



**THE YORK REGION ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1.0 MANDATE

The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) shall assist Council in improving opportunities for persons with disabilities by promoting the implementation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)* in York Region. The York Region AAC will achieve this primarily by advising Committee/Council each year, as required by the *Act*, on its annual Accessibility Plan which will focus on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. The York Region AAC shall also advise Regional Council on the implementation and effectiveness of its accessibility plan.

The York Region AAC shall assist Regional Council in realizing the Region's vision as stated in Vision 2026, which promotes access to Regional programs and services for York Region's citizens.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 "barrier" means;

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 and communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice; ("obstacle")

2.2 "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 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

- (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*").

2.3 "Accessibility Plan" is a document authored by Regional Council on an annual basis which is made available to the public. The Plan includes:

- (a) a report on the measures the Region has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- (b) a report on how the Region assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services to identify barriers
- (c) a list of the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services the Region will review in the coming year to identify barriers
- (d) a report on the measures that the Region will undertake in the coming year to identify, remove and prevent barriers
- (e) all other information required by Regulations to the Act.

3.0 REPORTING STRUCTURE

The York Region AAC will report to Regional Council through the Community Services and Housing Committee.

4.0 DUTIES

4.1 Duties required by the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*:

The York Region AAC shall be responsible for the following:

- a) Advise Committee/Council regarding the annual Accessibility Plan (which is authored by Regional Council) generally including the implementation and effectiveness of the Plan to ensure that it addresses the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the Region's by-laws, policies, programs, practices, and services.
- b) Advise Committee/Council on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises (or parts thereof) that the Region purchases, constructs, significantly renovates, leases or a facility used as a Regional municipal building.
- c) Perform other functions that are specified in the Regulations to the Act when they are developed.

4.2 Other Duties:

- a) At the beginning of each term, the AAC will assess the needs of persons with disabilities and identify issues of concern as it relates to barriers to persons with disabilities and based on the knowledge and expertise of AAC members provide strategic advice to Committee and Council on ways to remove and prevent those barriers.
- b) Establish subcommittees/working groups, of its members, as deemed necessary by the Region to address specific issues connected to the accessibility of person with disabilities (e.g. Public Transit).
- c) Notify and make recommendations regarding accessibility issues to other jurisdictions and organizations on issues that fall outside of the Region’s scope and mandate.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Composition and Size:

The York Region AAC will consist of seven to eleven members from across the Region (i.e. large urban, small urban and rural areas of the Region). The composition of the York Region AAC is as follows:

- a) The majority of members must be people with disabilities and, where feasible, will represent a range of disabilities as defined in Section 2 of the Terms of Reference.
- b) Up to three members of Regional Council, including one member from the Community Services and Housing Committee will be on the Committee.
- c) Citizens-at-large - who may not have a disability will be selected based on their interest or particular expertise in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers.
- d) Organizations representing people with disabilities and that provide services to York Region residents should be part of the York Region AAC

5.2 Regional Council will make a determination of the specific number of representatives within each of these membership categories following an assessment of the range of applicants and their skills.

5.3 Members of the public shall be qualified electors of York Region pursuant to the *Municipal Elections Act*. A Regional employee would not qualify to be a member of the York Region AAC.

5.4 The Regional Chair is an ex-officio member.

6.0 MEMBERSHIP SELECTION AND TERM

6.1 York Region AACs will serve for three consecutive one-year terms and at the pleasure of Regional Council. Members may be reappointed for an additional three consecutive one-year terms. The length of tenure of a Committee member cannot be longer than six (6) consecutive years.

6.2 Chair and Vice-Chair

The York Region AAC would be required to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair in accordance to the Region's Procedure By-Law.

7.0 RESIGNATIONS

7.1 Any resignation from the York Region AAC during the term of the AAC shall be tendered in writing to the Chair of the AAC, who will advise Council through the Community Services and Housing Committee. Regional Council or the Regional Chair shall appoint, considering the advice of the York Region AAC, a replacement member who will serve the remainder of the term.

7.2 In order to maintain a high level of commitment, members may be required to resign if they have been absent for three consecutive meetings without good cause.

8.0 MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Members shall be familiar with the Act and these Terms of Reference.
- b) Each Member of the Committee is an independent representative to the Committee and does not represent the concerns of only one disability or group. The members shall work together for the purpose of developing a common approach that is reasonable and practical.
- c) Members are expected to contribute their expertise actively during York Region AAC meetings.
- d) Members shall declare any situation that is, or has the potential to be, a conflict of interest.

9.0 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Members to the York Region AAC serve without remuneration, with the exception of those members who are persons with disabilities. Members who are persons with disabilities will be provided with the resources related to their disability and that are deemed necessary for them to fully participate in the Committee (e.g. sign language interpretation services, Braille translation services, transportation, support care services, etc.).

10.0 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Meetings will be held every other month (except July and August, when no regular meetings will be held) or on an as needed basis. The Chair may call special meetings. All meetings would be held at the Region's Administrative Centre (17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket) except as otherwise directed by the Committee. Appropriate notice of any location changes for York Region AAC meetings must be made publicly available.

11.0 RESOURCES

The ODA Staff Committee, under the leadership of the Community Services and Housing Department, will provide advisory staff support to the York Region AAC. Any advisory support required by a subcommittee of the York Region AAC that may be struck will be determined on an ad-hoc basis dependent on the needs of the subcommittee and the availability of resources.

The ODA Staff Committee will, where feasible, and to the extent where human resources will allow, provide the York Region AAC with information to enable it to provide sound strategic advice to Committee and Council. Other staff expertise will be made available, where feasible, and to the extent where human resources will allow, to support the York Region AAC.

The Regional Clerk's Office will provide administrative support, including the taking of minutes, distribution of minutes and agendas, and the general administrative coordination of meetings of the York Region AAC and any subcommittees that it may form.

12.0 PROCEDURE

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Region's Procedure By-law except as otherwise provided herein.

13.0 EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Terms of Reference for the York Region AAC will be re-evaluated in the third year of every Council term. Regional Council will have the prerogative of making changes to the Terms of Reference as required.

The Terms of Reference could be modified due to the upcoming release of the Provincial Regulations of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*.