

York Region Accessibility Status Report

2016

An update on actions by York Region
and York Regional Police to prevent and
remove barriers for people with disabilities
and implement the *York Region 2015 -
2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*

Creating an Accessible
York Region





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Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Engaging with our community, York Region conducted a series of Diversity Dialogues community discussions to talk about ways to make our communities more welcoming and inclusive for all people.



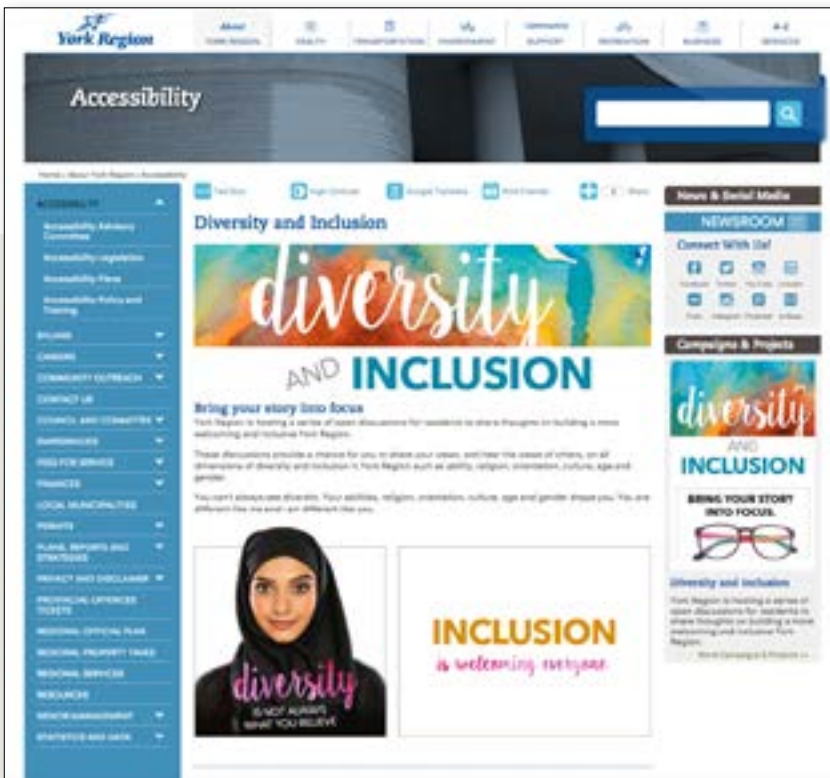
2016 York Region Accessibility Status Report

Creating communities where every person can participate fully is important for people, businesses and community life. This *Accessibility Status Report* is the annual update that The Regional Municipality of York (York Region) and York Regional Police provide on the measures taken in improving accessibility and implementing the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

This Report highlights the steps York Region has taken to meet the AODA requirements that became law January 1, 2016, and highlights the strategies and actions approved

by Regional Council to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in our programs, services and facilities. It also provides an update on actions taken to implement *York Region's 2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*, which details the Region's strategy for meeting AODA requirements.

To review *York Region's 2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and previous Status Reports visit york.ca/accessibility



AODA Compliance Timeline

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) became law in 2005. Under the Act, organizations must meet accessibility requirements in the areas of customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the design

of public spaces, with staggered compliance dates to 2021.

This at-a-glance summary shows the AODA requirements that are now part of York Region’s day-to-day operations.

2010 – 2015 Requirements Completed

- ✓ Accessible customer service
- ✓ Accessibility policies
- ✓ Accessible purchases
- ✓ Accessible information
- ✓ Emergency response plans for employees
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Accessible feedback
- ✓ New websites to WCAG Level A*
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Accessible formats and communication supports

*World Wide Consortium Guidelines (WCAG) is an international standard for making websites and web content accessible to a broader range of users with disabilities, with Level AA building on the requirements of Level A.

York Region’s Statement of Organizational Commitment provides a foundation to creating an accessible York Region:

“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.”

