

Memorandum

TO: York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

FROM: Doug MacKay, Manager, Engineering, Transportation

DATE: November 16, 2023

RE: **Canadian Melody for East-West Accessible Pedestrian Signals**

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#), outlines the requirements of accessible pedestrian signals, whereby both audible and vibro-tactile walk indicators be included. AODA does not specify the audible signal itself.

The standard across Ontario for the audible indicator for the north-south crossing is the "[Cuckoo](#)". However, for the east-west crossing, there are two audible indicators used by municipalities. The older version is "[Chirp](#)" and some municipalities have replaced it with the "[Canadian Melody](#)". To ensure consistency across all municipalities, it is recommended to use the more distinctive "Canadian Melody" instead of the "Chirp" indicator, as the latter can be confused with certain bird songs.

In June 2018, Public Works provided an update on Accessibility Improvements at Intersections at the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (Committee). The issue of differing audible indicators was raised as a concern. The recommendation from the Committee was as follows:

1. The Committee recommended that Transportation Services staff bring the issue of inconsistent audible tones at intersections to the attention of various Ontario-wide transportation associations, and request that the province require the implementation of consistent audible tones, for the safety and security of pedestrians.

Public Works recently conducted a review of the neighbouring municipalities to determine if there is consistency with the east-west audible indicator:

- City of Toronto – uses both “Chirp” and “Canadian Melody”. Older intersections use “Chirp” while new intersections use the “Canadian Melody”.
- Peel Region – uses the “Canadian Melody” for all intersections.
- Region of Durham – uses the “Canadian Melody” for all intersections.

The Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 12, is the guideline that Ontario municipalities follow for the operation of traffic control signals. It reflects the legal requirements of the Highway Traffic Act, AODA, and the Municipal Act. The purpose of the Ontario Traffic Manual is to provide information and guidance for transportation practitioners and to promote uniformity of treatment in the design, application and operation of traffic control devices and systems across Ontario. The objective is safe driving behaviour, achieved by a predictable roadway environment through the consistent, appropriate application of traffic control devices.

Book 12 of the Ontario Traffic Manual states, *“The ‘Walk’ indication must be audible and tactile and is only used as an indication of the start of the ‘Walk’ and not generally as a guide across the intersection. A ‘Cuckoo’ sound is used for north-south direction and the ‘Canadian Melody’ sound is used for the east-west direction. The ‘Walk’ indicator tone may be emitted from the pushbutton or from supplemental overhead speakers (beacons) directed towards the crosswalk”.*

Given that York Region’s neighbouring municipalities are implementing the “Canadian Melody” as the audible tone for the east-west pedestrian crossing, and that the recently updated Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 12, set for release in December 2023, provides guidance to use the “Canadian Melody”, York Region will be changing the “Chirp” audible tone to the “Canadian Melody” in the spring of 2024 at all its signalized intersections with accessible pedestrian signals as part of the spring inspection program, including those that York Region operates and maintains for the area municipalities and Ministry of Transportation of Ontario.

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Copy to: Nelson Costa, Manager, Traffic Safety and Signal Operations
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