



Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

York Region's 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

1. Recommendations

1. Council to approve the York Region 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, included as Attachment 1.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, York Regional Police Services Board and local municipalities for their information.

2. Purpose

This report seeks Council approval of the 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for York Region and York Regional Police in Attachment 1. This document is a text-only version with graphics to be added once text is approved. Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (the Act), York Region must review and update its multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years.

Key Points:

- York Region and York Regional Police prepared one combined multi-year accessibility plan and will work together to implement and report compliance with the Province's accessibility legislation
 - A multi-year accessibility plan outlines strategies and actions to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in York Region's and York Regional Police's programs, services and facilities
 - The proposed 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for York Region and York Regional Police (Attachment 1) updates and replaces the Plan approved by Council in April 2020
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- Key changes to the 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan include an update that York Region and York Regional Police have met all accessibility requirements to date and have identified areas for improvement under each Standard. The continuous improvement actions York Region and York Regional Police will undertake from 2023 to 2027 include:
 - Employment Standards – York Regional Police will develop a specialized course for its staff providing a comprehensive understanding of disability in the workplace
 - Transportation Standards – York Region Transit will conduct an accessibility and best practices review
 - Design of Public Spaces Standards – Review and update the Region's Accessibility Design Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities

3. Background

Ontario's law requires accessibility plans

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) was passed in 2005 with the goal to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive by 2025. To support this goal, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) under the AODA sets out accessibility standards for private and public organizations in the areas of Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, Design of Public Spaces and Customer Service. The [Act and its Regulation](#) also include general, compliance and reporting requirements.

The Regulation requires designated public sector organizations (including municipalities) and other large organizations with 50 or more employees to:

- Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization's strategy to meet requirements under the legislation and to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in its programs, services and facilities
- Develop the plan in consultation with an accessibility advisory committee and people with disabilities
- Make the plan available to the public
- Prepare and post annual status reports
- Review and update the plan at least once every five years

The draft York Region 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (Attachment 1) is the legislated review and update to the [2020 to 2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) approved by

Council in 2020. York Region and York Regional Police prepare one combined plan. View previous plans and annual accessibility status reports at york.ca/accessibility.

Accessibility Plan supports the Region's vision of strong, safe and caring communities

York Region is home to nearly 1.2 million people of all backgrounds and abilities. According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disabilities, approximately one in five York Region residents aged 15 and over (or 18%) has at least one type of disability. Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

Creating a community that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible for everyone aligns with the goals set out in Regional strategies and policies including Vision, Regional Official Plan, 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan – From Vision to Results, Accessibility Policy and the Inclusion Charter for York Region.

The Plan demonstrates York Region's and York Regional Police's commitment to meeting accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner. Both organizations aim to provide equitable access to their programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence.

York Region and York Regional Police continue to meet legislated accessibility requirements with guidance and advice from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

York Region and York Regional Police have jointly developed plans and implemented actions to achieve legislative compliance with the Act since 2010 when the first requirements under the Act became law. York Region is the compliance lead for both organizations and Council approves the Plan on behalf of both York Region and York Regional Police.

Accessibility planning in both organizations is currently guided by the multi-year accessibility plan approved by Council in April 2020. This proposed 2023 to 2027 Plan updates and replaces the 2020 to 2023 Plan. The Plan includes actions over the next three years. The end date coincides with the term of York Region's current Strategic Plan. It will be updated in 2027 to align with the new term of Council. Annual status reports highlight accomplishments by York Region and York Regional Police in delivering on the Plan and can be found on york.ca/accessibility.

Accessibility planning and implementation at York Region and York Regional Police are guided and supported by a Council-appointed Accessibility Advisory Committee, as required under the Act. Members of York Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee come from different backgrounds and abilities, represent local municipalities, and are appointed for a term concurrent with Council.

