



**ELGIN COUNTY
MULTI-YEAR
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
2015-2020**

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INTRODUCTION

COMMITMENT

The County of Elgin is committed to removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing our goods, services and facilities.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the County's approach to ensuring that services provided will be done so in an accessible manner. The County will continue to develop inclusive workplace policies and procedures.

The County endeavours to demonstrate leadership for the local municipalities and to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services and facilities.

BACKGROUND

For several years, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee has been removing barriers through processes outlined in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001. This process will continue, however, it will become integrated into the multi-year planning cycles. This process will combine the planning requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This combined planning process will be reviewed once every five years or until the ODA, 2001 is repealed.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee is a public committee that is comprised of people with disabilities and staff members from the County and Municipality of Central Elgin. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice to Councils on the removal and prevention of barriers.

OBLIGATIONS

This Multi-Year Plan is based upon requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. It contains standards in the following five areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation and;
- Built Environment

The Accessible Customer Service Standard came into effect in 2008. In 2011, under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation, the Province combined Information and Communications,

Employment and Transportation. In 2014, the Province added the Design of Public Spaces into the Integrated Accessibility Standard and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has updated the Ontario Building Code to include barrier free amendments. All County projects will consider both of these regulations and attempt to exceed these requirements where possible.

This plan outlines the requirements of the AODA along with projected timelines. An annual status report will be developed that will report on the previous years accomplishments.

The plan will be reviewed and updated once every five years. This includes a consultation with the public.

MONITOR AND REVIEW

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement Elgin County's strategy and meet the requirements under the AODA.

PLAN COORDINATION

The County's Accessibility Coordinator is responsible for the development of this plan, in consultation with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

All staff have a role to play in identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

Employees who are engaged and knowledgeable are able to incorporate accessibility considerations into their daily business practices.

TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

OUTCOME

- People with disabilities will receive quality goods and services in a timely manner
- People with disabilities will have access to County-produced information and communications
- A barrier-free recruitment process
- Greater accessibility in County-owned facilities
- Staff will be able to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent or remove them

APPROACH

- Develop policies and procedures
- Incorporate accessibility into planning processes
- Train staff
- Engage the public in feedback
- Work to remove barriers to employment
- Continue to make facilities accessible and;
- Ensure there is access to information and communications

TIMELINES

2012-2013:

- The development of policies
- Developing a multi-year accessibility plan
- Purchasing requirements
- Emergency and public safety information
- Public Libraries
- Report to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (2013)

2014-2016:

- Employment
- Training
- Feedback process
- Accessible formats and communication supports
- Accessible Websites and web content
- Report to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (2015)

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The County of Elgin is committed to ensuring that all customers receive accessible services in a timely manner. Members of the public will receive an equitable customer service experience that meets their needs. The County will achieve this by:

- Reviewing and updating policies to ensure high quality, accessible service.
- Embedding accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials.
- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action.

PROGRESS

- Developed Accessible Customer Service Policy (2009)
- Alternate formats are available through the Accessibility Coordinator
- Customer Service Training to all staff. (2009)
- Customer Service Training to volunteers.
- Continuing to review and update policies to ensure consideration of people with disabilities.
- Accessible Customer Service Training to new employees – offered monthly. (ongoing) This training has been updated and is now part of General Accessibility Training offered monthly.
- Updated purchasing policy to ensure that third party contractors are familiar with the AODA and the County's Accessibility Policy.
- Reviewed Accessible Customer Service Policy and incorporated requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. (County Accessibility Policy 2.130)

GOALS

- Review current processes to receive feedback from the public.
- Review current processes on how public can request an alternate format.
- Continue to fulfill the needs of residents and customers under the Accessible Customer Service Standard.
- Review requirements under Accessible Customer Service pending update in 2015/2016

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY REGULATION

GENERAL

The Integrated Accessibility Regulation requires the County to:

- Develop policies on how the County will achieve accessibility and meet the requirements of the regulation
- Develop a statement of organizational commitment
- Develop a multi-year accessibility plan and post an annual status report on the County's website outlining the progress that has been made.
- Train staff on the requirements of the regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.

PROGRESS

- Developed County Accessibility policy which describes how Elgin County will achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation.
 - County Accessibility Policy – HR 2.130
- Included in the County Accessibility Policy is a statement of organizational commitment.
- Prepared annual status report in 2014 which identified the progress made in implementing this multi-year accessibility plan.
- Training has been provided to staff on the Integrated Accessibility Regulation and the Ontario Human Rights Code. This training will be provided to new staff on an ongoing basis.
- Training module has been developed for new staff that incorporates requirements under the Accessible Customer Service standard, and the Integrated Accessibility Standard.
- Trained Councilors on accessibility (early 2015)
- Report compliance to the Accessibility Directorate

GOALS

- Review corporate HR policies to ensure they reflect the requirements of the AODA.
- Update Accessibility Policy to reflect updated Accessible Customer Service Standard
- Review purchasing procedures related to accessibility and incorporate into existing procedures, where possible.
- Develop accessible purchasing training.
- Launch online training modules to maximize efficiency. Offer in-house training courses where applicable.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Information and communications are a large part of County business. It is because of this that it so important to ensure that information and communications are created in a way that considers accessibility.

