

Improving access for passengers with disabilities

By Mark Pavilons

Metrolinx has acknowledged a Schomberg woman's concerns about accessible parking at the King City GO station. They've vowed to step up their game.

Sandra Kendall travels to work every day on the GO train. She lives with severe rheumatoid arthritis and she was routinely unable to park in the accessible parking spots at King City station.

The reserved spots were often blocked by drivers idling in place or dropping off other riders. Kendall decided to file a Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario claim against Metrolinx in the spring of this year.

"This is not just a Metrolinx problem, but I am glad they have now stepped up their game. Some mornings I saw over six cars blocking or parking in the accessible spots!" commented Kendall. "All of the signs encouraging drivers to move along were there, but sometimes you just have to put some muscle behind true access for people with disabilities."

Kendall and Metrolinx resolved the claim last week. Metrolinx has made the following changes for improved accessible and barrier-free parking at the King City station:

- Increased the number of accessible spaces from 8 to 10.

- Grouped all accessible spaces together.

- Improved signage.

- Removed the curb along the accessible parking stalls to accommodate a continuous accessible curb, providing an easier path to the train platforms.

- Constructed an island platform at the entrance of the parking lot to improve overall traffic flow.

Metrolinx continues to expand accessibility throughout the entire transportation system and will actively ensure accessible parking spots remain available to those who need them.

Kendall had faced the problem of drivers blocking the eight handicapped spots when dropping off riders on an almost daily basis for the past year or so. An incident March 19 was pretty much the last straw. A parking officer had to restrain someone from confronting Kendall.