4. Analysis

The Plan outlines actions to meet legislated requirements

The proposed Plan organizes objectives and actions under the five standards and general requirements in the Regulation. These objectives and most actions were approved in the last Council approved Plan, and the proposed Plan builds on, and adds to, these actions. The following provides a description of each standard and the general requirements, with examples of actions:

- Information and Communications Standards – Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. Examples include accessible websites and web content
- Employment Standards – Incorporate accessibility practices across all stages of employment. Examples include providing accommodations during recruitment, assessment and selection processes and supporting employees with disabilities in the workplace
- Transportation Standards – Make it easier to move around the Region by considering the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. Examples include providing safe storage and handling of mobility aids and automated electronic pre-boarding and onboard announcements for passengers on public transportation. These requirements are not applicable to York Regional Police who do not provide public transportation services
- Design of Public Spaces Standards – Make regional public spaces more accessible. Examples include providing forest trails that are accessible to all users and accessible pedestrian signals for safer crossing at intersections
- Customer Service Standards – Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities. Examples include mandatory accessible customer service training for all employees and provision of notice of temporary service disruptions
- General Requirements – Implement actions to enhance accessibility across the organization. Examples include using the corporate Accessibility Policy to guide the Region's work, providing employee training on the Regulation and including accessibility criteria in purchases

Most actions in the Plan are already in effect and continue to be part of regular business practices.

The Plan was developed in consultation with internal and external partners, including the public and members of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Act requires the multi-year accessibility plan be developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with people with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee.

Development of the proposed Plan was informed by consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including internal one-on-one focused conversations and consultations with subject matter experts (AODA leads for each of the Standards), two public YRAAC meetings, online consultation survey (34 responses and over 260 visits to the public consultation page), and social media interactions (over 9000 interactions).

Continuous quality improvement actions are included in the Plan to ensure programs, services and facilities continue to be accessible to everyone

While not legally required to include continuous quality improvement in the Plan, York Region and York Regional Police have traditionally included related actions. The Plan includes a review of compliance processes for requirements of the Act which have been implemented in the past to identify improvements. This ensures our approach remains current.

Key changes to the 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan include an update that York Region and York Regional Police have met all accessibility requirements to date. York Region and York Regional Police have identified areas for improvement under each Standard. The continuous improvement actions York Region and York Regional Police will undertake from 2023 to 2027 include:

- Employment Standards – York Regional Police will develop a specialized course for its staff providing a comprehensive understanding of disability in the workplace
- Transportation Standards – York Region Transit will conduct an accessibility and best practices review
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Updates on continuous quality improvement initiatives are included in the annual status reports.

Accessibility legislation and standards are in a constant state of review and resulting amendments may require updates to the Plan

All current requirements set out in the Regulation for designated public sector organizations came into effect on January 1, 2021. However, accessibility legislation and standards are reviewed periodically.

The Act itself must be independently reviewed every three years. The government appoints reviewers to assess the effectiveness of the Act. In 2022, Rich Donovan was appointed to conduct the Fourth Review of the AODA. Mr. Donovan is a globally recognized subject matter

expert on disability and corporate profitability. His review focused on three key areas: potential changes to improve the AODA's success, spreading awareness and building community support, and compliance and enforcement. His report to the Minister of Accessibility and Seniors may result in changes to the Act and its Regulation in the future.

Standards under the Act must be reviewed by the Province of Ontario five years after coming into force. Reviews of Employment, Transportation, and Information and Communications standards have been completed; however, amendments are pending. The mandated review of the Design of Public Spaces is currently underway. The Province is also working on two new standards in the areas of health care and education.

York Region and York Regional Police will monitor, review and respond to any amendments to the Standards by bringing forward any required changes to the Plan, if necessary.

5. Financial Considerations

Accessibility planning is integrated with the Region's business planning and budget process and actions are completed using existing staff resources and approved operating budgets.

6. Local Impact

This proposed Plan supports inclusive communities, a common goal shared with all organizations that have endorsed the Inclusion Charter for York Region, including all of the Region's nine local municipalities. Under the Act, each local municipality is also required to develop a multi-year accessibility plan outlining activities it will undertake to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for its own programs, services and facilities.

As part of the implementation of the Plan, staff will continue to work together with local municipal counterparts to share information, best practices and resources. Collaborative efforts with and through local municipal accessibility advisory committees and the Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group (comprised of local municipalities, York Regional Police, school boards, hospitals, local organizations and agencies) will also be undertaken.

7. Conclusion

The Plan meets York Region's legislated requirements for accessibility planning and affirms the Region's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities so that all people have access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

The Plan will be updated in 2027 to align with the next term of Council and meet the legislated requirement to be reviewed and updated at least every five years. Annual status reports outlining the progress of actions will also be prepared and posted.

For more information on this report, please contact Stephen Maio, Senior Executive Officer at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71420. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Stephen Maio

Senior Executive Officer, People Equity and Culture



Approved for Submission:

Erin Mahoney

Chief Administrative Officer

October 27, 2023

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Attachment 1 – 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (#1580112)