

Memorandum

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Daniel Kostopoulos
Commissioner of Transportation Services

DATE: February 4, 2016

RE: **Mobility Plus Eligibility Appeal Panel Update**

The memorandum provides an update on the status of the York Region Transit Mobility Plus Eligibility Appeal Panel (Appeal Panel). The duties of the Appeal Panel were contracted out to Medisys Health Group (Medisys) in April, 2015.

At the March 2015 Council meeting, Council authorized the Region to enter into an agreement with Medisys to conduct Mobility Plus eligibility appeals. The term of the agreement was for one year, commencing April 2015. Council also approved a contract extension for up to three additional years, subject to the success of the initial one year term. Additionally, staff were directed to report back to Council after one year to provide a review of the program.

Medisys is a company that provides occupational health services, including pre-placement evaluations. It has been the sole provider of eligibility appeal evaluations to the Toronto Transit Commission for their Wheel-Trans service, with additional experience supporting other Canadian transportation service providers. Medisys currently provides a panel to conduct appeal hearings and in-person assessments with individuals who appeal a York Region Transit Mobility Plus decision concerning their eligibility or status. The Appeal Panel applies York Region Mobility Plus eligibility criteria in evaluating the appeals. The Appeal Panel consists of one medical practitioner, one transcriber and one resident from York Region that is familiar with people with disabilities and accessible transportation.

Prior to Medisys conducting the Appeal Panel duties, Council appointed members of the public to the Mobility Plus Eligibility Appeal Panel to assess appeals to the Mobility Plus service application. In January 2014, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* required transportation service providers to provide an independent eligibility appeal process. Contracting out the appeal process assists in ensuring independence and transparency of the appeal process.

In 2015, over 95 per cent of the applications for Mobility Plus service met the eligibility criteria and were approved by staff. An individual is eligible for the Mobility Plus service if they are unable to use conventional transit due to a physical or functional limitation. The remaining five per cent of applicants that are deemed to be ineligible for Mobility Plus service, or eligible with restrictions, have an opportunity to appeal their status. Community and Health Services, Strategies and Partnerships Branch staff administer the Region's agreement with Medisys to minimize the involvement of Mobility Plus staff in the appeal process.

From April to December 2015, Medisys assessed 28 appeals. Of the 28 appeals, nine appeals were allowed and Mobility Plus service was provided.

Medisys has complied with the requirements of the agreement and is providing a valuable service to the Region. The agreement with Medisys has provided the following benefits:

- Improved customer service, as wait time for applicants to have their appeals heard have been reduced. The Appeal Panel meets when requested by the Region, which is typically once a month.
- Enhanced compliance with Section 64 of Regulation 191/11 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as appeals are assessed through an independent appeal process. Further, the appeals are heard within 30 days of being received, as required by Regulation 191/11. For more detailed information, refer to Attachment 1.
- Eliminates York Region staff time to attend each panel hearing, which saves approximately \$9,600 annually. An additional \$9,500 is saved annually as advertisement, recruitment, screening and selection of the former volunteer panel members are no longer required.
- Appeal meeting dates are no longer necessary to be adjusted based on the availability of Appeal Panel members to attend. Medisys ensures appeal hearings are conducted on dates requested by the Region.
- Community and Health Services, Strategies and Partnerships staff administers the agreement with Medisys, which minimizes Mobility Plus involvement in the appeal process, and further supports an independent appeal process.

The first contract year with Medisys will cost approximately \$19,000 based on the number of appeals heard and meeting frequency. This cost is offset as York Region staff now have limited involvement in the appeal process. Based on positive results in year one of the contract with Medisys, and in keeping with Council's direction, staff will be negotiating an extension of the contract with Medisys. Sufficient funds are included in the 2016 operating budget.

Daniel Kostopoulos, P.Eng
Commissioner of Transportation Services

Attachment (1)

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Mobility Plus Eligibility Appeal Panel Update

As required by Regulation 191/11, appeals and decision are required to be heard and made within 30 days.

The table below shows customer wait time for appeals for the Volunteer Appeal Panel compared to the Medisys Appeal Panel.

Customer Wait Time for Appeals to be Heard

	30 days or less	31 to 60 days	61 days plus
Volunteer Appeal Panel - January 2014 to March 2015	9	4	13
Medisys Appeal Panel - April to December 2015	28*	0	0

*Note - 6 appeals were carried forward from the Volunteer Appeal Panel or were received prior to the startup of Medisys