

**Town of Markham
Advisory Committee on Accessibility**

**Wednesday, May 16 2012, 3:30 p.m.
Canada Room**

Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Councillor Valerie Burke
Councillor Don Hamilton
Councillor Alan Ho
Jaqueline Bell (Guest)
Kristen Hayes
Robert Hunn, Vice-Chair
Joan Jenkyn
Cindy Jones Shrek
Brian Lynch
Sidney Polak, Chair
Margit Swift

Staff Present:

Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator
Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
Christopher Alexander, Supervisor of
Licensing & Animal Services

Regrets:

Don Taylor, Manager, Executive Operations

Regrets:

Arlene Juanillo

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility convened at 3:36 p.m. with Sidney Polak presiding as Chair.

1. MOBILITY PLUS FAMILY OF SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

Ms. Sharon Doyle, York Region, was in attendance to speak about changes to Mobility Plus Services.

The changes to Mobility Plus stem from analyzing transit patterns and attempting to manage the cost of providing door to door transit service for persons with a disability. For example riders travelling constantly to Finch Station were encouraged to take regular transit from transit headquarters. Riders who did not feel comfortable taking regular transit and who were assessed by a nurse could continue to take Mobility Plus. Many of the riders encouraged to take regular transit enjoyed the newfound independence they obtained from taking regular transit. It was confirmed that changes to services will not lead to the discontinuation of Mobility Plus.

The Committee compared the services provided by York Region's Mobility Plus with Toronto's Wheel-Trans.

A member expressed her concern with the letter circulated to the Committee from York Region regarding changes to Mobility Plus services. The following concerns were expressed: (1) some

riders have invisible disabilities and may not be able to manage on regular transit; (2) riders may not realize that they have the option to continue to use Mobility Plus services; and (3) riders were not invited to a public meeting to provide feedback on the changes to the service level.

An article entitled “Invisible Disabilities Canada” was circulated to the Committee.

It was noted that The City of Toronto notified all Wheel-Trans riders through its Community Link magazine of the TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit. The forum was held on May 10 at the Queen Elizabeth Building at the Exhibition Place. Free accessible transit was provided to and from Bathurst Station for all riders wanting to attend.

It was confirmed that Mobility Plus charged the same fare as York Region Transit. Additionally, seniors using Mobility Plus can now pay a seniors fare, as previously they were required to pay an adult fare.

2. ACCESSIBLE TAXI CABS

Christopher Alexander, Supervisor of Licensing & Animal Services, was in attendance to speak about accessible taxi cabs.

It was explained that there are currently no accessible taxi cabs in Markham that can be called on demand. Staff would like to consult this Committee on its plans for issuing accessible taxi cab licenses in Markham and on the demand for accessible taxi cabs in Markham.

There was a discussion on the Taxi Script, which was explained to be coupons that persons with a disability can obtain from the Town of Markham to put towards their taxi fee. Chris Alexander was requested to find out more information on this program.

It was explained that the strategy for accessible taxi cabs previously presented to the Committee will no longer be adopted due to the feasibility of the strategy and due to a change in staff.

The Committee discussed how the industry has resisted having accessible taxi cabs due to the high cost of providing the service. The industry is concerned with the high vehicle cost and the extra time required to transfer accessible patrons to and from the vehicle.

There was a discussion on persons with a disability paying the same taxi fee as everyone else. It was agreed that it is important to come up with a solution that works both for this Committee and for taxi drivers, as it was understood that taxi drivers must be able to make a living in order for the accessible taxi cab strategy to be successful.

There was a question regarding what the difference is between an accessible taxi cab and a regular taxi cab. It was clarified that an accessible taxi cab is typically a converted mini van with a side ramp for a wheelchair or scooter to enter that has a system to lock the wheelchair to the floor of the van.

The Committee was advised that the taxi industry would be consulted over the summer with respect to having accessible taxi cabs in Markham. It was recommended that this Committee be included in these sessions.

It was confirmed that the public consultation sessions regarding accessible taxi cabs in Markham would be advertised. It was suggested that these sessions be advertised through Corporate Communications and on Markham's Facebook page. Staff planned on advising Markham Mobility Plus riders of these sessions.

The Committee requested that a presentation be provided on the existing structure of the taxi cab industry in Markham and on how accessibility falls into this. Mr. Alexander agreed to provide a presentation on the existing taxi cab structure in Markham and to providing ongoing updates on accessible taxi cabs.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was clarified that the following document was circulated at the March 21 meeting "Exise Tax Act Application for Refund of Federal Exise Tax on Gasoline" and that the minutes have already been corrected to reflect this.

