

YORK REGION (DRAFT) 2020 TO 2023 MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

An Update to the York Region 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

York Region Logo

York Regional Police Logo

Accessible formats or communication supports for this document are available upon request. Please email AODA@york.ca or call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72149 or TTY: 1-866-512-6228 (for deaf or hard of hearing)

Note: This document is a text only version. Graphics will be added once internal reviews are completed.

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Message from York Regional Council

York Regional Council is committed to ensuring residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, play and invest in York Region.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) sets out accessibility standards for organizations to implement with the goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. York Region is committed to removing and preventing barriers through sound and effective accessibility planning.

The *2020 to 2023 York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* highlights and guides the important work that York Region and York Regional Police are doing to create accessible programs, services, supports and facilities for everyone. Together more than 850 initiatives have been implemented that promote accessibility since planning efforts began in 2003.

Through our focus on customer service excellence and with the support of the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, York Regional Council will continue to create welcoming and inclusive communities that value the diversity of our residents and allow every person to thrive, free of barriers and without discrimination.

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Message from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Everyone is likely to be affected by disability at some point in their lives – whether personally or indirectly, through the experiences of family, friends or coworkers. A disability can be visible and non-visible, physical and attitudinal. You can be born with a disability or you can acquire it through an accident or over time. Better access helps everyone. It improves the quality of life of our entire community.

As the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee, we advise York Regional Council and York Regional Police on behalf of the community about accessibility initiatives to create a barrier-free York Region.

Our committee represents all nine local municipalities, different backgrounds, abilities and disabilities that offer many perspectives to improve accessibility for York Region residents. To us, accessibility means ensuring that all people, including people with disabilities, have the freedom and opportunity to fully participate in their community.

This updated York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan builds on the accomplishments of York Region's previous accessibility plans and activities to implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). It also outlines the work ahead to help create an accessible Ontario by 2025.

Our Region is enriched by the contributions of people of all abilities. Our community is strengthened when everyone is included. It is our privilege to continue to advise Regional Council and York Regional Police on identifying and removing barriers, changing attitudes, and creating more awareness around both disability and the importance of accessibility in York Region.

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

[2019 to 2022 York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Photo and Names]

ABOUT THE PLAN

One Plan, Two Organizations

Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses and community life. York Region and York Regional Police continue to plan so services are accessible and welcoming for everyone.

Accessibility planning supports the Region's vision of strong safe and caring communities. The 2020-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines strategies and actions approved by Regional Council to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services and facilities. The Plan also details our strategy for meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

York Region at a Glance

York Region is made up of nine local municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville. It is a diverse region which combines urban and rural areas and is in the northern part of the Greater Toronto Area.

York Region is home to nearly 1.2 million people of all ages and backgrounds. It is one of Canada's fastest growing communities, and the third largest municipality in Ontario. According to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, approximately one in five York Region residents aged 15 years and over (or 18%) has at least one type of disability.

This Plan highlights actions for the accessibility of York Region and York Regional Police programs, services and facilities. Each local municipality also has a multi-year accessibility plan that highlights activities at a local level. In addition, public and private organizations and businesses have requirements under the legislation.

York Region provides services and programs that are delivered across wide areas and require large-scale coordination. These include children's services, court services, economic development, forestry, housing services, long-term care, paramedic services, planning, public health, regional roads, social assistance, transit, waste management and water.

York Regional Police provide police services to residents. Key priorities include working with partners in addressing community safety issues, delivering sustainable and effective police services to communities, and ensuring roads, schools and communities are safe through prevention and enforcement.

Accessibility Planning Helps Create an Accessible York Region

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law in 2005. Under the AODA, York Region and York Regional Police must establish, review and update a multi-year accessibility plan at least once every five years, and prepare annual status reports on the actions taken to improve accessibility and implement legislated requirements. This plan updates the 2015 to 2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan approved by Regional Council in 2015, with annual Accessibility Status Reports posted on york.ca/accessibility.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Development

The AODA requires that the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is developed, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and an accessibility advisory committee. York Region and York Regional Police collect feedback about the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan from people with disabilities, the community and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee. This requirement was met through the use of public meetings, social media and an online survey conducted during the Plan's development phase.

York Region Transit also holds its own annual consultations with people with disabilities on the transportation-specific section of the Plan, as required by the AODA. The department collects feedback which informs the development of this Plan.

Creating a community that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible for everyone aligns with the goals set out in Regional strategies and policies, including *Vision 2051*, *Regional Official Plan*, *2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan – From Vision to Results* and the Accessibility Policy. To learn more, visit york.ca.

INFOGRAPHIC: DISABILITY IN YORK REGION STATISTICS (FULL PAGE)

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN IN ACTION

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes both legislated and non-legislated actions. York Region and York Regional Police will continue to maintain compliance with the Province's accessibility standards and work towards meeting Accessible Websites and Web Content requirements in 2021. The plan also contains non-legislated initiatives that address barriers people may face accessing our services.

