



Annual Accessibility Status Report

A summary of Elgin County's accomplishments towards inclusion in 2020

Objectives and Purpose

This is the County of Elgin's Annual Accessibility Status Report update. In 2013, Elgin County released its first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The plan outlined the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which included how to meet phased-in requirements under the AODA.

In 2015, the County released its second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which takes the County's accessibility efforts through to the end of 2020.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2020 to implement the strategy outlined in the County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of this Status Report is to make the public aware of Elgin County's progress with accessibility implementation and to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the AODA.

Compliance Reporting

Elgin County filed its fourth Accessibility Compliance Report in 2019 with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Elgin County's Commitment Statement

The County of Elgin's statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the Municipality to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The County's statement of commitment is publicly available on the County website.

The County of Elgin is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The County of Elgin recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

The County of Elgin is committed to being responsive to the needs of all our residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the County will:

- Ensure policies address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods, services, programs and facilities.

- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

The County of Elgin will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, The County will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan will outline the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

Continuous Achievements in Accessibility

- The County of Elgin focuses on removing barriers which may exist in our buildings and facilities, while ensuring that new buildings, leases, and renovations do not create any new barriers.
- Elgin County/Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives.
- The County of Elgin continues to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation including continuing to train staff, volunteers and third parties who interact on behalf of the Municipalities on an ongoing basis.
- All library branches continue to provide accessible materials and communication supports upon request. In addition, the library has several accessible materials and resources available including but not limited to: large print books, audio books, CELA Library loan access, electronic materials with zoom features, hand-held magnifiers as well as ZoomText with large print keyboards
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action.

Highlights of 2020

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic response in the Human Resources Department, the County's Accessibility Coordinator was temporarily redeployed during a portion of 2020 in a supporting role. This support included screening in our long term care facilities along with additional COVID-19 response tasks as assigned by both the Manager and Director of the Human Resources Department. Considering the required 50/50 hourly split with the County of Middlesex, there were some priority items that have been pushed into 2021. With that in consideration, please see below some of the accessibility related highlights of 2020:

- Enabling Accessibility Fund (Federal grant opportunity for funding up to \$100,000) application support provided to multiple local municipal partners
 - Successful in securing funding in the full amount of \$100,000 for the installation of a new universal washroom in the Elgin County Administration Building basement
- Ontario Trillium Fund: Resilient Communities Fund application support for a number of local municipal partners – applications pending review
- Ministry for Seniors & Accessibility Compliance Audit support provided to multiple local municipal partners – awaiting compliant response
- Elgin County/ Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewed and provided feedback on the Port Stanley Fire Hall project
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation & Ontario Human Rights Code virtual training provided to the Municipality of West Elgin staff
- Significant accessibility upgrade at the Straffordville Library with the installation of an elevator, providing access to the basement level for all occupants
- Handrails installed in the County Administration Building basement to support users of all ages and ability navigate the main hallway ramp
- County of Elgin Procurement Policy updated to include best practices accessibility verbiage

Availability of the Plan and Status Report

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be accessed through Elgin County's website: <http://www.elgincounty.ca/main-menu/council/accessibility>

Contact Information

For more information contact – Elgin County's Accessibility Coordinator:

Phone 519-631-1460 ext. 167

Fax 519-633-7785

Email smcfarlane@elgin.ca

Mail Accessibility Coordinator

County of Elgin, Human Resources Dept.

450 Sunset Drive,

St. Thomas, ON N5R 5X7

Accessible formats and communication supports available upon request.