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DATE: April 7, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK MAY 31 - JUNE 6, 2010**

FROM: Norma Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

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### RECOMMENDATION

**That the week of May 31, 2010, be proclaimed “National Access Awareness Week” in the Regional Municipality of Peel;**

**And further, that the members of the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) be commended for their dedication and commitment to improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities.**

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) will be observed in many Canadian communities during the week of May 31 – June 6, 2010.
- NAAW continues the tradition first established in 1988 to promote better community access for people with disabilities.
- The Region of Peel began celebrating this week in 2008 to show its support to citizens and staff with disabilities.
- Similar to previous years educational and promotional activities will be held during the week to commemorate the 2010 NAAW.
- The 2010 event will include a “Lunch & Learn” session for Regional staff regarding the accessibility challenges experienced by persons with disabilities.
- During the week of May 31 - June 6, 2010, the Accessibility Planning Program will launch the 2010 Poster Campaign on Emergency Preparedness for Peel Residents with Disabilities developed to educate the community at large on how to assist people with disabilities in an emergency or a disaster situation.
- The 2010 NAAW event is a collaborative partnership between the Accessibility Planning Program and the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

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## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) was first established in 1988 to promote better community access for people with disabilities. The week was created in response to a request from Rick Hansen following his 40,000 km Man in Motion World Tour, which was organized to raise awareness about the need for accessibility for people with disabilities.

The week celebrates achievements made by and for people with disabilities. It promotes access for people with all disabilities who encounter barriers that prevent full participation in day-to-day activities. The range of barriers includes:

- Physical barriers that result from a building's or structure's design;
- Communication barriers that make it difficult for people to understand information;
- Technology - or lack of it - that prevents people from accessing information;
- Systemic barriers that restrict people through practices or rules; and
- Attitudinal barriers that result in a person being discriminated against or stereotyped.

People with disabilities face daily barriers that prevent them from working, enjoying and participating in their communities. Each year, NAAW encourages Canadians to think about the barriers people with disabilities face, and to find ways to break them down.

### **2. Raising Regional Staff Awareness of Accessibility**

Proclamation of the NAAW is the perfect opportunity for Regional Council to reflect on current accessibility initiatives taking place in our community and focus on what we can do to ensure an inclusive and barrier free Ontario by 2025 as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

A series of educational activities will occur during the week of May 31, 2010 to engage staff in the observance of NAAW. Staff will participate in on-line quizzes and fact finding exercises designed to raise awareness about innovative ideas and best practices in the area of accessibility. Activities will be designed to raise awareness of staff about newly developed provincial accessibility standards such as the Accessible Customer Service Standards (ACSS) and the international human rights treaty, United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), recently ratified by the Canadian government on March 11, 2010.

Our third NAAW event celebration will focus on delivering a Lunch & Learn session in partnership with Region of Peel AAC, with the goal of better informing staff around the accessibility challenges experienced by persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Planning Program has developed a Poster Campaign regarding *Emergency Preparedness for the Peel Residents with Disabilities* developed in partnership with the Region of Peel Emergency Management program. During the week of May 31 - June 6, 2010, using our internet site [www.peelregion.ca](http://www.peelregion.ca), this information will be shared with the staff and broader community members

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**CONCLUSION**

Declaration of the week of May 31 – June 6, 2010 as the National Access Awareness Week, offers an opportunity to acknowledge Regional diversity, build the ability of staff to identify and address barriers, foster changes in attitudes towards persons with disabilities, and eliminate barriers to full participation by persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.




Norma Trim  
Chief Financial Officer  
and Commissioner of Corporate Services

**Approved for Submission:**



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D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

# Proclamation

National Access Awareness Week

May 31 – June 6, 2010

WHEREAS the Region of Peel and other Organizations representing persons with disabilities and various levels of government recognize the week of May 31 – June 6, 2010 as National Access Awareness Week;

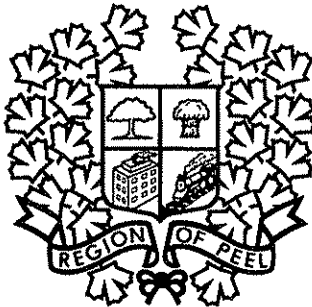
AND WHEREAS, the disabled community in Peel exceeds 14.8 per cent of the population;

AND WHEREAS, persons with disabilities contribute to our community, as entrepreneurs, decision-makers, employees, musicians, artists, volunteers, parents, grandparents;

AND WHEREAS, recognition of this week calls attention to the achievements made by and for people with disabilities, including the important work of the members of the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC);

AND WHEREAS, for many among us, our future depends on the success of creating barrier free and inclusive communities through accessibility planning and raising awareness of best practices in the area of accessibility;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the week of May 31 – June 6, 2010 be proclaimed “NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK” in the Regional Municipality of Peel.



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Emil Kolb  
Regional Chair