Non-Legislated Actions

In addition to legislated actions under the AODA, the following non-legislated key action of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will help ensure programs, services and facilities continue to be accessible to everyone:

Continuous Quality Improvement

York Region and York Regional Police will continue to implement the following continuous quality improvement actions to remove and prevent barriers

Reviews and audits

York Region and York Regional Police will:

Review compliance processes for requirements under the AODA to identify improvements in practices and procedures and ensure continued accessibility across programs, services and facilities.

The process includes but is not limited to the following steps:

- Develop detailed work plans to review implemented AODA requirements
- Conduct accessibility reviews of facilities
- Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Report updates in annual Status Reports

Legislated Actions in Progress

Another key action of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to meet compliance with the remaining requirements of the Accessibility with Ontarians with Disabilities Act which ensures websites and web content meets specific accessibility standards by January 1, 2021:

Information and Communications – Websites and Web Content

Requirement	Action
January 1, 2021	
Accessible websites and web content: All websites and web content to WCAG Level AA	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a strategy to ensure all websites and web content conform to WCAG Guidelines 2.0 Level AA*• Provide accessible formats of content published before 2012, upon request <p>The process includes but is not limited to the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement detailed work plans to make the requirement operational• Assess identified websites and establish plan to meet and maintain compliance• Promote accessible information resources for employees• Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee• Report updates in annual Status Reports <p>*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities. WCAG 2.0 A and AA refer to a series of technical checkpoints to make websites more accessible, with Level AA building on the checkpoints of Level A.</p>

Legislated Actions Implemented and Ongoing

The AODA is ongoing legislation. The following legislated actions are already in place. York Region and York Regional Police will continue to implement ongoing:

General Requirements

- Use the corporate Accessibility Policy to guide the Region's accessibility work
- Implement a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that outlines long-term strategies to achieve AODA requirements and improve accessibility within programs, services and facilities, with annual Accessibility Status Reports
- Include accessibility criteria in purchases and acquisitions including self-service kiosks
- Train all employees, volunteers and agents on the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities

Information and Communications

Continue to provide accessible information and communication to residents, visitors and employees through the following actions:

- Ensure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities
- Provide and arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request, in consultation with the requestor and taking into account the person's accessibility needs. This includes emergency plans and public safety information
- Ensure all York Region and York Regional Police websites and web content conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA in accordance with the timelines set out by the AODA Integrated Regulation

Employment

Continue to ensure employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities with these established actions:

- Ensure all employees and successful applicants with disabilities are informed of available supports and accommodations
- Ensure applicants with disabilities are informed of available accommodations during the recruitment, assessment and the selection processes
- Consult with employees to provide and arrange for accessible formats and communication supports
- Provide employees, upon request, individualized workplace emergency response information
- Maintain a return to work process and provide individual documented accommodation plans for employees with disabilities when required
- Ensure the needs of the employees with disabilities are taken into account for the purposes of performance management, career development, advancement and redeployment

Transportation

Continue to ensure York Region's conventional and specialized transportation services are accessible to people of all abilities with these established actions:

- Offer information on the accessibility equipment and features of vehicles, routes and services is available upon request
- Establish documented emergency preparedness and response policies that provide for the safety of people with disabilities

- Ensure people with disabilities are able to board or deboard at the closest available safe location if the official transit stop is not accessible
- Offer safe storage and handling of mobility aids
- Provide alternate accessible arrangements to transport persons with disabilities to their destination if there is a service disruption
- Offer specialized transportation to visitors who are eligible in the jurisdiction where they live
- Coordinate specialized transportation services between adjacent municipalities with connections made from one transportation service to another
- Provide same hours of operation for conventional and specialized transportation services
- Ensure service delay information is provided to a passenger using specialized transportation in a mutually agreed manner
- Provide clearly marked priority seating for people with disabilities
- Allow companions and dependents to travel on specialized services with a person with a disability, with notice and paid fare. A support person who accompanies a person with a disability is not charged a fare
- Ensure transit operating contractors provide accessibility training for staff on how best to provide service to people with disabilities, the safe use of accessible equipment and features, emergency response procedures and addressing temporary barriers, in addition to the other AODA training requirements
- Provide an eligibility application process for those wanting to use specialized transit. Riders can be deemed eligible for full specialized transportation services, the Family of Services or conventional transportation under three categories: Unconditional (no limit), Temporary (with a time limit) and Conditional (with some conditions for use)

- Offer temporary specialized services for emergency needs or on compassionate grounds
- Accept same day bookings for specialized services and provide same day service based on availability. Registrants can also book any number of trips within regular hours of service
- Offer automated electronic pre-boarding and on-board announcements

Design of Public Spaces

Continue to ensure new or redeveloped public spaces comply with specific accessibility design requirements for the following areas:

- Trails, beach access routes and forest trails
- Outdoor public eating areas
- Public play spaces and accessible parking
- Exterior paths of travel including sidewalks and accessible pedestrian signals
- Service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas
- Emergency and preventative maintenance in public spaces (see Page 16)

Customer Service

Continue to offer an excellent accessible customer experience to everyone through the following actions:

