Management Branch plans to work with government organizations and community agencies (e.g., home-based care agencies, residential healthcare facilities, emergency responders, local disability organizations and advocacy groups for

the disabled) to identify clusters of people with disabilities who live or work in the Region and involve them in the emergency plan needs assessment process.

Access to Regional Services

York Region is responsible for delivering a range of health, social, and community services and has done a great deal to make these services accessible. In 2004, the Region's services will implement a number of initiatives to identify barriers.

Health Services

- Using a combination of client surveys, complaint reviews, and other strategies to involve the community, the Health Services Department will assess whether there are barriers in current practices used to deliver health services (e.g., clinics, educational forums, public meetings, public consultations).
- Complaints and client surveys will be reviewed to determine whether the process used to gather information (i.e., the health services forms) are a barrier for people with visual or cognitive impairments or people with arthritis. Health Services staff plan to identify possible changes to the forms as well as to the approaches used by staff in helping people to complete these forms.
- Health Services will assess the mechanisms they use to disseminate information about special services (such as Health Connections' TTY line for people who are deaf or deafened) in order to increase awareness of these services and encourage their use by the public.
- For the assessment, staff will survey clients to assess their awareness of services and to test possible marketing strategies.



- Printed materials, web site information, and business cards will also be reviewed to see whether they are accessible to all citizens, and identify strategies to make the automated phone system more responsive and user friendly.

Community Services

- Using a combination of client surveys and other types of consultation, the Community Services and Housing Department will assess certain practices, policies, and documents to determine whether they create barriers for clients with disabilities. In particular, they will examine:
 - the Ontario Works application process
 - in-house Ontario Works employment workshops
 - the child care fee assistance application process
 - the communication needs of KidsLine callers
 - the communication needs of Access Centre callers
 - all new or updated communication products to eliminate any barriers for people with sensory or cognitive disabilities.
- Managers and staff will also work with the training unit to review staff needs for sensitivity training in providing both information and services to people with disabilities.

Housing Services

- To meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities applying for special needs units in York Region, staff will work with housing providers and consult with community support agencies to determine whether the Region should develop a centralized waiting list for people or households with special needs.

York Regional Police

- York Regional Police plan to review existing policies and procedures, by-laws and best practices - including signage policies, policies for dealing with people who are Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing, people in wheelchairs, or people who are emotionally disturbed at the scene of an incident. They will also assess all available technologies, hardware, and software used in policing to identify barriers for people with disabilities.
- York Regional Police will monitor the frequency of calls on its TTY line, and review its training methods to assess customer satisfaction, service capacity, and effectiveness.
- The forms commonly used by the public to provide information to the police will be assessed for any barriers.

Making Regional Facilities More Accessible

While York Region has made significant investments in ensuring its buildings are accessible; there may still be some physical barriers. In 2004, York Region will:

- Conduct a pilot study of the Regional Administrative Centre to assess whether it meets current building code standards for accessibility and identify existing barriers or problem areas (e.g., signage, lighting, flooring, technology, reception areas, colour schemes).
- Develop a list of the types of buildings to be evaluated and inspected in order of priority.



- Begin to inspect facilities (in order of priority) to assess whether they meet current building code standards for accessibility.
- Develop new accessibility criteria to evaluate all regionally owned and leased facilities in the future.
- Ensure that any renovation or new construction of police facilities comply with all applicable by-laws and best practices.
- Review current leaseholds, leasing practices, and standard leasing agreements as well as inspect all leased facilities to identify any barriers or problems.
- Review the wording of standard lease agreements to ensure that facilities leased in the future are reasonably barrier-free.
- Legal staff will work with Property Services to identify the responsibilities of landlords of the Region's leasehold facilities in complying with the ODA.

Participation in Regional Government

York Region is committed to identifying and removing barriers to participating in Regional government and its programs and activities.

Council Meetings, Procedures and By-Laws

- The Region will investigate the use of teleconferencing services to enable citizens to call in and listen to Council and Committee meetings.
- To help different departments identify possible barriers, the Corporate Services Department will review all regional by-laws, as well as the publication standards for Council and committee agendas and reports.

Customer Service

- Legal Services' next customer service survey will include a question designed to help identify any barriers in delivering services to people with disabilities.

Regional Planning

- Regional planners will review the Regional Official Plan policies designed to guide area municipalities in ensuring accessible urban design.
- Staff will review the practices they use to disseminate information (e.g., size of documents, size of print, colour) and notify people about planning meetings (e.g., notices in local media, documents posted on web site) to determine whether they are reaching people with disabilities; if not, they will identify alternatives.
- Undertake an assessment of planning meeting locations for their accessibility, and develop a list of criteria for meeting locations (e.g., accessibility to transit, accessible building, special needs requirements).
- Review the York Explorer program and applications for barriers and explore options to make the information more accessible, such as tactile mapping and assistive software for people with visual impairments.



Purchasing and Procurement Practices

- Staff will review the Region's purchasing and procurement practices and procedures and consult with stakeholders and software providers to identify ways to eliminate any barriers (e.g., making bid documents available on-line, revising the evaluation process).

Communicating with the Public

- The Corporate Communications Division will develop new visual identity standards, including graphic standards that take into account the needs of people with disabilities.
- Corporate Communications will also continually assess the Region's web site for accessibility, and phase in the same accessibility features for the Region's Intranet and other electronic services.
- York Regional Police will review its brochures and web site for both content and presentation, and assess the sites where it holds community forums to ensure they are accessible.

Employment Opportunities

In 2004, the Corporate Services Department plans to assess a number of the Region's human resources processes and procedures including:

- Human resource policies, including the potential for a work-at-home policy that will meet the needs of all employees including people with disabilities
- The Career Line to ensure that this service is barrier free
- The process for scheduling interviews and the need to provide applicants with accommodations for the interview
- The testing process and whether it can accommodate applicants with disabilities
- The need for one TTY line in Human Resources.

York Regional Police plan to review testing and interviewing guidelines to ensure there are no obstacles for people applying for work, and assess its current policies on accommodating employees with injuries or disabilities.

Next Steps: Addressing Barriers

York Region is devoting the first year of implementing the ODA to assessing its policies, practices, processes and facilities to identify barriers to ensure that changes are strategic and effective. However, the Region has already identified some barriers that can and will begin to be addressed in 2004.



Make Public Transit More Accessible

York Region Transit has identified a number of improvements that will be made to the specialized transit and conventional transit systems to make these systems more accessible to persons with disabilities. To improve services for customers with disabilities York Region Transit will:

- Move to a performance-based procurement process and model contract. As part of the contract, the contractor will agree to meet certain quality and performance standards, and the Region will use certain indicators, such as on-time service and customer satisfaction to assess the service.
- Provide special training for both in-house and contracted services, to ensure drivers understand different disabilities and are sensitive to customers' needs.
- Collaborate with the Wheel Trans Service in Toronto to implement a pilot project that would give York Region residents transit service into Toronto.
- Establish partnerships with health and social services agencies, and co-ordinate transportation to programs, making it easier for riders to travel to and from appointments.
- Develop criteria for an "accessible bus stop", prepare an inventory of accessible bus stops in the Region, and develop a process to improve street infrastructure and access to transit facilities.

Provide More Accessible Apartments for Seniors and People with Disabilities

With accessible living space and support services in the community, seniors and people with disabilities can continue to live independently and be active members of the community. To meet the needs for accessible housing, York Region will:

- Modify 20 rental units at Hadley Grange to make them fully accessible for people with disabilities
- Renovate an existing building in Newmarket to make it more accessible and provide up to 60 new affordable rental housing units for frail elderly and disabled adults.

Strengthen Services for People with Cognitive or Mental Health Disabilities

With mental health reform, more people with mental health problems are receiving care in the community and may occasionally experience a crisis.

In 2004, York Regional Police are implementing programs designed to help people in the community with mental health disabilities. Police officers will be trained to:

- Recognize a mental health crisis or identify people who are vulnerable, know how to respond appropriately, and link them with community-based programs



Improve Access to Regional Facilities

In 2004, York Region will make it easier for people with disabilities to access Regional facilities by:

- Constructing new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) stations in Richmond Hill, East Gwillimbury, Markham, and Vaughan and upgrading existing stations with wider hallways, accessible washrooms, and electronic door openers
- Installing an elevator in the new Material Recovery Centre in East Gwillimbury to ensure access to the Public Education Centre and meeting rooms.

Improve Access to Regional Activities and Information

York Region will make a number of changes designed to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in Regional government activities and receive information about the Region's programs and services.

The Region will:

- Make public meetings more accessible by ensuring locations are accessible and providing different forms of communication
- Develop a primer/guide on the language that staff should use when communicating with and referring to people with disabilities
- Ensure Health Services staff are aware of all resources available to people with disabilities (e.g., TTY line, sign language contacts, accessible features in the buildings, web capabilities)
- Complete the site map for people with visual impairments on the Region's web site
- Redesign the York Explorer program and applications, as well as the graphics and web applications to disseminate planning information to make it more accessible to people with visual, sensory, or physical disabilities.
- Provide audio streaming between the Council Chambers, Seminar Room and Committee Rooms at the Administrative Centre.