Source: York Region Accessibility Policy

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Placing a spotlight on learning disabilities, the National Access Awareness Week series of lunchtime sessions raised awareness about learning disabilities and the supports that are available in the workplace and community.



New! 2016 Requirements Completed

- ✓ Recreational trails and beach access routes
- ✓ Outdoor, public-use eating areas like rest stops or picnic grounds
- ✓ Outdoor play spaces such as playgrounds in parks and communities
- ✓ Public outdoor paths of travel including sidewalks and pedestrian signals
- ✓ On and off-street parking areas
- ✓ Service counters, fixed waiting lines and waiting areas with fixed seating
- ✓ Maintenance and temporary disruptions

Future Requirements

2017 - Accessible Transportation requirements

2021 - Website to WCAG Level AA*



2016 Status Report for the Design of Public Spaces - Compliance Actions Completed

The Region developed Accessibility Design Guidelines for buildings and facilities in 2014 which include the technical requirements for outdoor public use eating areas and play spaces, exterior paths of travel, service counters and waiting areas, and on and off-street parking areas. The Guidelines will be used for the design of future outdoor public use eating areas and outdoor play spaces.

The following section highlights actions by York Region and York Regional Police to comply with the ***Design of Public Spaces*** requirements that became law January 1, 2016. Refer to previous Status Reports for compliance activities prior to 2016.

The Design of Public Spaces refers to accessibility requirements for the built environment outside of the accessibility elements of Ontario's Building Code. The standards apply to public spaces that are new or undergoing planned significant redevelopment and do not require that public spaces be retrofitted to meet compliance.

Recreational trails

Accessible public spaces include recreational elements like trails, outdoor eating areas and play spaces that people of all abilities can enjoy. Processes are in place to ensure that new or redeveloped recreational trails in the York Regional Forest comply with the Design of Public Spaces requirements and are accessible. This includes requirements for path width, surface, slope, trail entrance openings and signage.

York Region has constructed two accessible trails to date that meet or exceed the legislative requirements, with a third trail in development, and was featured in a Government of Ontario YouTube video about accessibility best practices. The Region also developed *Accessibility Design Guidelines for York Regional Forest Trails* in consultation with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and people with disabilities. The

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Making its online resources more accessible, the York Regional Police Services Board launched its new website which follows the internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.





Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Guidelines will be used for the design of future trails in the York Regional Forest tracts.

Outdoor public use eating areas

Outdoor public use eating areas are part of the many recreational opportunities available in our communities. Processes are in place to ensure new or significantly reconstructed outdoor public use eating areas that are managed by the Region are accessible.

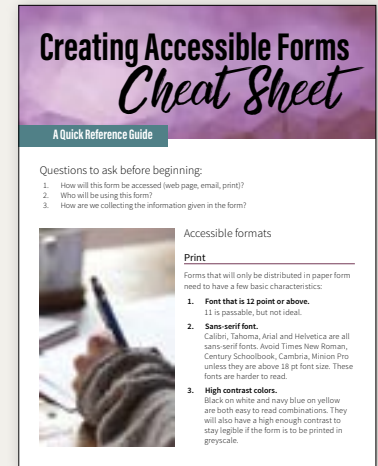
Outdoor play spaces

Play is a natural and important part of a child's daily life and healthy development. Accessible outdoor play spaces allow people of all ages and abilities to use play spaces together. The use of the Region's Accessibility Design Guidelines for buildings and facilities ensures new or redeveloped outdoor play spaces that York Region intends to maintain are accessible.

Exterior paths of travel

Accessible public spaces include sidewalks that are free of barriers and wide enough for people of all abilities to move around. They also include pedestrian signals at intersections with both audible and visual cues to move people safely across the street. Processes are in place to make new or redeveloped exterior paths of travel accessible. This includes accessibility requirements for ramps, stairs, curb ramps, depressed curbs, accessible pedestrian control signals and rest areas.

Ensuring online information is accessible, York Region launched the *Creating Accessible Forms Cheat Sheet*, a step-by-step easy reference guide to help staff develop accessible electronic word documents, PDFs and online forms.