The County will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies. This includes websites, print communications materials as well as face-to-face interactions.

The County is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities. We will do this by:

- Achieving compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) to ensure websites are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Developing resource materials for creating accessible documents for common software programs such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Ensuring that emergency information, procedures, plans and public safety information is available in alternate formats, when requested.
- Developing a training strategy to ensure that staff have the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials.

PROGRESS

- Website Redesign in accordance with WCAG 2.0 (February 2013)
- Training for staff on how to make documents accessible, in accordance with WCAG 2.0 requirements. **(April 2013 and ongoing)**
- Emergency Plan and related procedures are available in an alternate format, upon request
- Developed resources for staff on making documents accessible
 - Creating Accessible Documents Training (Word and PDF)
- Developed strategy to ensure WCAG compliance for web documents. (ongoing)
- Developed accessible templates for web documents (ongoing).
- Reviewed Library resources that are available to people with disabilities.
- Purchased hand-held magnifiers for people with low vision. These are available for use at the Library Branches.
- Purchased large print keyboards for people with low vision. These are available for use at the Library Branches.

GOALS

- Documents are available in an alternate format, upon request. Staff should ensure that “alternate formats available upon request” is on all print documents.

- Continue to educate staff on the need for accessible documents
- Develop a strategy of how to ensure existing (pre 2012) documents are accessible or available upon request.
- Research accessible communications and determine if a guideline is needed for staff.
- Review current feedback process to determine if process is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Review process for obtaining accessible formats and communication supports to determine if an update is needed.
- Continue to monitor website compliance and keep up to date.

EMPLOYMENT

The County of Elgin is committed to providing ensuring that the process of finding, getting and keeping a job is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce. Human Resources staff will be provided resources in order to meet compliance under the Integrated Accessibility Regulation. It is expected that training will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Understanding employer obligations to provide employment accommodations.
- How to identify and remove barriers in the workplace.
- Enhancing workplace emergency responses through individualized emergency response information and assistance as required.
- Revising individual work plans and developing a manager's guide, tools and templates to remove barriers from the recruitment process.

PROGRESS

- Job advertisements let the public know that accommodations will be provided, upon request. Applicants need to make their accommodation needs known in advance.
- Developed workplace emergency response information policy and notified staff.
 - Emergency Workplace Response for Employees with Disabilities – HR 2.130.1
- Updated Accommodations in the Workplace policy (HR Policy 2.80.2)
- Continuing to remove barriers from the selection process. All applicants who are invited to interviews are being asked if they require accommodations in order to participate.
- Job advertisements are currently posted in a variety of newspapers and websites. Job advertisements and descriptions will be provided in an alternate format upon request.
- Update Staff Performance Appraisal Policy (HR Policy 4.80)

GOALS

- Continue to monitor HR policies to ensure compliance with AODA regulations.

ACCESSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The County of Elgin will strive to ensure that new facilities are designed and built with universal design principles in mind. All County owned building plans are currently reviewed by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

As part of the procurement process staff are required to consult with a variety of standards and guidelines to determine the most accessible and feasible design choice.

On January 1, 2013 the Province of Ontario amended the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (O.Reg 191//11) to include the Design of Public Spaces. In January, 2015, the Province released the amended Ontario Building Code which includes updates to the Barrier Free section.

County accomplishments and planned projects related to the accessible built will be outlined in Appendix A.

COMMUNICATION

This plan will be available on Elgin County's website, located at www.elgincounty.ca.
A print copy of this plan is also available by contacting the County's Accessibility Coordinator.

FEEDBACK

The County of Elgin is committed to ensuring accessibility is a reality throughout all facilities and business operations. There is still so much to accomplish, and as we progress, we would like to hear from you!

Do you have any thoughts or feedback on what has been accomplished so far?

Please contact us with your questions and ideas.

CONTACT

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This document is available in accessible formats.