Conclusion

Barriers for people with disabilities take many forms. They can be physical - a door knob that cannot be opened by someone with limited arm strength. They can also be architectural - a doorway that is too narrow for a wheelchair, or technological - a web site that cannot be accessed by someone with a visual impairment. There are information barriers, such as typefaces that are too small for people with vision impairments, and there are communication barriers, such as people who speak too loudly when talking to someone who is Deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. Some barriers are a function of attitudes: some people may discourage someone who is disabled from participating in a program just because they think they are not "able". Some barriers can be unintentionally institutionalized in an organization's policies and practices. For example, some organizations have a practice of only sounding auditory alarms to warn people of fire without taking into account whether that is adequate for people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.

In its long-term strategic plan, York Region made a commitment that, by 2026, all its "residents will live, work, play and learn in healthy, accessible and safe neighbourhoods". The Region is already actively engaged in identifying and removing barriers - particularly physical barriers. The requirements of the ODA have helped the Region understand more about the broad range of disabilities, and focus more strategically on other barriers.

Making York Region accessible will be an ongoing process. In the first year of accessibility planning, the Region is focusing on identifying problems and barriers. In subsequent years, it will work within its resources and other priorities to remove and prevent those barriers. The Region recognizes that the investment it makes in identifying and removing barriers for people with disabilities will benefit everyone. Wider doorways, automatic doors and curb cuts may be installed to help people in wheelchairs, but they also help parents with strollers or young children, and people carrying heavy bags. Clearer signs and larger lettering are designed to meet the needs of people with visual impairments, but they make information more accessible to everyone. The 24-hour Career Line helps people who cannot leave their homes, but it also makes it easier for anyone to get job information. Better policies, practices, and forms are good for us all. These changes are an integral part of creating strong caring safe communities and giving all residents a sense of belonging.



> > Departmental Accessibility Plans



Community Services and Housing

Corporate Communications Services

Corporate Services

Emergency Management Services

Finance

Health Services

Planning and Development Services

Transportation and Works

York Regional Police

Community Services and Housing

Environmental Scan

Community Services and Housing will address the following issues:

Accessible Programs

- Initiate a review of existing practices, policies, and communication methods to ensure that Community Services and Housing programs are accessible to persons with a range of disabilities.

Staff Training

- Identify gaps in current training practices in combination with Human Resource Services regarding awareness, identification, and solutions for York Region citizens with disabilities. Included in this will be an exploration of the potential for community partners to have input into ongoing staff training related to services for disabled persons.

Access to Information

- Identify barriers for York Region citizens to access of information about our programs and services.

Our Customers

Housing and Residential Services Division

The Housing and Residential Services Division directly manages 1,695 social housing units through the operations of Housing York Inc. The Division also administers over 6,099 social housing units through 47 independent non-profit and co-operative Housing Providers and is responsible for the co-ordination of a region-wide wait list for subsidized housing, ensuring one-window access across the social housing system.



The Division administers service delivery of approximately 360 Domiciliary and Emergency Shelter beds through 28 non-profit and commercial operators. The Homemakers and Nurses Program provides in-home care and support, and the Homelessness Initiatives provide prevention and intervention programs for York residents.

Housing Programs Unit

Our customers include:

- Individuals and households applying for rent geared-to-income housing or residential services
- Social Housing Providers
- Private landlords providing rent supplement units
- Community agencies.

Housing Operations Unit (Housing York Inc.)

Our customers include the residents in our housing whose levels of capability range significantly. Among the almost 1695 households, we have a number of frail elderly as well people with physical, developmental, or intellectual disabilities.

While some of the residents require physical modifications to their living environment to accommodate their health issues, a number of them simply require support in one form or another. These supports are provided through local associations such as March of Dimes, Canadian Mental Health Association, York South Association for Community Living, Community Living Newmarket/Aurora District, Loft Community Services (Crosslinks), the Regions' Alternative Community Living Program and CHATS (Community Home Assistance to Seniors). Agreements with these associations are in place which include the dedication of a total of 83 rental units to their clients.

Incoming residents requiring modified housing accommodation are accommodated through placement in residential housing units that can be either fully handicapped equipped or fully accessible units.

Elderly residents or non-elderly residents with progressively disabling conditions can be transferred to more suitable accommodation as their condition progresses or they may relocate to other facilities where the supports they need are available, such as institutional settings.

Social Assistance Division

The Social Assistance Division provides financial and employment assistance to approximately 8700 York Region residents annually (including adults & children). This comprises approximately 4100 family units.

The demographics of our customers vary widely. We serve:

- People of all ages, including children and the elderly
- People with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds
- Persons in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Persons with a broad range of physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities.

The needs of our customers are:

- Financial assistance for food, shelter, and additional expenses
- Employment assistance that supports the participant's shortest route to employment

Financial assistance available for persons with disabilities:

- All Ontario Works participants receive an Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) card with their monthly social assistance cheque. The ODB card covers the costs of all prescription medications listed on the drug formulary.



- Social assistance and ODSP recipients with disabilities may be eligible to receive additional financial assistance with the cost of health-related items such as:
 - Mobility aids (i.e. walkers)
 - Foot orthotics
 - Vision & Dental care
 - Prosthetic devices (i.e. hearing aids)
 - Home repairs or renovations (i.e. addition of ramps, grab bars in the shower)
 - Wheelchair repairs and batteries
 - Other eligible items as defined in policy

Employment Assistance available for persons with disabilities:

- Ontario Works currently maintains a link with a range of agencies to assist persons with disabilities to prepare for employment.
- Persons with learning disorders have access through Ontario Works referrals to literacy and numeracy programs.
- Volunteer and Employment placement workshops delivered at local Community Services and Housing offices are physically accessible for persons with disabilities and mobility issues.
- One-on-one employment counselling is offered at all local Ontario Works offices to identify and address disabilities and barriers to employment.

Family and Children's Services Division

The Family and Children's Services Division provides financial assistance and/or direct developmental programming to approximately 4800 York Region children from birth to 12 years annually. This comprises approximately 2600 family units.

The demographics of our customers vary widely. We serve:

- Children from birth to 12 years of age
- Families with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds
- Families with an assessed financial need
- Children with a broad range of diagnosed and undiagnosed physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities
- Licensed child care centres with children with special needs enrolled
- Agencies delivering programs for children and families under the *Day Nurseries Act*
- Clients using the Ontario Child Care Management System.

The needs of our customers are:

- Financial assistance for child care fee support and enhanced inclusion support for children with exceptional special needs.
- Developmental programming to assist in the development of children with special needs and their inclusion into licensed child care centres and community settings.
- Information, intake, and access to programs and services in York Region.

Information, Intake, and Access to Family and Children's Services Division

- All requests for information, intake, and access for the following programs are accessed by calling the toll free 1-888-703-KIDS (5437) line:
 - Child Care Fee Assistance
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Preschool Speech and Language Program
 - Tri-Regional Infant Hearing Program
 - Child Care Support Line
 - This includes a Child Care Translation Language telephone line.



The Division administers:

- Child care fee assistance for families with an assessed financial need with children enrolled in licensed child care, including those with special needs.
- Wage subsidy to enhance staff salaries within licensed child care programs.
- Enhanced funding to provide inclusion supports to children with exceptional special needs in licensed child care programs.

The Division provides direct service delivery for developmental programming:

- Early Intervention Services (EIS) provides:
 - Developmental programming consultative supports for children with special needs in their homes, child care centres, community settings, and EIS offices.
 - Occupational and Physio-therapy consultative services.
- The Division manages the funding and program relationship with:
 - Speech Language Pathology services through a contract with Markham Stouffville Hospital.
 - In-home mobility, orientation, and developmental supports through a contract with Ontario Foundation for Visually Impaired Children.
 - Seating clinic equipment support for children with physical disabilities through a contract with Southlake Regional Hospital.
 - All Our Kids (AOK) Early Child Development and Parenting Programs.

Business Services Division

Ensures fiscal and administrative integrity within the Department.

The Division co-ordinates the development of budgets and financial

reporting, expenditure control, and statistical reporting. Business Services manages its revenues and disbursements, directs quality assurance reviews for its programs, delivers staff training, and conducts program reviews.

The Division also manages the Department's administrative practices and provides program technology support to its three principal data management systems.

Our customers are Community Services and Housing Department employees, service providers, vendors, and department clients.

Policy and Program Support Services Division

Provides support to the Department, the corporation, and Regional Council through the provision of strategic policy analysis and development services.

The Division also manages departmental emergency preparedness and business continuity planning; provides program communications services; produces YorkLink; co-ordinates the Region's ODA accessibility plan and manages community investment, planning and program evaluation activities.

Our customers are primarily the Department, the corporation, and community funding agencies.