On and off-street parking areas

Wider accessible parking spaces make it easier for people with mobility limitations to work, shop, travel and play independently. Processes are in place to ensure new or redeveloped off-street parking facilities comply with the Design of Public Spaces requirements. Requirements include the provision of two sizes of accessible parking spaces: one for those who use mobility devices and need more space for the deployment of ramps, and one for those who do not need this extra space.

Service counters, fixed waiting lines and areas with fixed seating

Accessible public spaces include waiting areas and service counters that all people can use including a person seated in a mobility device. Processes are in place to ensure new or redeveloped service counters and waiting areas are accessible.

Maintenance and Temporary Disruptions

Maintenance is an important opportunity to retain an accessible environment that is safe and useable by everyone. York Region and York Regional Police maintain the accessible parts of their public spaces and have preventative and emergency maintenance procedures for temporary disruptions that may occur.

Procedures include::

1. Scheduled routine preventative inspections and site visits to review accessible elements
2. Handling service requests received through the York Region Property Services Help Desk or York Regional Police Facilities
3. Dispatching staff to address and rectify issues

Procedures are in place for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

Procedures include:

1. Posting signs notifying persons of the temporary disruption
2. Closing off areas
3. Initiating service calls when deficiencies are found
4. Repairs where necessary



Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

The poster features the York Region logo at the top left. The main title is 'YorkSafe Food Handler Certification' in a large, bold font. Below the title, it states 'FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATION IS NOW MANDATORY.' in a blue box. On the right side, there is a photograph of a smiling woman wearing a white apron and a white cap. At the bottom left, contact information is provided: '1-800-361-5653' and 'TTY: 1-866-252-9933'. At the bottom right, it says 'Community and Health Services Public Health' and 'www.york.ca'. There are also social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Creating accessible employment opportunities, the YorkSafe Food Handler Certification program expanded to train individuals with intellectual disabilities to safely handle food while working in the food service industry.

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Responding to needs in the community, York Regional Police Community Services employs two social workers to act as a mental health resource by lending expertise to attending officers and providing resources and supports for individuals and their families.



AODA Actions Continue

York Region and York Regional Police continue to implement the requirements of the AODA and the actions outlined in the *2015-2021 York Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*. Compliance does not stop with completing the requirements of the AODA by the required date. These compliance activities are now part of ongoing, day-to-day operations.

What is next? AODA requirements for 2017 relate to accessible transportation including pre-boarding and on-board announcements for conventional transit and categories of eligibility for specialized transit. An update on actions to achieve compliance with these requirements will be posted in the 2017 Status Report.

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Making positive changes together, the residents of the Housing York Inc. Lakeside Residences in Georgina formed an Accessibility Working Group to improve accessibility in the local community.



Creating an Accessible York Region

York Region and York Regional Police are committed to creating programs, services and facilities that people of all abilities can access. Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Creating welcoming and inclusive communities where every person who lives, works or visits can participate fully makes good sense for all of us.

Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016

Helping organizations across Ontario become more accessible, York Region developed and launched the Beyond Compliance: Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool for Organizations with support from the Government of Ontario. Visit beyondcompliancetool.ca



Doing *more* to create accessible communities in 2016



To make sure intersections are barrier free for pedestrians, York Region Transportation Services modified 23 intersections to be accessible before the 2016 compliance deadline. Another 36 were modified in 2016. York Region Transportation Services also added accessible pedestrian crossings to rural areas where transit may be provided in the future and created a new more accessible York Region standard for curb ramps which separates ramps by direction.

Let Us Know What You Think

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the *York Region Accessibility Status Report*, the *2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* and accessibility matters in general. To request a copy of the Plan or Status Report in another accessible format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at:

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Previous Status Reports and the *2015-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* are available online at york.ca/accessibility

The **York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)** advises Regional Council and York Regional Police on making it easier for people with disabilities to use the Region's many programs and services. Members come from different backgrounds and most members must be people with a disability. Meetings are open to the public and are held at the York Region Administrative Centre. For details visit york.ca/accessibility



York Region
Community and Health Services

york.ca