APPENDIX A

	Project	Location	AAC Consultation Required?	Completion Date
Trails				
Beach access routes	Not applicable			
Outdoor Public Eating Areas				
Outdoor Play Spaces	Not applicable			
Exterior Paths of travel	Removed asphalt (32") around front garden area and created a sidewalk that is 72" (6 ft)	Terrace Lodge		
Accessible Parking	New asphalt in parking lot. Re-painted lines and will have 4 accessible parking spaces – 2 "van" spaces at 3.4 m wide, and 2 accessible parking spaces at 2.4 m wide. Additionally an access aisle will be provided between the spaces that is 1.5 m wide.	Admin		2015
Ramp	Removed ramp at south end (rear side) and replaced with a vertical key operated lift. The lift is located inside the building, and requires staff assistance to operate.	Admin		2009
Obtaining Services				
Accessible Pedestrian Signals	Install accessible pedestrian signals when installing new traffic lights.	Throughout County		Ongoing
Maintenance				

	Project	Building	AAC Consultation Required?	Completion Date
Elevator	Elevator Flooring – changed flooring to non-slip with no bevel	Terrace Lodge		
Eating Area	Adult Day Program Kitchenette - Island counter top is 36" high with shallow sink - barrier free handwash sink with a 5' turning circle	Terrace Lodge		
Washroom	Washroom upgrades in resident rooms - replaced old vanity with roll under style sink. - shallow sink - installed sliding doors instead of hinged doors. Door width increased from 28" to 32".	Terrace Lodge		
Resident's Rooms	Replaced flooring in 8 residents rooms. Removed old vinyl tiles and replaced with new flooring. The old vinyl tiles in residents rooms was lower than flooring in hallway, which was causing a bevel (approximately ½") and creating problems for residents trying to enter or exit their rooms with a mobility device.	Bobier Villa		Ongoing
Signage	Signage throughout Administration building in Braille and mounted no higher than 4' from the floor.	Admin		2013
Fire Safety	Fire pull stations and extinguishers mounted at 4' from floor.	Admin		2013
Doors	Install panic bars on all exterior doors (confirm)	Admin		
Library	Book drop off zones at libraries (confirm)	Libraries		
Library	Lower shelving at: Port Stanley, Dutton, Rodney, West Lorne, Springfield and Straffordville	Libraries		
Doors	Automatic door openers at all entrances	Admin		2010
Doors	Interior doors in the Administration and HR Departments are 36"	Admin		2008-2010
Thresholds	All thresholds to be level with flooring or entrances	Admin		
Washrooms	- Accessible universal washroom in basement (north end)			

	Project	Building	AAC Consultation Required?	Completion Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 accessible washrooms (with stalls) on 1A near Council Chambers - Accessible washroom (with stalls) on 2nd floor – considered the “public” washroom. Located halfway between north and south end. - Two accessible, universal washrooms on 3rd floor – one in the Human Resources Department and one in Administrative Services. - Accessible washrooms (with stalls) on 3rd floor – considered the “public” washroom. Located halfway between north and south end. - Accessible washroom on 4th floor – considered the “public” washroom. Used by staff and the public. 			
Fire Safety	Installed visual fire alarm systems on all floors.	Admin		2009/2010
Doors	Exterior rear entrance (south end) replaced with 36” door and automatic door openers. Lever style hardware installed.	Admin		2009/2010
Doors	Installed 36” wide door on basement training room.	Admin		2009/2010

APPENDIX B

MUNICIPAL ACCESSIBILITY WORK PLAN – COUNTY OF ELGIN

The County of Elgin Timelines for Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Regulations: The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Regulation 429/07) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation 191/11). As defined in the AODA, the County of Elgin is a large designated public sector organization with 50+ employees.

Year	Relevant Section of Standard	Requirements	Compliance
January 1 st 2010	Customer Service Standard (2010 only), Sections 3 to 9	<p>Customer Service Establishment of policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities that respects the dignity and independence, deals with the use of assistive devices and ensures communication with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.</p> <p>Establishment of policies, practices and procedures governing the use of service animals, the accompaniment of support persons and notice of temporary disruptions for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Training be provided to every person who deals with the public and/or who participates in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services.</p>	<p>Developed Accessible Customer Service Policy April 2009. (This policy has since been updated as HR Policy 2.130.) Training was provided to all staff throughout 2009.</p> <p>Statement on website indicating that accessible formats are available upon request. Requests will be handled by the Accessibility Coordinator.</p>

Year	Relevant Section of Standard	Requirements	Compliance
	Section 11	<p>Ensuring new internet websites and web content will conform to establish WWW Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0., initially at Level A.</p>	<p>New County website launched in February 2013</p> <p>Approximately 30 staff trained on how to make web documents accessible throughout 2013.</p> <p>Training provided to local municipal staff on making web documents accessible.</p> <p>Accessibility Coordinator working with individual staff and departments to ensure compliance with web content back to January 1, 2012.</p> <p>Accommodations in the Workplace Policy (HR Policy 2.80.2) approved by County Council January 2014.</p>

Year	Relevant Section of Standard	Requirements	Compliance
	Section 12	Provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, made available upon request.	supports available on County's website.
January 1st 2016	Whole regulation	Design of public spaces	Review procedures related to the Design of Public Spaces. Update procedures to ensure maintenance procedures are adhered to. Develop training for staff as necessary.
January 1st 2021	Section 14	Information and Communications Ensure all internet websites and web content will conform to established W3C Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0., Level AA (some exceptions).	Review website in 2018 to determine next steps for website and web content.