Accessibility Statement

The Community Services and Housing Department will begin to move toward accessible programs, training, and information. Our first step is this plan. Our next step is its implementation.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Need to develop affordable and accessible rental housing for seniors, frail elderly, and adults with disabilities.	Physical	Physical	Through the Housing Supply Strategy, community support agencies and the centralized waiting list, the need to develop affordable and accessible rental housing for the frail elderly and adults with disabilities was identified. The redevelopment of the Newmarket Health Centre's east wing for 58 new affordable, accessible rental housing units for frail elderly and disabled adults. (December 2003) The City of Vaughan and York Region partnership proposal to develop up to 60 affordable, accessible, rental housing units for seniors.
A number of physical and architectural issues within seniors residential housing complexes including: · Difficulties entering the building for persons with mobility issues · Difficulties seeing in public areas of building due to failing eyesight · Difficulties using furniture in lounge areas of buildings	Physical and architectural	Physical and sensory	Power door operators were installed in the main entrances in most of the seniors' buildings. New lighting was installed that is both energy efficient and of higher light output. Furniture replacement has taken place in the majority of seniors buildings with the replacement furniture being ergonomically designed to accommodate persons with diminishing physical agility and co-ordination.

¹ Gives a description of the barrier and indicates where the barrier was found. For example was the barrier in a program, service, by-law, policy, practice or facility

² Indicates the type(s) of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴ Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier

Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Information on services available to people with disabilities · Service	Communicational	All	YorkLink: · Collects and publishes information on disability-related community services (48 listed) · Specifies agencies which are accessible to people with physical and sensory disabilities
Information on services available to children with disabilities	Communicational	All	KidsLine: · Provides information, intake and/or referral to services for children with disabilities.
Identified need for specific employment services based on client issues/needs (gap in service that we assessed community partners could assist with) · Program · Service	Policy/Practice	Physical, sensory, cognitive and other	Development of partnerships and referral to employment assistance programs targeted to persons with disabilities.



Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when this will be completed)
Review staff training needs in relation to sensitivity training in providing services and information to people with disabilities.	Managers and staff will review training needs through processes currently in existence (i.e. learning plans) in collaboration with the training unit and training committee divisional representatives.	3rd quarter 2004
Review and evaluate the need to develop a centralized waiting list for individuals and households applying for special needs units in York Region.	In partnership with social housing providers analyze the need to establish and maintain a centralized waiting list for special needs housing units. Consult with community support agencies.	3rd quarter 2004
Review selected practices, policies, and documents to identify communication barriers including a review of: · Ontario Works application process · Child care fee assistance application process · Communications needs of Kids Line callers · Communications needs of Access Centre callers · New or updated communication products for accessibility/barriers to sensory or cognitively disabled.	· Use existing resources and partnerships (i.e. In-take Screening Unit) to facilitate a review of the Ontario Works application process · Use existing resources to review application process · Survey Kids Line callers · Survey Access Centre callers · Assess need for revising communications products based on target audience.	3rd quarter 2004

⁵ The timing for addressing this barrier does not necessarily have to be set within the 15-month period of the Plan. The nature of the action may be *phased in* over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the Department

Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Accessibility of in-house Ontario Works employment workshops. For people with disabilities	· Staff survey · Client survey · Workshop review / audit · Review of communication tools	· By 4th quarter 2004 (to do review)
Investigate ways to provide more opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in education and employment, specifically: · People with disabilities need access to computers and specialized computer training (including financial assistance for low income families) · Computer courses should be held in barrier-free buildings	Community Services and Housing will continue to provide financial assistance to OW participants requiring the purchase of training to support their return-to-work-action-plan. Community Services and Housing will develop a plan for the purchase of accessible computers and workstations for placement in each Ontario Works Area Office and in the Employment Resource Centres. Pending approval of the 2004 Regional Budget, pilot one accessible workstation in late 2004.	· 2004



Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Inadequate supply of handicapped equipped rental apartments for frail elderly	Architectural	We will be better able to accommodate a growing list of applicants who are persons with disabilities involved in the Alternative Community Living Program
Need to develop affordable and accessible rental housing units for frail elderly, seniors and adults with disabilities	Physical	Develop up to 60 new affordable and accessible rental housing units for seniors and frail elderly/ Partnership with the City of Vaughan and York Region

⁶ Indicates where the barrier was found. For example, was the barrier in a program, service, by-law, policy, practice or facility

⁷ Indicates the type of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
20 units will be modified to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities - Hadley Grange <i>Partnership with Alternative Community Living Program</i>	Housing additional households of persons with disabilities	Modifications are phased over coming 3 years as existing tenants move out as well as approval of funding from Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.
New construction of Apartment building and seniors' community centre to new standards	Up to 60 affordable and accessible rental housing units will be developed	Fall 2004

⁹ Describes what action will be taken to remove and/or prevent the barrier

¹⁰ Indicates how customer service will be improved by removing or preventing this barrier; also indicates any other measure(s) that will be used to determine whether or not the department was successful in removing and/or preventing this barrier

¹¹ The timing for addressing a barrier does not necessarily have to be set within the 15-month period of the Plan; the nature of the action may be *phased in* over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the department

Corporate Communications Services

Environmental Scan

Departments will be looking for Corporate Communications' guidance in the production of publications and information posted on the web site. An assessment with stakeholders of communication barriers in all media will be done.

Our Customers

Corporate Communications is a corporate service that serves all departments as well as the media, the public, and a wide range of external clients.

Corporate Communications has the responsibility for the corporation's visual identity, including setting graphic standards for corporate publications, signage, advertisements, correspondence, and the web.

The branch does not provide specific services that are targeted at persons with disabilities. It does provide a corporate service. Communication policies and/or standards it sets will have an effect on departments, programs, and services that may be targeted to people with disabilities. The web site was designed, however, with people with visual impairments in mind.

Accessibility Statement

Corporate Communications will assess all communication barriers with stakeholders. It will review its graphic standards for publications and the web site to ensure they are user-friendly for people with disabilities. It will also work with Human Resource Services to identify appropriate sensitivity training (e.g. language use).



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
York Region's web site was not accessible for people with visual impairments	Informational and technological	Physical and sensory	In 2002, the Region's web site was redesigned to better serve all visitors, including improvements for people with disabilities. The following are current features in the web site redesign: · Addition of a site map for quick reference and to assist web reading programs used by people with visual impairments · Where possible, colours of text contrast greatly with the background for easy reading for those with visual impairments · Combinations of red/green and blue/yellow were minimized for common colour blindness · Web auditing program was purchased and used to continually monitor the web site and ensure it remains accessible to people with disabilities · Descriptor tags are being placed on every web page that give information about the content and graphics of each page. This allows visitors with visual impairments using web reading programs to scan documents. · Where there are file attachments, executive summaries will be provided for easy reference and web reading programs.

¹ Gives a description of the barrier and indicates where the barrier was found. For example was the barrier in a program, service, by-law, policy, practice or facility

² Indicates the type(s) of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴ Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier

Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Corporate Communications will continually review its web access to identify barriers for persons with disabilities.	- Continually run web site through auditing program called "the Bobby" - Review the Region's site map based on Information Technology Services' projects and priorities - Get feedback from members of the Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)	Ongoing
Corporate Communications will review the need to phase in the web site accessibility features for the intranet.	Staff feedback	2004
Corporate Communications will produce new visual identity standards including a graphic standards guide that will take into consideration people with disabilities.	Seek feedback from AAC Research best practices	Begin early 2004 following budget approval

⁵ The timing for addressing this barrier does not necessarily have to be set within the 15-month period of the Plan. The nature of the action may be *phased in* over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the Department



Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Web access for people who are visually impaired.	Informational and technological	Improved access to York Region information and services
Written reference to persons with disabilities may not be politically correct and in fact insult individuals with disabilities.	Attitudinal	Better staff communication on disability issues

⁶ Indicates where the barrier was found. For example, was the barrier in a program, service, by-law, policy, practice or facility

⁷ Indicates the type of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
Site map for people who are visually impaired	Focus group and on-line survey response	Ongoing
Produce a primer/guide to language sensitivity when referring to people with disabilities in written form. Also Human Resources training for managers and new employees.	Use of correct language by staff	2004

⁹ Describes what action will be taken to remove and/or prevent the barrier

¹⁰ Indicates how customer service will be improved by removing or preventing this barrier; also indicates any other measure(s) that will be used to determine whether or not the department was successful in removing and/or preventing this barrier

¹¹ The timing for addressing a barrier does not necessarily have to be set within the 15-month period of the Plan; the nature of the action may be *phased in* over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the department

Corporate Services

Environmental Scan

Anticipated Challenges

- Review of the council, committee, legal, and court processes to identify and remove barriers
- Attraction and retention of talent (particularly specialist and technical jobs) in a competitive marketplace
- Higher than normal retirement rate due to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) retirement window
- Increasing benefit costs, particularly long-term disability, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and extended health, resulting from an ageing workforce and higher risk employees (Emergency Medical Services, Transit, Nursing, Police)
- Need to further develop corporate leaders who have a strong people management vision and who are knowledgeable about Human Resources practices
- Need to maintain pay competitiveness against our comparator municipalities and the Greater Toronto Area
- New and/or tougher legislation (i.e. *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, *Municipal Act*, etc.), increase in government standards for exposure monitoring, and greater powers of enforcement



- Higher risk employee population (e.g. Emergency Medical Services, Transit, Housing and York Regional Police) which require active Health and Safety initiatives and vigilance in administering Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) and Return to Work Program
- Documentation of existing barriers within Regionally owned and leased facilities, for the purpose of prioritizing facilities and improving accessibility to all residents of York Region
- Identification of existing barriers in leased facilities and negotiation of possible building improvements with landlords
- Escalation in construction costs for renovations or new building construction
- Both court locations were recently constructed in accordance with strict architectural guidelines provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) and required judicial approval prior to their opening. Any future modifications will fall under this heading as well. It is expected that the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) will be reflected in any changes done by MAG.

