

**Advisory Committee on Accessibility  
Minutes**

**Date:** Monday, April 8, 2024  
**Time:** 5:00pm  
**Location:** Zoom  
**Interim Chair:** Michelle Del Carmen

<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><b>Members present:</b>  Satya Arora  Yo Yo Chen  Edward Lau  Kim Adeney  Christina Lee  Jewell Lofsky  Stephanie Mak  Regional Councillor Alan Ho</p>	<p><b>Regrets:</b>  Michelle Del Carmen  Councillor Ritch Lau</p> <p><b>Staff:</b>  Dana Honsberger, Staff Liaison  Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Secretary</p> <p><b>Guests:</b>  Mandi Crespo, BDO  Kathleen MacMillan, BDO</p>
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TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>1. Call to Order</b></p>	<p>The Advisory Committee on Accessibility (AAC) convened at 5:02 PM with Edward Lau serving as Chair. The City’s Indigenous Land Acknowledgement was read.</p>	
<p><b>2. Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)</b></p>	<p>Dana Honsberger, Staff Liaison, introduced Mandi Crespo and Kathleen MacMillan of BDO, the consulting firm assisting the City of Markham in developing the Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP).</p> <p>Ms. Crespo gave a presentation showcasing BDO’s experience with other relevant projects and in developing accessibility plans. She provided the following timeline for Markham’s MYAP process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultations/listening - March–April 2024</li> <li>- Drafting report and Accessibility Plan – May–June 2024</li> <li>- Feedback and publication – June–September 2024</li> <li>- Compliance and reporting – June-December 2024 to ensure the plan is in place along with concrete steps to guide the City in making changes</li> </ul> <p>Committee members suggested that, if the final plan could be ready in early December, it could coincide with the observance of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 4.</p>	

Regional Councillor Alan Ho suggested that persons with disabilities or organizations that support persons with disabilities are faced with insufficient public funding. He hopes that the City’s MYAP can speak to how making the City more accessible can help the vulnerable population suffer less financially.

Edward Lau recommended that BDO conduct a focus group interview with MAAC, when the timing is appropriate.

In response to questions, Committee members were advised that:

- BDO feels it is important to ensure that those groups or persons who normally are left out do not get left out of the City’s MYAP process.
- BDO will reach out to persons with disabilities in a number of ways: (i) consulting with MAAC, (ii) meeting with City of Markham subject matter experts who understand the City’s practices, (iii) distributing a questionnaire to all staff, and (iv) distributing a community wide survey; Staff will check on whether the surveys could be translated into many languages to best serve Markham’s diverse population.
- BDO advised it is open to holding focus groups, offering one on one interviews, or considering other ways to reach out to specific groups of people with disabilities in order to achieve a higher response rate.
- Committee members suggested (i) having paper copies of the survey at certain locations where people gather, such as community centres and places of worship, (ii) distributing surveys to local organizations that serve people with disabilities, (iii) posting the survey on the City of Markham website, and (iv) finding other ways to reach out to those who have not shared their opinions.
- BDO will help create a framework for how the City of Markham will follow through on the MYAP plan and have continuous improvement.
- as far as the AODA is concerned, the City of Markham MYAP only considers how the City of Markham as an employer is meeting those IASR standards for employment.

Dana Honsberger thanked Ms. Crespo and Ms. MacMillan for their presentation and provided the BDO email address [accessible@bdo.com](mailto:accessible@bdo.com) in case Committee members wished to reach out to BDO.

	<p>Mandi Crespo and Kathleen MacMillan left the meeting at 6:05 pm.</p>	
<p><b>3. Unionville High School Site Plan Review</b></p>	<p>Dana Honsberger provided an overview of the role of the MAAC in reviewing site plans. Municipalities may exercise control over the details of development through a process called site plan control which allows a municipality to review a developer’s plans and to consider the accessibility of a development proposal. As set out in in Section 41 of the Planning Act, one of the duties of an accessibility advisory committee is to review in a timely manner the site plans and drawings that the committee selects, and then provide comments and recommendations in relation to accessibility. Section 41 of the Planning Act points out that interior design and layout as well as the manner of construction and standards for construction are excluded from the site plan control. There is presently no restriction or clarification on the type of site plans that are to be reviewed by the committee or the particulars of what is being reviewed within a site.</p> <p>The AODA also stipulates that Council shall seek the advice from the AAC on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to any buildings that a municipality, such as the City of Markham, purchases, constructs, significantly renovates, or where the City enters into a new lease.</p> <p>The current site plan submitted to the Committee for review is for a proposed addition to Unionville High School. The school is proposing to eliminate portables on a concrete base in favour of erecting a two-storey building, thereby increasing the number of classrooms.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed site plan, and recommended that consideration be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- including a drop off area just for the proposed addition to avoid any need to go through the existing building first;</li><li>- including a pathway connection between parking on the far side and the proposed addition;</li><li>- moving the accessible parking spaces closer to the entrance of the proposed addition;</li><li>- having a crosswalk connecting the proposed parking lot to the new proposed two story building, to avoid a pedestrian hazard;</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- including signage, benches, areas of rest along the new path; and</li><li>- including overhead protection from the elements, especially from the new building to the old building.</li></ul> <p>It was also noted that, per Markham Accessibility Design Guidelines, for this project there should be three accessible parking spots: one to be type A for a van and two to be type B for a car. The Committee will comment that the site plan includes the required number of spaces for Type A, but not for Type B. The Committee will also comment that hatching is required between the parking spots, and ramps are required to assist people in getting out of a car.</p> <p>Committee members were advised that they only need to provide comments or observations, they did not need to provide details. It was agreed that Committee members would send any comments to Edward Lau by Friday April 12, 2024; he will summarize the comments for Christina Lee who to put on the site plan PDF, so that the finished document can be submitted to the Planning Department by the deadline of Monday April 15, 2024.</p>	
<b>4. National Accessibility Week</b>	<p>Yo Yo Chen reported that planning is underway for an event in the afternoon on Monday, May 27, to celebrate National Accessibility Week. Currently, plans include two guest speakers, visual artists and a musical theater performer with lived experiences. Approval has been given by the City to invite them and to provide some honorariums, as well as to promote the event on the City's Instagram page.</p> <p>The Committee discussed whether to hold the event in person or virtually. It was suggested that a virtual event may mean it's more accessible to a greater audience and that it would be easier to coordinate details for a virtual event. The Committee agreed to hold the event virtually. It was suggested that Yo Yo Chen liaise Markham Library staff to take advantage of their planning expertise.</p>	
<b>5. Adjournment</b>	The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 7:12 PM.	