- Provide Accessible Customer Service training to all staff and volunteers, and to agents who provide service to the public on our behalf
- Accommodate the use of assistive devices, support persons and service animals
- Receive and respond to feedback regarding the manner in which goods or services are provided to people with disabilities
- Provide notice of temporary service disruptions to programs, services or facilities

Procedures and Performance Measures

Multi-Year Accessibility Plans must outline the following maintenance procedures and performance measures:

Design of Public Spaces Maintenance Procedures

York Region and York Regional Police will continue to implement the following Design of Public Spaces maintenance procedures	
Maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces	<p>York Region and York Regional Police will:</p> <p>Review and update procedures for the preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements required in the Design of Public Spaces Standards.</p> <p>Review and update procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when these accessible elements are not working.</p>

Transportation Performance Measures

York Region will continue to implement the following transportation specific accessibility performance measures. This requirement does not apply to York Regional Police	
Process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback	<p>The process includes but is not limited to the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer feedback/complaints are received by York Region Transit (YRT) and Mobility Plus staff representatives, tracked in the complaint tracking system and forwarded to the appropriate functional area for investigation and resolution, and customer follow-up, where requested• Monthly reports summarize the number of complaints received and categorize them according to functional area. Customer feedback is used to identify opportunities for service improvement

Demographic and ridership projections for specialized transportation services	YRT undertakes a demand analysis for Mobility Plus as part of the five year service plan. The five year service plan for Mobility Plus includes ridership projection as well as measures to reduce waiting times.
Steps to reduce waiting times	As part of the five year service plan for Mobility Plus, YRT identifies steps to reduce waiting times, including maintaining contractual obligations for on time service delivery and providing same day service.
Accessibility equipment failures	Measures to identify, prevent and address accessible equipment failure is documented in the operating contract between YRT and the operating contractors. These include pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip inspections and regularly scheduled maintenance of vehicles.
Development of accessible design criteria to be considered in the construction, renovation or replacement of bus stops and shelters	YRT ensures that there is a staff representative at every York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. YRT continues to provide updates and solicit feedback on transit-related matters, including the design of bus stops and facilities, when required. YRT continues to upgrade stops and terminals using accessible design criteria to increase accessibility.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

As legislated, York Region and York Regional Police will review and update this plan at least every five years. An annual status report outlining the progress of the actions in the plan will also be prepared. These documents are posted on the Region's website at york.ca and can be made available in an accessible format or with communication supports upon request.

Obtaining feedback is an important part of the evaluation process. York Region and York Regional Police will continue to review and create strategies to engage key stakeholders in providing accessibility related feedback, including people with disabilities. Accessibility (compliance) reports are submitted as required to the Government of Ontario, which regulates compliance for all Ontario organizations.

Including accessibility in the Region's everyday work has become the way of doing business. With the 2020 to 2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, York Region and York Regional Police will continue to strive for excellence to meet Ontario's requirements and enhance accessibility in our communities.

Strong, Safe and Caring Communities

Accessibility planning supports York Region's vision of strong, safe and caring communities. Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses and community life. Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. Creating communities where every person who lives or visits can participate fully makes good sense for people, for businesses, for communities, for all of us.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the York Region 2020 to 2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general.

To view this plan online visit york.ca/accessibility

To request a copy of the plan in another format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

The Regional Municipality of York

Email: AODA@york.ca

Mail: Accessibility Unit
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1

Phone: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72149

TTY: 905-762-0401

Fax: 905-895-6616

York Regional Police

Email: accessibility@yrp.ca

Mail: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau
York Regional Police
47 Don Hillock Drive Aurora, Ontario L4G 0S7

Phone: 1-866-876-5423 ext. 7643

TTY: 1-800-668-0398

[SIDEBARS to be distributed throughout document]

[SIDEBAR] DID YOU KNOW?

Accessibility is a general term used to describe the degree of ease that something can be used and enjoyed by someone with a disability. It implies conscious planning, design and effort to ensure it is barrier-free to people with a disability and, by extension, highly usable and practical for all people.

[SIDEBAR] DID YOU KNOW?

The **York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee** advises Regional Council and York Regional Police on the accessibility of programs, services and facilities. Members come from different backgrounds and the majority of members have a disability. Visit york.ca/accessibility for more information.

[SIDEBAR] DID YOU KNOW?

A **barrier** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. A barrier can be physical or due to architectural design. Sometimes the way we communicate causes barriers, as can attitudes, technology and policies. Accessibility planning helps prevent, identify and remove those barriers.

[SIDEBAR] DID YOU KNOW?

York Region is committed to welcoming and inclusive communities where diversity is celebrated and everyone can develop to their full potential, participate freely in society and live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination. The **Inclusion Charter for York Region** was endorsed by York Regional Council in 2018 and aims to create an inclusive environment with equality for all who work, live and play here.

[SIDEBAR] DID YOU KNOW?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) aims to have an accessible Ontario through the implementation of mandatory accessibility Standards in the areas of:

- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces
- Customer Service

Both public and private sector organizations must implement these standards in phases by 2025.