Our Customers

- Regional Chair, Members of Regional Council
- Police Services Board
- The public
- Regional employees
- Direct service departments
- Other municipal and government employees, local and outside of York Region
- Other government agencies

Accessibility Statement

Corporate Services will continue to encourage diversity in hiring and Human Resources policy development.

We plan to review council, committee, legal, and court processes to identify and remove barriers that limit accessibility to these processes for people with disabilities.

We will continue to identify and reduce barriers and enhance and improve our work environment with a vision of a barrier-free workplace for our customers.

We intend to focus initial efforts on defining the scope of facilities to be evaluated for existing barriers and on establishing baseline accessibility information for prioritized facilities. We will not only review the physical nature of buildings, but also our policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that all aspects relating to the design, construction, operation, maintenance, or leasing of regional buildings are focused on improving accessibility for all persons with disabilities.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Service barrier: employment opportunities were only posted at work sites	Communicational	Sensory	24-Hour Career Opportunity Line (an audio line with a brief description of open job opportunities at the Region) that is accessible to the public in the Region
Practice	Attitudinal	Cognitive	York Region District School Board "Accessing Community Experience" - A high school student work experience program Human Resource Services participates in this school board program that seeks to find students with learning disabilities job placements in the community
Practice	Communicational	Sensory	Employee Data Update asked staff members to self identify fluency in other languages including sign language
Council Chambers: Councillors' desks not accessible to members in wheelchairs	Physical	Physical	Desk cut to accommodate wheelchairs Movable microphone installed Microphone controls relocated
Council Chambers and Committee Rooms: audio level inadequate	Communicational/ Technological	Sensory	Provided hearing assist units in Council Chambers, Committee Room A, and Seminar Room Installed a better quality audio system in Council Chambers, Seminar and Committee Rooms

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³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴ Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier

Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Regional Administrative Centre Kiosk	Architectural	Physical	Information Kiosk at the Regional Administration Centre was designed to provide access to wheelchair users
Regional Administrative Centre Kiosk	Architectural	Physical	Height of desks at public access Internet terminals is adjustable
Wheelchair Access	Physical	Physical	Court Administration Office (Tannery location) - payment counter modified
Administrative Centre: Loading dock's rear door had steep, narrow stairs	Architectural	Physical	A heated wheelchair accessible ramp was constructed
South Services Centre and Georgina Social Services Building: Reception counters were too high	Architectural	Physical	Both reception counters were redesigned and modified to better serve the needs of persons with physical mobility related disabilities
South Services Centre and Georgina Social Services Building: Lobby washroom doors too narrow and difficult to open	Architectural and physical	Physical	One set of public washroom doors in each facility was modified by installing wider power-assisted doors



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Doors to the Committee and Seminar Rooms	Architectural and physical	Physical	Power assisted and electro-magnetic hold doors were installed
Audio in Committee Room B	Technological / communicational	Sensory	Provided hearing assisted unit in Committee Room B
Facility - 62 Bayview (Newmarket): Access from parking area to building entrance too steep	Architectural	Physical	Parking and approach areas were resurfaced to provide a more level surface to the building entrance

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³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Examine the recruitment process to determine how to best meet the needs of people with disabilities when interviews are being scheduled.	Human Resource Services (HRS) Staff to conduct review; review will include examining the development of alternative formats for application forms Review hiring policies and procedures to ensure that no barriers to persons with disabilities exist.	2004
Examine testing processes to find ways to ensure that these are barrier-free and can accommodate persons with disabilities	HRS Staff	2004
Review York Region Career Line to ensure that this service is barrier-free	HRS Staff to conduct review; review will include installing a Teletypewriter (TTY) line	Ongoing
Identify barriers to Human Resource Services offices	Customers	2004
Identify ways to always ensure that Human Resources policies, both new and existing are barrier-free through continuous review within HRS and the Corporate Policy Working Group	Consultation with Human Resources Staff/ Corporate Policy working group	2004

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when this will be completed)
Develop a Work at Home policy that will meet the needs of all employees including people with disabilities	HRS Staff to develop policy	December 2004
Review all Regional by-laws to assist departments in identifying barriers	Conduct inventory, review and assess results, and then bring forward to Staff Working Group	2004
Review Procedure By-law to determine any process barriers for people with disabilities	Review and seek input from Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members	2004
Review publication standards for Council and Committee Agendas and Reports	Assess for most appropriate font based on input from the AAC and Canadian National Institute for the Blind	2004
Review Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of the Attorney General in light of ODA implementation	Review of requirements; utilize the existing checklists to complete visual inspection	December 2004
Review legislative requirements i.e., Evidence Act - being called for court	Consult with other Provincial Offences Act (POA) providers	December 2004
Work with property services to determine what responsibilities landlords have to make leasehold properties ODA compliant	Meetings and follow-up communications	Within the constraints of the leasehold term
Include a question in next Legal Services customer service survey to identify any existing barriers in service delivery to disabled customers	Survey clients, review results and assess needs	2004

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Establish baseline information regarding how prioritized facilities satisfy current building code standards relating to persons with disabilities	This review will identify ways to improve access to Regional facilities which may include exceeding the current Building Code requirements. To assist in the barrier identification process, the York Region AAC will be given a tour of the prioritized regional facilities.	2004
Review all aspects of building accessibility, including physical, sensory, and cognitive	Research current best practices utilized in both the public and private sectors for identifying and eliminating barriers including a review of the installation of automatic doors rather than power assisted doors	2004
Undertake a Pilot Study of the Regional Administrative Centre	The Study will determine the building's accessibility level measured against current Building Code standards; identify existing barriers or problem areas, (signage, colour schemes, lighting, flooring, technology, reception areas etc.), and develop new accessibility criteria beyond the current Code that could be used in the future evaluation of all Regionally owned and leased facilities The Study may review: • guidelines about what is wheelchair accessible (including the height of service counters), • automatic door openers (ensure that the time open is appropriate), • use of stronger colour contrasts to help make services more accessible for people with visual impairments • and any other matters considered feasible by the consultant	2004



Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Review current leaseholds, leasing practices and standard leasing agreements	Inspect all leased facilities to identify current barriers or problem areas and investigate opportunities for building improvements with landlords. Review the wording of standard lease agreements to ensure that future leased facilities are reasonably barrier-free.	2004
Review accessibility to Council and Committee meetings (meetings more accessible for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.)	This will include a review regarding the feasibility of acquiring and installing portable lighting. Determine need for sign language interpreters at Council and Committee meetings based on input from specific customers. Research will include the use of interpreters by other government agencies.	2004

Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Staff plan to develop and conduct a pilot diversity and sensitivity training workshop as part of the Corporate Learning Program	Policy/Practice	A heightened awareness in new employees and existing employees with issues relating to the accommodation of persons with disabilities
Install TTY line in HRS	Communicational	Removing this barrier will enable deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing interviewees an appropriate interview venue
Have Braille business cards available for job fairs and for customers who request them	Communicational/informational	Enable customers who are blind or visually impaired access Regional information
Accessibility to Regional Administrative Centre to attend Council and Committee meetings	Physical Sensory (audio)	People with disabilities will be able to access Council and Committee proceedings via audio streaming over the Internet

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⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
Incorporate ODA discussions. The design of a pilot training program will be shared with the York Region AAC. The AAC will also be given the opportunity to attend a training session.	Increase in the number of persons with disabilities interviewed at the Region, monitor customer feedback, and monitor the turnover rate for employees with disabilities	Ongoing
Install the phone and train HRS staff	Ability to interview deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing job candidates on site in HRS in the same environment as other candidates	2004
Have current business cards done in Braille	Improve Regional informational accessibility for people who are blind or visually impaired	2004
Provide interconnectivity of audio streaming between Council Chambers, Committee Rooms A and B, and Seminar Room	Customers who are unable to access the Regional Administrative Centre will be able to listen to Council and Committee proceedings	2004

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Emergency Management Services

Environmental Scan

Governments have not recognized that people with disabilities have a great stake in the effectiveness of public programs aimed at preparing for and responding to all types of disasters.

In the United States, a National Organization Disabilities/Harris Poll survey commissioned in November 2001 discovered that 58 percent of people with disabilities did not know whom to contact about emergency plans in their community. Some 61 percent had not made plans to quickly and safely evacuate their homes. Among the employed disabled 50 percent said that no plans had been made to safely evacuate their workplaces. All of these percentages were higher than for people without disabilities. The survey also found that people with disabilities were far more anxious about their personal safety. Eighteen percent of those with disabilities were extremely or very anxious, compared with just 8 percent of the non-disabled population. Another 44 percent of people with disabilities were at least somewhat anxious.

A Canadian survey would probably provide similar findings.

