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TITLE: Accessibility Policy	Edocs No.: 4490879 Original Approval Date: November 15, 2012 Policy Last Updated: November 15, 2012 Posted on Intranet: November 20, 2012
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POLICY STATEMENT

The Regional Municipality of York is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person’s dignity and independence.

APPLICATION

To all York Region Employees, Volunteers and Agents who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of York Region, or who help develop policies for the organization.

PURPOSE

This policy identifies how York Region achieves and maintains accessibility by meeting the requirements of the accessibility standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”), the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* (“ASCS”), the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11* (“IASR”) and future regulations as amended.

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility Plan

A document approved by Regional Council and made available to the public that includes:

- (a) the Region’s strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities and meet its requirements under the enacted regulations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), and
- (b) all other information and actions required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and AODA.

Accessibility Standard

A rule that persons and organizations must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Accessible Formats

May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by people with disabilities.

Agent

A third party individual or organization who deals directly with members of the public to provide a program, service or facility on behalf of York Region.

Barrier

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

Communication Supports

May include, but is not limited to, captioning, augmentative sound devices, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conventional Transportation Services

Public passenger transportation services on transit buses, motor coaches or rail-based transportation that are provided by a designated public sector transportation organization.

Disability (as defined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*)

- (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 co-ordination, 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

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- (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*.

Regional Department

For the purpose of this policy, a “Regional Department” refers to each the following:

- Community and Health Services Department
- Corporate Services Department
- Environmental Services Department
- Finance Department
- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
- Office of the Regional Chair
- Transportation and Community Planning Department

Specialized Transportation Services

Public passenger transportation services that are provided by a designated public sector transportation organization and are designed to transport persons with disabilities.

DESCRIPTION

This Accessibility Policy functions as an overarching policy for the requirements of the accessibility standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA):

- Customer Service Standards (ASCR, O. Reg. 429/07)
- General Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Information and Communications Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Employment Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Transportation Standards (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11)
- Built Environment (Design of Public Spaces) Standards (under development)

York Region achieves compliance with the AODA through the following directives:

1. Customer Service

York Region is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone, including people with disabilities. When serving customers with disabilities, reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the same level of service given to other customers and service shall be provided in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. The Accessible Customer Service Policy governs how York Region offers goods and services to people with disabilities. See Reference: Accessible Customer Service Policy (No. 1385705).

2. Accessibility Planning

York Region will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the AODA. The multi-year accessibility plan will outline the ways York Region will prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements of the standards developed under the AODA.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be:

- Reviewed and updated at least every five years, and
- Established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee.

An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared. The multi-year accessibility plan and accompanying status report will be posted to the Region's website and provided in an accessible format upon request.

3. Procurement/Self-Service Kiosks

Where possible, Regional Departments will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks. If it is not practicable to do so, staff will provide an explanation, upon request.

4. Training

All individuals to whom this policy applies will be trained in accordance with the regulations under the AODA. The Region will keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which training is provided and the number of individuals trained.

5. Feedback

York Region has processes for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the Region provides goods and services to customers. Regional Departments will ensure that these feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports upon request.

6. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Regional Departments will upon request provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for people with disabilities. This will be done in consultation with the person making the request, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs and (if the original product has a cost) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

7. Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by York Region or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the Information and Communications Standards.

8. Employment

York Region will create an accessible work environment for all employees across the employment life cycle, in accordance with the requirements and timelines set out in the Employment Standards and existing requirements under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to accommodate people with disabilities.

9. Accessible Transportation

The Region is committed to providing accessible public transportation services through both conventional and specialized transit services, in accordance with the Transportation Standards.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Regional Council will adopt policies as required under the AODA.

York Region (including all Departments, Senior Management and Staff) will make sure that:

- All requirements of the ASCS, O. Reg. 429/07 under the AODA are met on an ongoing basis.
- All requirements of the IASR, O. Reg. 191/11 under the AODA are met on an ongoing basis in accordance with the timelines set out in the regulation.
- Departmental policies, practices and procedures are aligned with all requirements of the IASR, O. Reg. 191/11 under the AODA.
- Accessibility requirements related to the implementation of this policy are part of the annual budget and planning processes.

Regional Departmental Leads will act as corporate coordinators for designated standards under the AODA and are responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the legislated requirements of the AODA as follows:

- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer: Information and Communications Standards
- Corporate Services Department: Employment Standards
- Transportation and Community Planning Department: Transportation Standards
- Corporate Services Department: Built Environment Standards (under development)

The Community and Health Services Department will act as corporate coordinator for the AODA and is responsible for:

- The corporate coordination, development of policies and procedures, and monitoring of compliance for all regulations under the AODA, including the General Standards under the IASR.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring that:

- The implementation of the requirements of this policy is happening within their departments, branches and units.

ODA/AODA Staff Committee is responsible for:

- Leading their respective department in achieving compliance with the regulations under the AODA.

York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing and advising Regional Council through the Community and Health Services Committee on how the Region is complying with the regulations under the AODA.

All Regional Employees are expected to comply with this policy.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*. Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Agents who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to contract termination.

REFERENCE

- Clause 3 of Community and Health Services Committee Report No. 9, authorized by Regional Council on November 15, 2012
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
- *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11* made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*

- Accessible Customer Service Policy (No. 1385705)
- Report No. 3 of the Community and Health Services Committee Regional Council Meeting of November 19, 2009: Accessible Customer Service Policy
- The Regional Municipality of York Multiple Format Guidelines, 2007
- The Regional Municipality of York Accessible Meeting Guidelines, 2007

CONTACT

Program Manager ODA/AODA, Community and Health Services Department

<u>APPROVAL INFORMATION</u>		
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