

SRLIB06.22

REPORT ON: **Accessibility Plan Update 2006/2007**

PREPARED FOR: **The Richmond Hill Public Library Board**

PREPARED BY: **Mary Jane Celsie**
Director of Public Service

BOARD MEETING DATE: **September 21, 2006**

1.0 PURPOSE

To provide the Board with a plan to provide or improve accessibility of all Library facilities for users with disabilities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act was proclaimed September 30, 2002 and December 31, 2002. One provision of the Act requires that municipal institutions and facilities file updated accessibility plans by the end of September each year. The physical plant of the Library is administered by the Town, but as the Libraries are public buildings with their own specific concerns, staff has developed a report documenting accessibility issues and solutions in the context of Library services.

3.0 CURRENT STATUS RE: ACCESSIBILITY

3.1 Physical Plant

Responsibility for the Library's buildings lies with the Town of Richmond Hill's Asset Management Department. All four sites are completely wheelchair accessible, both in terms of entry to the facility and movement through the building. As examples, exterior main doors are equipped with automatic openers; library shelving is placed to allow easy maneuvering through the stacks by wheelchairs.

The Library strives to maintain equitable access for patrons with disabilities. As an example of past upgrades, although the front entry way of Central Library was designed to standard initially, elderly patrons found the wide staircase difficult to negotiate. Handrails were added to increase safety.

The current renovation of the Central Library Children's Department was designed, among other things, to maintain appropriate space to allow easy negotiation of the department for children with disabilities.

The new library branch at Richmond Green, opened in 2005, has been designed in accordance with standards for accessibility, and is completely wheelchair accessible.

The east door at Central Library has been equipped with an automatic opener to make access from Yonge Street more convenient for physically disabled users. The public access door from underground parking to the elevator to the main floor has also been equipped with an automatic opener to make access to the Library from P1 more convenient for physically disabled users.

3.2 Automated Services

The Library's current Library Materials Management System makes access to the Library's materials and the users' accounts available from home or work via the telephone or the Internet, for those who cannot visit the Library in person.

Telephone functions include:

- Ability to place holds
- Ability to renew materials
- Ability to check account status

On-line functions include:

- Ability to place holds
- Ability to renew materials
- Ability to change/update an address
- Ability to request the purchase of materials
- Ability to check account status

Additionally, Library staff has implemented voice and print augmentation software to make access to the OPAC in the Central Library more accessible to vision impaired users in both the Children's and Adult Departments.

3.3 Visiting Library Service

This program is for patrons who are unable, for reason of disability, to visit the Library in person. They can have materials delivered directly to their home through the Library's Visiting Library Service.

4.0 2006/2007 PLANNING FOR ACCESSIBILITY

4.1 Physical Plant

Signage design for all Library branches is being redesigned and updated. The company being consulted for signage design has worked with the CNIB on signage systems and is therefore knowledgeable in the area of features such as Braille or large lettering to make the signage legible to visually impaired patrons.

4.2 Automated Services

The Library will examine the installation of a TTD line, to make access to telephone services easier for hearing impaired users now that the upgraded telephone service has been installed.

4.3 Visiting Library Services

With the recent construction of several retirement facilities in Richmond Hill, and with a awareness of the needs of an aging population, the Library recognizes the desirability of implementing a volunteer program aimed at increasing the number of hours available to Visiting Library Services. Library staff will meet with Helpmate staff to discuss the possibility of Helpmate administering the selection and coordination of volunteers for this program.

4.4 Staff Education

The Director of Public Service and the Director of Service Development, Planning and Support have enrolled in a workshop detailing considerations and solutions for accessibility in many contexts, from physical plant to website design, and for many types of disability.

5.0 CONCLUSION

While the Library has always designed facilities and services with an awareness of users with disabilities, changing needs and innovations in adaptive technology require an ongoing audit of accessibility issues. Library staff will continue to examine facilities and upgrade services to the disabled.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive Report SRLIB06.22 *Accessibility Plan Update 2006/2007*.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Mary Jane Celsie
Director, Public Service

Jane Horrocks
CEO

LIBRARY**What Barriers have been eliminated:**

<u>Barrier Identified</u> ¹	<u>Barrier Type</u> ²	<u>Disability Type</u> ³	<u>How Barrier Was Addressed</u> ⁴
Wide stairway in front entry (Central Library)	Physical	Ambulatory but frail	More central stair rails were installed
East door of Library was difficult to open if physically disabled - this is the closest access from Yonge St.	Physical	Physical	Installation of automatic door opener
Door from public underground parking garage difficult to open – only access to elevator to main floor.	Physical	Physical	Installation of automatic door opener
Crowded conditions in Children's Dept. at Central Library	Physical	Physical	Expanded space in 2005 allowed more ease of access
Difficult for visually impaired to use OPAC/Internet workstations in-library	Information/ Communication	Sensory	Installation of two special purpose workstations with voice/ print augmentation software and scanners (one Adult, one Children's) at Central Library

¹Description of barrier

²Indicate type of barrier (physical, architectural, information, communication, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

³Indicate type of disability affected by barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁴Describe the action taken or timing to remove barrier

LIBRARY**Identification and details of current Barriers:**

<u>Barrier Identified</u> ⁵	<u>Barrier Type</u> ⁶	<u>Disability Type</u> ⁷	<u>Timing to address barrier</u> ⁸
	Physical	Physical	
Telephone service needs to be heard in order to access	Information/ Communication	Hearing Impairment	Inclusion of incorporating TTD line into telephone system upgrade in 2006
Need to access materials without coming to a Library site	Physical	Physical	Investigation of working with Helpmate to implement volunteer staffing for Visiting Library Service in 2006/7
Finding the way in Library buildings requires ability to read directional signs	Information/ Communication	Visual Impairment	Incorporation of features such as Braille or Large Print into Library signage for visually impaired patrons at all sites. Study has been carried out with signage specialist – implementation in 2006/7.

⁵Description of barrier

⁶Indicate type of barrier (physical, architectural, information, communication, attitudinal, technological, policy/practice)

⁷Indicate type of disability affected by barrier (physical, sensory, cognitive or other)

⁸Describe the action taken or timing to remove barrier