Our Customers

The mission of our Branch is to co-ordinate and deliver comprehensive emergency medical services to the citizens of York Region and the public and volunteer organizations that protect their lives and property. The Branch's role is to provide emergency management planning, training, exercise, response, recovery, and mitigation assistance to any Regional Department, local municipality, or volunteer organization who requests our assistance. We do not have a response capability, or the resources to bring to a disaster. Instead, we co-ordinate the efforts of those organizations, which can provide that assistance.



The Region's arrangements for providing emergency assistance to its most vulnerable population should include:

- Appropriate emergency management for disabled persons
- Region-wide co-ordinated community services
- A system to identify and locate disabled people
- Relevant public information before and after emergencies

Accessibility Statement

Emergency Management Services will identify the range of issues that need to be considered in developing and carrying out emergency plans. For instance, hearing limitations could prevent people from following warnings or instructions. A variety of cognitive disabilities might impair an individual's ability to appreciate or respond to an emergency. Since statistical data on the disabled community can only provide a superficial impression of the impact of a disability during an emergency, it is imperative to analyze the various needs and form meaningful partnerships with the disabled community.

Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ¹ (when will this be completed)
Emergency management and public safety related policies and programs	The Branch will: · identify and partner with government organizations, representatives of home based-care agencies, residential healthcare facilities, emergency responders and advocacy groups for the the disabled · work with local disability organizations to identify clusters of people with disabilities who either live or work in the Region · involve the disabled community in the emergency plan needs assessment process.	2004

Barriers That Will Be Addressed

To be developed based on barrier identification process and in conjunction with 2004 Business Plan preparation.

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Finance

Environmental Scan

- Using technology to enhance public access to Regional staff and Regional material on the Region's web site
- Reviewing our interactions with vendors, suppliers, and bidders in order to maximize accessibility.

Our Customers

- Council
- Residents of York Region
- Direct Service departments in York Region
- Regional staff
- Development industry
- Vendors, suppliers, and bidders in public procurement processes
- Area municipalities

Accessibility Statement

We will continue to look at the services we deliver and the processes we manage, with a view to continually improving service quality and accessibility. We will accomplish this through a multi-year plan aligned with the Region's strategic goal of improving service accessibility for all regional residents.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Information Technology (IT) - Access to Region's web site	Technological	Sensory, Physical	In partnership with Corporate Communication staff updated the Region's web site with accessibility options. York Region will continue to improve accessibility features. A web auditing program - The Bobby - will be used to continually monitor the web site and ensure that it remains compliant with the Region's vision of accessibility.
IT - Access to PDF documents for people who are blind or visually impaired	Technological	Sensory	Standardized on Adobe 5.0. This allows persons that are blind or visually impaired the ability to access (read) PDF documents using voice recognition software.
IT - Systems not fully accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired and others with disabilities	Technological	Sensory	Upgrade to Windows/Office XP. Windows/Office XP includes the following accessibility features: a) Narrator- read text for blind or visually impaired people b) Magnifier - magnifies text for visually impaired persons c) Sticky Keys - useful for people who have difficulty pressing two keys simultaneously d) Compatibility with more than a dozen assistive technology products such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, on-screen keyboards, one-handed keyboards and augmentative communication devices (Braille Devices)
IT - Systems not fully accessible to people with visual impairments	Communicational	Sensory	Implemented Unified Messaging System

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Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Supplies and Services - Postage machine positioned on a table too high for use by person in wheelchair in mailroom	Architectural	Physical	Postage machine was relocated to main floor of Administration Centre and put on a table with 28" height
Supplies and Services - Contract distribution available to only those who could physically appear at counter	Communicational	Physical	Commenced an electronic process that makes bid information available on-line so that individuals do not physically have to appear at Supplies and Services counter



Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when this will be completed)
Information Technology - Investigate teleconferencing services to allow citizens to call-in and listen to Council and Committee meetings	Consult with our software provider and stakeholders	March 2004
Information Technology - Investigate the possibility of using voice-activated technology to allow citizens to interact with the Region's auto-attended and voice mail systems using their voice	Consult with our software provider and stakeholders	March 2004
Information Technology - Develop a strategy to review the Region's web site and make recommendation regarding how to make it more accessible to persons with disabilities	Consult with our software provider and stakeholders	March 2004
Supplies and Services - Review of Purchasing by-law # A-0304-2002-031	Consultation with stakeholders	July 2004
Supplies and Services - Review of Request for Proposal (RFP) evaluation process	Consultation with internal issuers of RFPs and with other Public Entities	December 2004
Supplies and Services - Review capacity to enhance our ability to have bid documents available on-line	Consult with our software provider and stakeholders	July 2004

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Health Services

Environmental Scan

The Health Services Department provides programs and services to a wide variety of clients including those who are temporarily or permanently disabled. As Department management and staff deal with accessibility issues on a daily basis, it is no wonder that Health Services has an impressive list of achievements in the areas of identifying and removing barriers for persons with disabilities. The challenge for the Department is to continue to be innovative and proactive in providing and modifying our many programs and services so that they are accessible to all our client groups.

Our Customers

All Branches of the Health Services Department work together to promote, protect and enhance the health and safety of the people of York Region. The Health Services Department serves a variety of clients including York Region residents of all age groups, the general public and other health care professionals.

Many of the services, even a majority of the services, provided by our three operational Branches (Emergency Medical Services, Long Term Care and Seniors and Public Health) are targeted at persons with disabilities. They include direct health care service, health education and promotion, emergency and non-emergency medical response, family and children's health programs, immunization services, environmental health, health protection, community outreach and long term care programs and services.

Accessibility Statement

The Health Services Department will continue to identify barriers and implement strategies to increase accessibility on an ongoing basis. In addition to these activities, the focus of the Health Services Department will be to reassess presentation, public education and marketing tools to ensure that persons who have disabilities can participate fully in our programs.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Facility: Regional buildings not all suitable to allow access to our services	Architectural	Primarily physical	Building of: <i>Maple Health Centre</i> with: · 100 fully accessible resident rooms: · accessible washrooms · electrical operated beds · ceiling lifts · transfer poles Redevelopment of: <i>Newmarket Health Centre</i> including: · 100 fully accessible resident rooms: · accessible washrooms · electrical operated beds · ceiling lifts · transfer poles · Upgraded passenger elevators · Additional handicapped parking · Adjustable height dining tables · Alternative Community Living Program (ACL) Apartments Renovations at: <i>Maple Health Centre</i> including: · Automatic door openers · Adjustable height dining tables <i>Prospect Street Dental Clinic</i> including: · Relocation from lower level to main floor · Accessible ramp installed at entrance · Accessible washrooms · Accessible dental chairs <i>Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response stations</i> including: · High visibility of outdoor signage (reflective) · Accessible washrooms, lounge, kitchen and offices

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Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Facility: Community residential sites	Architectural / technological	Primarily cognitive	<i>Newmarket and Maple Health Facilities and Maple Day Centre:</i> · Secured garden areas with: · wide circular pathways · wheelchair accessible Gazebos · raised gardens · Visual aids for identification of resident rooms (specific picture on door instead of name) · Snozelon rooms - soft lighting, waterfalls, massages, aromatherapy, and tranquil settings invite relaxation and sensory stimulation
		Primarily physical	Renovations at: <i>Alternative Community Living Program (ACL) Apartments</i> including: · Installation of automatic door openers, bathroom bars, and shower heads · Replacement of kitchen lighting, flooring, door sills · Purchase of portable electric client lifts
		Primarily cognitive	<i>Keswick Gardens Adult Day Centre</i> · Secured program area and gardens with wide circular paths, wheelchair accessible Gazebos and raised gardens · Day Program Area also secured to prevent wandering



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Practice: Improve the Visibility, Accessibility, and Availability of Services and Programs	Technological/communications	Primarily sensory	<i>Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Ambulance upgrades:</i> · Improved visibility of vehicle's exterior emergency lights · Louder back up alarm · Greater visibility of vehicle due to branding and modular style vans · Lowered step on side door for easier access · Captain chairs in ambulances for paramedics · Improved grab handles on insides of ambulance doors <i>TTY (Health Connection):</i> · Teletypewriter (TTY) operator assists Health Connection staff to communicate with deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing callers on the phone <i>Delivery of Workshops/Presentations:</i> Tailoring the delivery of services to meet the specific needs of the audience/clients, including: · Using larger print, more readable font, and more illustrations on printed materials · Using microphones at workshops · Providing sign language services on request · Implement contrast/colour techniques to assist with depth perception

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Practices for Service Delivery (i.e. Public Meetings, Educational Forums, Clinics, Consultation Process)	· Surveys · Advertising · Involve stakeholders	2004
Marketing practices for services provided by the Health Services Department such as Health Connection's TTY line for deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing clients	· Client surveys · Survey of key stakeholders · Test advertising	2004
Policies and practices regarding the usability of Health Services Forms - review, advocacy to other agencies, as well as practices for helping people deal with forms	· Complaints review · Client surveys · Involve stakeholders	2004
In Co-ordination with Other Departments: Communication policies to ensure accessibility. For example: · Health Services web site · Review of printed products to identify which materials require improvements · Business Cards - larger print, increase readability · Review of feasibility of visual fire alarm systems at Regional LTC facilities · Handicapped Parking at Prospect Street building	· Consultation with clients and stakeholders	2004