Moved by Joan Jenkyn

Seconded by Councillor Don Hamilton

That the Minutes of the April 16, 2012 Advisory Committee on Accessibility be adopted as presented.

CARRIED.

4. NATIONAL AWARENESS WEEK

Christopher Alexander was asked to have a booth with information on accessible taxi cabs at the June 28, 2012 National Awareness Week event.

Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Coordinator, reported that both the Great Hall and the Lower Atrium will be used for the National Access Awareness fair in order to accommodate more booths.

It was confirmed that the keynote speaker at the barbeque will be a representative from the James Robertson Public School. All proceeds from the barbeque will go towards having an accessible school yard at James Robertson Public School.

It was noted that Enbridge does free barbeques for the community. Mr. Rupnarain will investigate this possibility and will ensure that an outside organization is permitted to assist with the barbeque.

The Committee will be asked to help man the booth. A few booths have been confirmed. It was suggested that the Committee shorten the length of the fair. Councillor Alan Ho requested he be advised of the confirmed fair hours.

A Member recommended that Sharon Doyle be asked to have a booth on transit options for persons with a disability.

5. DISCUSSION ON RECREATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

Ms. Joan Jenkyn reported that there were only two (2) adapted programs in the summer edition of Markham Life and that both of these programs were located at Centennial Community Centre. Additionally, there was only one adapted program offered through the Seniors' Centres, Sit and Fit, at the Water Street Seniors' Centre.

There was a discussion on whether Markham should have more adaptable recreation programs and if there is enough demand to offer more programs.

6. DISCUSSION ON MARKHAM MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. DISCUSSION ON MARKHAM MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

There was no report provided.

9. NEW BUSINESS

The May 10, 2012 Thornhill Liberal was circulated to the Committee. There was a picture of Councillor Burke at Thornhill Square opening the newly installed accessible doorway.

10. TOUR OF MARKHAM THEATRE

The architect reviewed preliminary plans to make Markham Theatre more accessible. The Committee was asked to provide its feedback. The Committee will be advised of any changes to the plans.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility will be held on Wednesday, June 20, 2012 at 3:30 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 5:30p.m.

Advisory Committee on Accessibility Action Items

1. Promotions and Business Initiatives Subcommittee

- a) Board of Trade Awards: invite winner to AAC meeting to celebrate the achievement.

2. Barriers Subcommittee

- a) The developer of the new development on Highway 48, south of Major Mackenzie Drive, has agreed to implement the Committee' suggestion regarding its accessibility concerns - Warren Rupnarain will provide update in 2012

3. Lack of accessible parking on Main Streets in Unionville and Markham.

- Markham BIA has attended to discuss parking issues. AAC members were encouraged to attend a future BIA meeting and submit an article for their newsletter. (Sidney to attend)
 - Upcoming Markham Seminar

Unionville BIA attended in September, 2010 and encouraged AAC to work on parking and washroom issues with the Town – Upcoming Unionville Seminar

4. Main Street Environmental Assessment

- Warren and Markham BIA to coordinate efforts to ensure accessibility issues are not missed.

Town engineering staff will encourage existing business owners to explore accessibility opportunities – Dale Mackenzie, throughout 2012

Committee plans to make presentation to the BIA in 2012.

5. Heritage/Accessibility

- Staff to provide info on coordination of accessibility (Warren) - ongoing
- Update on the BIA mandate to be provided following Council/BIA workshop

6. National Access Week Event

7. Investigate standards for super mailboxes in Markham – Waste Management Staff

8. Investigate having door-to-door mail service for persons with a disability in Markham – Warren Rupnarain
9. Decide what the Committee next steps are with respect to accessibility retrofitting of heritage properties – All Committee Members
11. Work with the Accessibility Coordinator, the Chair and Vice-Chair to obtain further feedback on the Green Print recommendations – Katie Burns
12. Investigate the model banks are using to locate their accessible parking spots - Warren Rupnarain
13. Invite a representative from Markville mall to discuss this matter and to encourage the mall to be more proactive with respect to issuing parking infractions – Warren Rupnarain
14. Write letter to (3) medical clinic owners with disclaimer – Warren Rupnarain
15. Invite the Accessibility Committee to the sessions being held over the summer to discuss accessible taxi cab licenses in Markham with the taxi industry and ensure the session are well advertised – Christopher Alexander