

Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

February 24, 2025

Council Chambers

5:00 PM

Attendance:

<p>Members present Regional Councillor Alan Ho Yoyo Chen (Chair) Jewell Lofsky (Vice-Chair) Kim Adeney Satya Arora Stephanie Mak</p> <p>Staff: Lois Davies, Accessibility Consultant Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Laura Chong, Project Manager, Transportation Policy & Strategy (Guest)</p> <p>Guests: Nancy Mitchell and Staff, Diversity Institute</p>	<p>Regrets: Kinya Baker, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Joann Sotiropoulos, Senior Manager, Transformation Office, Learning, Organizational Development and Inclusion Councillor Ritch Lau</p>
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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee convened at 5:00 PM.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are members of the City of Markham's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Our role is to provide advice to the municipal government on a wide range of municipal processes to help ensure public services and facilities are accessible to everyone. We begin today by acknowledging the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples and their commitment to stewardship of the land. We acknowledge the communities in circle. The North, West, South and Eastern directions, and Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Anishnabeg, Seneca, Chippewa, and the current treaty holders Mississaugas of the Credit peoples. We share the responsibility with the caretakers of this land to ensure the dish is never

empty and to restore relationships that are based on peace, friendship, and trust. We are committed to reconciliation, partnership and enhanced understanding

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MARKHAM ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Moved by Satya Arora

Seconded by Kim Adeney

That the Minutes of February 24, 2024, Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee be approved as presented.

Carried

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Mobility for All, Markham Transportation Master Plan

Laura Chong, Project Manager, Transportation Policy & Strategy, provided a presentation titled “Markham Transportation Plan, Markham Accessibility Advisory Committee, Meeting #1”. Throughout the presentation she asked the Committee to provide insights. The Transportation Master Plan will plan Markham’s transportation network until 2051 and beyond.

The Committee provided the following feedback to the questions on Mobility for All:

What should be the priority for Markham’s Transportation Master Plan?

- Moving people quickly, safely and comfortably, especially those with disabilities.
- Focusing on transit and active transportation.
- Focusing on increasing transit use and reducing the number of vehicles on the road.
- Focusing on accessible transit.
- Focusing on building connected cycling pathways.
- Ensuring snow is removed from bus pads and that transit is still available during and immediately following a snowstorm (staff will take this comment back to York Region for their consideration).

What are your top 3 concerns for Markham’s transportation system today and in the future

- Having safe pathways for people to walk on as some streets do not have sidewalks.
- Ensuring bus stops are close to people’s homes so they do not have to walk too far.

- That the transportation system is getting too congested and that this stresses some users out more as they feel less comfortable.
- Lack of coordination between transportation systems.
- Conflict between electric bicycles and vehicles on the roadway.
- Lack of parking for electric bicycles and scooters.
- That walkways will not be wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, and electric bikes.
- That there will not be clear guidelines on where electric bicycles can be used and parked.

What types of changes do you think would be required to address those concerns?

Note: This question was skipped in the interest of time.

What would encourage you to use active transportation?

- Having services closer together and near transit.

What challenges have you encountered when travelling in Markham?

- Signage is too small and difficult to read when driving. Would like to know what street is coming up sooner, rather than when already at the intersection.
- Buses lanes and bus stops in the middle of Hwy 7 are very visibly distracting, making driving along Hwy difficult.

How can the City of Markham make it easier for residents to travel within the City?

- Limiting traffic congestion so that seniors can get to medical appointments possibly through better synchronization of traffic signals.
- Keeping reasonable parking standards, noting people need places to park their cars.
- Ensuring there is adequate parking in Markham Centre and at the Viva terminals.
- Making sure infrastructure is adapted to accommodate micromobility devices.

What are your top 3 concerns when it comes to micromobility and how can the City of Markham address those concerns?

- People using micromobility devices need to follow the rules of the road, noting the issue is worse amongst young people due to them wanting to get around quickly and not always being considerate of others.
- Worried there will be injuries due to micromobility conflicts with vehicles or pedestrians because of people not following the rules of the road or people falling off their micromobility device.

What actions would you like to see the City take to improve road safety?

- Have more road safety signs and make sure they are enforced. Noting that many by-laws exist, but people are not aware of them.
- Have signs with larger fonts.

Ms. Chong advised the Committee that an information package will be shared shortly after the meeting and the committee can provide additional feedback by March 10th, 2025.

B. Diversity Institute

Nancy Mitchell, Diversity Institute, advised that the Diversity Institute is collecting information from key stakeholder groups to prepare a report on establishing an equity process for the York Region Police.

The Committee provided the following feedback on the York Region Police through an accessibility lens:

Positive Experience with Police

- Had a positive experience with the police after being robbed.

Police engagement with people with a disability

- Suggested that the police avoid using their sirens/lights whenever possible as it can cause distress to a person in crisis and their family.
- Noted the police should participate in more community outreach targeting residents with disabilities and seniors, suggesting this could be done through the municipality or local politicians as residents may be more receptive or trusting of this type of engagement.
- Suggested more should be done to help residents in a trauma situation.
- Provide more education on how people of various disabilities can access police services when required.
- Suggested that the police should have a specialist that works with persons with developmental disabilities.
- Suggested that the police should be able to communicate with residents in different languages and that they should have diverse employment practices.
- Should be proactively educating seniors and people with a disability on protecting themselves from fraud.

Improvement Areas

- Need to communicate in a variety of ways – too much communication is being done via social media and other electronic channels.

- Suggested more communications should be sent out by mail.
- Better management of crowds at events to ensure residents stay calm and safe.
- Provide 911 operators with more training on dealing with people with disabilities.

Trust and Building Relationships

- Suggested should attend more community events and do more community outreach.
- Noted the need to build trust with new immigrants.

Mental Health Support

- Need more community care access centres to help residents.

6. Accessibility Updates

A. National AccessAbility Week

Yoyo Chen, Chair, presented three options the Committee could focus on for National AccessAbility Week. Ms. Chen explained that the goal of the week is to celebrate Canadians with disabilities and to raise awareness of the critical need for accessibility and inclusion in our communities and workplaces. Ms. Chen suggested that the Members should evaluate the options based on the cost of the event, the outreach impact (who is the target audience and how diverse is the audience), activity (the level of awareness the Committee will generate), autonomy (is the event fully hosted by the Committee), and resource conservation (the time, money, and planning it takes to run the event).

After some discussion, most members supported working with Corporate Communication to do a social media campaign promoting accessibility awareness.

B. 2025 Accessibility Award Review of Application and Award Criteria

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

C. City of Markham Vision Zero Road Safety Plan Stakeholder

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. Deputations

There were no deputations.

8. Communications

There were no communications.

9. Other Business

There was no Other Business.

10. Adjournment

The Markham Accessibility Committee adjourned at 7:00 PM.