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Lack of staff awareness regarding available resources	Communicational	Improved customer service for individuals with disabilities
Limited number of accessible apartments at Hadley Grange	Physical/architectural	Increased the number of accessible apartments
Limited number of accessible seniors housing in Vaughan	Physical/architectural	Increased availability of accessible housing for seniors
Requirement for additional Emergency Medical Services stations which are accessible	Physical/architectural	York Region Emergency Medical Services stations will be accessible

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⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier⁹	Indicators of success¹⁰	Timing¹¹ (when will change occur)
Awareness and Training of staff on resources such as TTY, sign-language contacts, accessible buildings, web capabilities, etc.	Improved access for people with disabilities	2004
Renovation of Hadley Grange - Three-Year Plan	Improved access	Project phasing in over 3 year period commencing in 2003
Vaughan Housing and Community Project designed for universal access	Support aging in place	Multi-year project commencing in Fall 2004
Construction of new Emergency Medical Services stations in Richmond Hill, East Gwillimbury, Markham and Vaughan and upgrading existing stations with wider hallways, accessible washrooms, electronic door openers, etc.	Improved access for disabled persons	Multi-year project commencing in 2003

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Planning and Development Services

Environmental Scan

- Providing access at public meetings to reduce/minimize physical, architectural, informational, and communication barriers.
- Ensuring informational and communication barriers for the vast range of publications and web applications are minimized.

Our Customers

- Regional Council
- Residents of York Region
- Regional and area municipal politicians
- Other Regional departments
- Area municipalities
- Development industry
- Businesses of York Region
- Public agencies (i.e. school boards, conservation authorities, utilities, health and safety organizations)
- Human service providers
- Residents and consumers of human services

Accessibility Statement

The Planning and Development Services Department will commit to serving all of our customers to the best of our ability, taking into consideration their accessibility needs and our ability to address those needs. Where a barrier can be removed with existing resources - we plan to do so. When a barrier is identified that requires the co-operation or resources of another corporate department (i.e. Clerk's Department, Property Services, etc.) we will work in partnership to minimize and/or eliminate barriers to access.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Accommodating people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing at public meetings	Communicational	Sensory	· Use of sound system · Speaking clearly · Writing down
Legibility of maps	Informational	Sensory	· Consider larger fonts, size of maps, choice of colours
Access to maps and information	Physical	Physical	· Information/maps available on web site e.g. York Explorer provides maps
Accessibility of Services	Physical	Physical	· Inclusion of Regional Official Plan policies promoting transit, accessibility

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³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴ Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier

Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Review York Explorer Program and Applications · Static Maps (York Maps in PDF) · Interactive Maps · Web site (as part of Corporate Electronic Service Steering Committee)	Will review taking into consideration user needs, Region's Accessibility Plan and <i>Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> (ODA) Will review taking into consideration user needs, Region's Accessibility Plan and ODA; may investigate possibilities/options around tactile mapping applications Will review to investigate available technologies and costs for assistive software for visually impaired	2004
Review Regional Official Plan policies that guide area municipalities in ensuring accessible urban design	Review Regional Official Plan Policies	2004
Services Information dissemination e.g. Smaller pdfs, black & white documents, documents available in word (for voice recognition software) and large print (14 pt. font)	Review information dissemination practices, including alternatives in addition to notification in local media, review size and format of documents posted to web site for ease of use and downloading	2004
Review meeting notification practices	Review existing methods of providing notification of meetings (legislatively required or not) including alternatives in addition to posting notices in local media	2004
Review meeting locations used for public and stakeholder meetings around the Region	Review existing accessibility of locations we hold meetings in, work with ODA staff committee to develop a list of accessibility criteria, including accessibility to transit, accessible buildings, and special needs requirements to be supplied at meetings	2004

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
York Explorer program and applications	Informational	Improved access for people with visual impairments
Meeting notification processes and locations	Communicational, physical, architectural	Improved access for people with physical and sensory impairments
Services information dissemination	Informational	Improved access for people with physical and sensory impairments

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⁷ Indicates the type of barrier (physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
Graphic redesign	Increase number of users	3rd quarter 2004 or sooner, if possible
· Review meeting locations for accessibility · Use assisted processes (e.g. Sign language) · Investigate options to provide closed captioning	Client satisfaction ratings	3rd quarter 2004 or sooner, if possible
· Graphic redesign · Web applications	Client satisfaction ratings	3rd quarter 2004 or sooner, if possible

⁹ Describes what action will be taken to remove and/or prevent the barrier

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Transportation and Works

Environmental Scan

York Region's population is projected to be 1.1 million by 2021 with a corresponding increase in employment to 700,000 jobs. This in turn is causing significant pressure on the transportation system. Currently 25% of the Region's road network is operating at or near capacity and average congestion levels are projected to increase. This growth also requires significant investment to maintain the roads system, water supply and wastewater collection, and solid waste management.

The public is demanding higher service standards in road maintenance and transit coverage. At the same time, the cost of delivering these services is increasing. The introduction of Provincial Minimum Maintenance Standards for roads may further increase costs.

The Region is working to minimize the impact of construction on the environment. Natural environments are returned to near pre-construction conditions where water and sewer facilities are constructed. In the case of road construction, wetlands and wildlife routes are maintained where feasible.

The Department has implemented an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) Program in some areas that gives emphasis to and improves the management of environmental aspects of its services.

Issues related to the quality of drinking water and disposal of wastewater are receiving greater public attention and concern. Meeting Provincial regulations, which require increased testing, monitoring and reporting, along with capital and operating modifications, will improve the water supply but increase its cost as well.

Major changes to the *Occupation Health & Safety Act*, such as requiring enhanced vehicle control and protection at work sites, have increased the costs of maintenance and construction.



The economic conditions and growth pressures within York Region are still robust. The Department will continue to experience significant increases in fuel prices, road maintenance and transit operating contracts, and the cost of construction. These costs are reflected in an upward pressure on property taxes.

Our Customers

The Department's customers include a broad cross-section of Regional residents, businesses, area municipalities, and visitors as related to transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste and forestry services.

Accessibility Statement

To plan and provide accessible, safe, cost-effective, quality driven, and integrated public transit, roads, water and wastewater, solid waste diversion and disposal, forestry and other related services that support environmental sustainability, public safety and economic vitality, while meeting Regional growth and the expectations of Regional residents and businesses.

Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Access to public transit	All	All	Amalgamation of municipal transit services in January 2001 into York Region Transit (YRT). Regional Council adopted the York Region Transit 5-Year Service Plan for both conventional and Mobility Plus services. The specialized transit Plan included the following: revised eligibility criteria, update of application process and new cross boundary services. Developed performance based conventional transit contracts with criteria that all accessible buses have a fully functional ramp. YRT monitors the maintenance of the ramps on a regular basis.

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³ Indicates the type(s) of disability affected by the barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴ Describes the action taken to identify, remove or prevent the barrier



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
People with disabilities unable to fully access conventional transit services	Practice	Physical and other	Large percentage of conventional fleet now low floor/ramp equipped. New buses are purchased with wheelchair accessibility. Buses come equipped with easier access features (i.e. grab rails). New specialized vehicles purchased are low floor/ramp equipped. Drivers trained to assist with passenger securement. Developed standardized bus stop design to incorporate accessibility features.
Specialized transit customers required to make transfers for inter-municipal trips within Region	Policy	Physical, sensory, cognitive and other (as per eligibility criteria)	Introduced no transfer policy for inter-municipal trips in York Region. Introduced a fare zone system at a reasonable cost to allow customers to travel throughout the Region. Designated pick-up/drop-off points have been identified for all major trip origins and destinations (i.e. hospitals and malls) for specialized transit.

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Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Lack of co-ordinated process to provide comments on development applications	Practice	Physical, sensory, cognitive and other (as per eligibility criteria)	Site plan review process includes conditions to provide access to transit services and facilities. Ensure transit supportive comments incorporated in development review process.
Process of household hazardous waste drop-off to York Region facility	Practice	All	The Region's contractor at the household hazardous waste facility unloads the waste from the vehicle.
Customer access to department reception area	Physical, architectural and informational	Physical and sensory (difficult to locate)	The Transportation and Works reception desk was re-located closer to the main entrance of the Administrative Building for easier access.
Working environment for employees with allergic reaction	Policy/ Practice	Sensory	Staff hired with allergic reaction to scents. Air cleaner installed in office; advised staff working in proximity to eliminate use of scented products.
Intersection approach - 25mm lip curb at crosswalks in intersections	Physical barrier for wheelchairs and strollers	Physical	The standard drawings were modified to eliminate the 25mm "lip" on the drop curb for crosswalks.
Sidewalk approach to the intersections	Informational barrier to people with visual impairments	Sensory	The standards were modified to include directional grooves on the sidewalk approaching intersections to warn pedestrians who are visually impaired.



Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Traffic control signals that can accommodate people with disabilities to cross the street safely	Informational barrier to people with visual impairments	Sensory	Co-ordinated with Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), certain intersections are equipped with audible traffic control signals to assist the visually impaired to cross intersections safely.
	Informational barrier for Seniors not knowing when to cross the intersections safely	Cognitive, physical	Countdown signals installed that indicate time left before the signal changes.
Font size of street name signs	Informational barrier	Cognitive	Larger signs with reader friendly fonts provide easier recognition of information.
Identification of chemical test results based on colour	Employee had difficulty reading the colour test result because of colour blindness	Sensory	Alternative test method identified and field kit obtained to solve problem.
Ability to identify labels on equipment in wastewater facilities	Identification of equipment by colour coding	Sensory	Standardization of label colours and fonts with inclusion of colour coding as a consideration in decision matrix for system chosen.
Ability to accurately transcribe labels on equipment in water and wastewater facilities	Informational	Cognitive	As part of a broader asset management initiative, reviewing identification of equipment using bar codes and scanners.

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵
<i>Mobility Plus</i> - Review of service delivery model for Mobility Plus service	- Review of best practices from other transit systems - Assess results from specialized transit customer satisfaction survey - Review establishing fare parity between Mobility Plus and Conventional Transit - Review safety regulations regarding the securement of mobility devices - Recommend improved service delivery model - Review reducing application process cycle time to 10 business days - Review development of an appeal process	Review to be completed in 2003, with implementation to begin by year-end.
Review of eligibility criteria	Presentation to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee on Mobility Plus eligibility criteria. This review will include: - The needs of people with cognitive and sensory disabilities - Fare policies for attendants and family members travelling with people with disabilities	2004
<i>York Region Transit Conventional</i> - Improve accessibility to conventional transit (street infrastructure and fleet acquisition)	Review inventory of accessible bus stops and facilities	On-going to be completed within two years
Road design practice relating to pedestrians	Through the local municipality and community groups, identify in the planning and design stages the special needs of pedestrians during construction and include in the construction specifications	Start in 2003/2004
Winter road maintenance practice relating to intersections	Identify concerns and communicate with local municipalities regarding the winter maintenance of intersections	Start in 2003/2004
Traffic control signal timing design practice	Review complaints regularly regarding signal duration for pedestrian to complete the walk across intersections	Start in 2003/2004
On-Street Parking By-law review	Review and identify the need of handicap parking space where on-street parking is allowed	Start in 2003/2004
Ensure published communication (printed and web-based) meets accessibility goals	Work through Department web representative and Corporate Communications	Ongoing

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Quality of contracted Mobility Plus service	Physical, communicational, attitudinal, policy/practice	Improved quality of contracted service
Mobility Plus drivers' sensitivity to the needs of the customers	Physical, communicational	Mobility Plus customers will have an improved transit experience
Limited functionality of the technical software used to schedule Mobility Plus trips	Technological	Expanded technical functionality of the software; statistical reports; improved staff efficiency.
No access to TTC subway stations	Physical Policy/ Practice	Improved access to Toronto
Customer ease of travelling across Regional boundaries	Physical, policy/practice	Improved access to travel inter-regionally to Toronto
Lack of co-ordinated transportation needs among health, and social service agencies and York Region Transit	Policy/practice, physical	Improved co-ordination of transportation to programs

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Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
Review the current service delivery model; review best practices around the Province; hire a consultant to undertake study; prepare performance-based contract for contractor. New performance based procurement process and model contract.	On-time performance Customer satisfaction	1st quarter 2004
Provide enhanced driver training for both in-house and contracted services.	Review of program and process for training	Ongoing
More staff training on the software. Working with Versus, the company that developed the software; provide feedback on things that work well and do not work well.	Improved statistical data Performance measurement	Ongoing
Conduct a site review of accessible subway stations, work with TTC Wheel Trans to discuss their experience and prepare a costing analysis	Customer satisfaction	1st quarter 2004
Work with TTCs Wheel Trans to implement a pilot project in the Bathurst corridor.	Pilot project Customer satisfaction	1st quarter 2004
Establish partnerships with health & social service agencies. Communicate needs and resources.	Customer satisfaction Improved access to programs	Preliminary discussions have begun, begin implementation in 2nd quarter 2004

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Access to bus stops	Physical, policy/practice	Access to bus stop facilities for people with disabilities
Conventional drivers' sensitivity to the needs of the customers	Physical, communicational	Improved customer service experience
Maintenance of ramps on buses	Physical, policy/practice	Improved passenger safety
Inconsistent hours of operation between Mobility Plus Service and conventional transit	Policy/practice	All York Region Transit customers will have improved access to transit services and more convenient hours of service

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⁸ Indicates how accessibility will be enhanced by removing or preventing this barrier

Means to prevent/remove the barrier⁹	Indicators of success¹⁰	Timing¹¹ (when will change occur)
Define what an accessible bus stop is. Prepare an inventory of accessible and non-accessible bus stops in York Region. Identify a process for improving on-street infrastructure including access to facilities.	Percentage of stops which are fully accessible	4th quarter 2004
Ensure new operating contracts for conventional service include driver training for sensitivity (i.e. monitor effectiveness).	Establishment of program and process of sensitivity training with contractors	Ongoing
Develop a process for monitoring preventative maintenance for ramps on all vehicles (i.e. conventional low floor, specialized buses, vans, taxi vans). Maintenance standard as per Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) requirements. Ramp maintenance is covered in performance contracts.	Requirement is set out in performance contracts and there is a disincentive (i.e. penalty) to the contractor if the ramps are not properly maintained; cycle counter validates use of ramp	Ongoing
Work towards implementing parallel conventional and Mobility Plus transit services in York Region by providing the same service hours and call centre hours for both.	Customer satisfaction and improved access to service	1st quarter 2004

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Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Lack of access to the Public Education Centre at the new Material Recovery Centre to be located on Bales Drive (East Gwillimbury)	Physical	The public will be able to use the meeting rooms and public education centre
Lack of sensitivity training and strategies to work with customers	Policy/practice	Improved customer service
Inadequate surface for wheelchair or strollers on pedestrian paths in construction site where there is sidewalk replacement	Physical	It will address the barrier for the physically challenged
Each local municipality in York Region has their own standard for drop curbs on crosswalks at intersections that may not be suitable for persons who use mobility aids or assistive devices.	Physical	A region-wide standard for drop curb at the crosswalks would ensure consistency and provide easier mobility throughout York Region

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Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
An elevator will be installed in this Centre to ensure access to the Public Education Centre and meeting rooms	Customer satisfaction	Construction completed 4th quarter 2004
Provide sensitivity training and strategies.	Customer satisfaction, reduction in the number of complaints	4th quarter 2004
Specify in construction contracts the need to use hard surfaces as temporary pedestrian paths until the new sidewalk is in place.	Reduction in the number of complaints	Ongoing
Transportation and Works will forward its Standard Drawing for drop curbs on crosswalks to all nine local municipalities for their consideration.	Local municipalities review and consider York Region's Standard Drawing or modify their own to suit.	2004

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York Regional Police

Environmental Scan

York Regional Police proudly serves its communities through the efforts of its 984 officers and 318 civilian members. We maintain headquarters and support facilities in each of our five police districts, delivering community based policing, investigative and specialized services to both urban and rural communities. The organizational structure includes Operational and Administrative Branches which oversee Uniform, Investigative, Support, Information, Financial, Human Resource, Professional Development, and Community Services.

As the Region's population continues to grow, there will be pressure on infrastructure and service providers resulting from the expectations of our citizens. As we consider the significant population growth it is important to realize that persons with disabilities number over 15 percent of our population. They suffer substantial disadvantages and exclusion from the mainstream of society. They face numerous barriers in gaining access to and fully participating in important activities such as jobs, access to information/communication, education at all levels, public transit, and the use of goods, services, and facilities that the public usually enjoys. These unfair barriers can be physical, technological, bureaucratic, legal, or attitudinal.

People with disabilities are a part of the diverse composition of the population we serve. The legitimate needs of all persons drive the need for responsive public services that enhance quality of life. Members of York Regional Police understand the importance of inclusion and will continue to develop strategies and programs that facilitate access to policing services.

Our Customers

The customers of the York Regional Police include all citizens, businesses located in and visitors to York Region. Providing quality policing services requires a concerted effort to ensure the protection of all citizens, giving specific attention to vulnerable groups and locations in our communities.



Accessibility Statement

York Regional Police will evaluate accessibility as it relates to disabled persons requiring policing services regardless of the event(s) giving rise to the need for interaction. Education, outreach programs, communication strategies, human resource practices, and criminal investigations will all be reviewed as a precursor to implementing necessary changes that reflect our desire to effectively deal with our clients.

Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Accessibility: Lack of parking for workers with disabilities.	Physical	Physical	Additional handicap parking identified.
Policy: Dealing with injured York Regional Police employees	Policy/practice	Physical and cognitive	Enhanced return to work program that permits gradual re-integration based on individual requirements.
Program: Internal training of personnel.	Policy/practice	Cognitive	Introduced various courses to curriculum to address individual sensitivities within the organization.
Service: Sensitivity to victims of crime.	Informational	Cognitive	Introduced ViCARS - volunteers trained to work with victims of crime.
Service: Dealing with emotionally disturbed persons.	Policy/practice	Cognitive	Developed policies, supported by training, to assist police officers in dealing with emotionally disturbed persons.

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Accessibility Achievements

Barrier Identified ¹	Barrier Type ²	Disability Type ³	How the barrier was addressed ⁴
Service: Contacting the police.	Practice	Cognitive	Maintained a Teletypewriter (TTY) line in the Communications Centre to deal with callers who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.
Practice: Traditional hires.	Attitudinal	Physical	Hired staff with disabilities.
Practice: Markings on police patrol vehicles.	Policy/ practice	Sensory	Adopted universal colour schemes for police vehicles throughout the Province.
Practice: Limited distribution of job opportunities.	Informational	Cognitive	Automated attendant telephone capability that assists callers with information related to job opportunities.
Facility: Workplace environment.	Policy/ practice	Sensory	Members with allergic reactions to scents. Provided information to members advising of sensitivity.
Facility: Police buildings not easily accessible.	Architectural	Physical	Modify entrance ways to existing buildings and incorporate accessibility features in new facilities.
Facility: Signage in buildings.	Informational	Sensory	Introduction of Braille signage.



Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when this will be completed)
Practice: 9-1-1 emergency calling capability for deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing	Communications staff to monitor frequency of TTY calls and converse with associations for Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.	3rd quarter 2004
Practice: 9-1-1 call taker ability to handle TTY calls and successfully move them to downstream agencies.	Review of current training methods.	3rd quarter 2004
Practice: Need to deal with members requiring accommodation due to incapacitating experiences.	Review Human Resource policies dealing with accommodated positions.	3rd quarter 2004
Practice: Facility design, build and renovations.	Review design work on all new construction, existing facilities, and renovation projects to ensure all comply with ODA requirements and best practices.	4th quarter 2004
Practice: Pre-hire testing and interviewing process.	Review all testing and interviewing guidelines to ensure there are no inherent obstacles to people with disabilities applying for work.	4th quarter 2004
Practice: Holding Community Forums at various facilities.	Review potential sites to hold Community Forums with disabled members of the community.	1st quarter 2004
Practice: Signage at police facilities.	Review all signage inside and out of existing police facilities to ensure appropriate exposure to disabled persons.	3rd quarter 2004
Policy: Dealing with emotionally disturbed persons.	Review current policy to ensure it meets all requirements of legislation and medical best practices.	3rd quarter 2004

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Barrier Identification

By-laws, policies and practices to be reviewed	Methods to be used to identify the barrier	Timing ⁵ (when will this be completed)
Policy: Dealing with deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing at any incident attended by police.	Review current capabilities with respect to sign language skills.	2nd quarter 2004
Policy: Dealing with arrested persons who are wheelchair bound.	Review current policies dealing with arrested and in-custody persons.	1st quarter 2004
Policy: First responders dealing with individuals with a disability at an incident.	Review first responder training with respect to managing the needs of a person with a disability at the scene of an incident.	2nd quarter 2004
Policy: Dealing with victims of crime who have a disability after an incident.	Review current information available to victims of crime to ensure it is available in various formats.	3rd quarter 2004
Policy: Information available in the public domain is accessible for people with disabilities.	Review all pre-printed brochures and York Regional Police (YRP) web site for content and presentation style.	3rd quarter 2004
Policy: Information collection on pre-printed or electronic forms.	Review forms commonly used by the public to convey information to the police.	4th quarter 2004
Policy: Location of workplace under physical control of YRP.	Evaluate feasibility of a work at home policy for people with disabilities	4th quarter 2004



Barriers That Will Be Addressed

Barriers identified ⁶	Barrier type ⁷	What will be gained by removing or preventing this barrier? ⁸
Service: Crisis response to incidents involving mental health issues.	Informational and attitudinal	Provide service on a higher level to Emotionally Disturbed Persons.
Service: 9-1-1 services for deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.	Communicational	Timely response in an emergency.
Practice: Testing of candidates being considered for employment.	Physical	More comfortable work space for applicant testing.

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Means to prevent/remove the barrier ⁹	Indicators of success ¹⁰	Timing ¹¹ (when will change occur)
Establish an enhanced Mobile Adult Crisis Team that combines mental health and law enforcement expertise.	Improved incident resolution and reduced repeat visits to Emotionally Disturbed Persons.	2nd quarter 2004
Introduce software to the Altaris CAD system.	Handle TTY calls at every call taker position.	3rd quarter 2004
Appropriately designed work space to conduct desktop exercises.	Improved success rate for tested applicants.	2nd quarter 2004

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> > Key Terms to Know



Barrier

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice (obstacle).

Barrier Identification Process

Any process or methodology used to determine what barriers exist, where barriers exist and other information. Examples of a barrier identification process may include surveys, audits or customer feedback.

Disability

Means,

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or



(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (handicap)

Types of Disability and Functional Limitations

A person's disability may make it physically or cognitively hard to perform everyday tasks. Listed below are different kinds of disabilities and the effects of these limitations on an individual's ability to perform everyday tasks.

1. Physical

Physical disabilities include minor difficulties moving or coordinating a part of the body, muscle weakness, tremors and in extreme cases, paralysis in one or more parts of the body. Physical disabilities can be congenital, such as Muscular Dystrophy; or acquired, such as tendonitis.

Physical disabilities affect an individual's ability to

- Perform manual tasks, such as hold a pen, grip and turn a key, type on a keyboard, click a mouse button, and twist a doorknob
- Control the speed of one's movements
- Co-ordinate one's movements
- Move rapidly
- Experience balance and orientation
- Move one's arms or legs fully, e.g., climb stairs
- Move around independently, e.g., walk any distance, easily get into or out of a car, stand for an extended period
- Reach, pull, push or manipulate objects
- Have strength or endurance

2. Sensory

Hearing

Hearing loss includes problems distinguishing certain frequencies, sounds or words, ringing in the ears and total (profound) deafness. A person who is deaf, deafened or hard-of-hearing may be unable to use a public telephone, understand speech in noisy environments, or pronounce words clearly enough to be understood by strangers.

Speech

Speech disability is a partial or total loss of the ability to speak. Typical voice disorders include problems with

- Pronunciation
- Pitch and loudness
- Hoarseness or breathiness
- Stuttering or slurring

Vision

Vision disabilities range from slightly reduced visual acuity to total blindness.

A person with reduced visual acuity may have trouble reading street signs, recognizing faces, or judging distances. They might find it difficult to manoeuvre, especially in an unfamiliar place. He or she may have a very narrow field of vision, be unable to differentiate colours, have difficulties navigating or seeing at night, or require bright lights to read. Most people who are legally blind have some vision.

Deaf-blind

Deaf-blindness is a combination of hearing and vision loss. It results in significant difficulties accessing information and performing activities of daily living. Deaf-blind disabilities interfere with communication, learning, orientation and mobility.



Smell

Smell disability is the inability to sense, or a hypersensitivity to, odours and smells.

A person with a smelling disability may have allergies to certain odours, scents or chemicals or may be unable to identify dangerous gases, smoke, fumes and spoiled food.

Taste

Taste disability limits the ability to experience the four primary taste sensations: sweetness, bitterness, saltiness and sourness. A person with a taste disability may be unable to identify ingredients in food, spoiled food, or noxious substances.

Touch

Touch disability alters the ability to sense surfaces and their texture or quality, including temperature, vibration and pressure. Touching sensations may be heightened, limited, absent (numbness), or may cause pain or burning. A person with a touch disability may be unable to detect (or be insensitive to) heat, cold or changing temperatures. Alternatively, a person with a touch disability may be hypersensitive to sound, physical vibrations, or heated surfaces or air.

3. Cognitive

Intellectual

An intellectual disability affects an individual's ability to think and reason. The disability may be caused by genetic factors (e.g., Downs Syndrome), exposure to environmental toxins (as in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), brain trauma and psychiatric conditions.

A person with an intellectual disability may have difficulty with

- Language: understanding and using spoken or written information
- Concepts: understanding cause and effect
- Perception: taking in and responding to sensory information
- Memory: retrieving and recognizing information from short- or long-term memory
- Recognizing problems, problem solving and reasoning

Mental Health

There are three main kinds of mental health disabilities:

- Anxiety: a state of heightened nervousness or fear related to stress
- Mood: sadness or depression
- Behavioural: being disorganized; making false statements or inappropriate comments; telling distorted or exaggerated stories

People with mental health disabilities may seem edgy or irritated; act aggressively; exhibit blunt behaviour; be perceived as being pushy or abrupt; start laughing or get angry for no apparent reason.

Learning

Learning disabilities are disorders that affect verbal and non-verbal information acquisition, retention, understanding, processing, organization and use. People with learning disabilities have average or above-average intelligence, but take in information, retain it, and express knowledge in different ways. Learning disabilities affect reading comprehension and speed; spelling; the mechanics of writing; manual dexterity; math computation; problem solving; processing speed; the ability to organize space and manage time; and orientation and wayfinding.



4. Other

Disabilities result from other conditions, accidents, illnesses, and diseases, including ALS (Lou Gehrig disease), asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, environmental sensitivities, seizure disorders, heart disease, stroke, and joint replacement.

Taken from: A Guide to Annual Accessibility Planning

