Annual Status Update 2021

To the 2018-22 Joint Accessibility Plan

County of Perth

Municipality of North Perth

Township of Perth South

Township of Perth East

Municipality of West Perth

If you require this document in an alternate/accessible format, please contact info@perthcounty.ca or call 519-271-0531 ext. 210

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Perth County Joint Accessibility Plan Annual Status Update 2021

County of Perth Joint Accessibility Plan Annual Status Update 2021

Executive Summary

This is the fourth Annual Status Update to the 2018-2022 County of Perth Joint Accessibility Plan, and illustrates the intentions of the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities for meeting their obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and for identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities in communities across the County.

This plan was established, reviewed and updated in consultation with staff and with the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC).

This update will be posted on the County's website, as well as on the website of each of the Lower Tier Municipalities, and shall be made available in an alternate format and with communication supports upon request.

Obligations

The County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities must meet the requirements under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Please refer to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022 for more information.

Consultation

This plan was developed in consultation with the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. This adds the valuable perspectives of individuals with lived experience to help ensure the effectiveness of this plan. This committee composition is outlined later in this report.

Implementation

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities support the spirit and goals of the AODA to make the Province of Ontario accessible by 2025. A commitment has been made to identify and eliminate wherever possible, all forms of barriers faced by people with disabilities, including:

- Attitudinal
- Physical
- Architectural
- Policy/Practices
- Technological
- Information and Communications
- Legislative

Structure and Governance

The Legislative Services Division of the Corporate Services Department and the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) are responsible at a corporate level for ensuring compliance to the AODA, and sharing legislative analyses and subject matter expertise. The County of Perth and each of its Lower Tier Municipalities are separately responsible for ensuring that all departments with their Municipalities are compliant with the Standards contained within the AODA. Each department is accountable for ensuring that their respective clauses are executed according to the legislative requirements to the service industry.

Informal consulting groups will be developed on an ad hoc basis for variable terms to assist in policy and procedure review and development and implementation.

This plan is subject to approval by the County of Perth Council and each of the Lower Tier Municipal Councils.

Municipal Jurisdictions Participating in this Plan

The Corporation of the County of Perth

1 Huron Street
Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Lower Tier Municipalities

The Municipality of North Perth

330 Wallace Ave N
Listowel, ON N4W 1L3

The Township of Perth East

P.O. Box 455
25 Mill Street E
Milverton, ON N0K 1M0

The Township of Perth South

3191 Road 122
St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0

The Municipality of West Perth

P.O. Box 609
169 David Street
Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

Key Contact

Tyler Sager, Clerk
Corporation of the County of Perth
1 Huron Street, Stratford, ON N5A 5S4
Tel: 519.271.0531 Ext. 210
clerk@perthcounty.ca

Our Progress on the AODA Regulations

The following outlines Perth County's commitments, our countywide progress in 2021 and the new goals established for 2022 in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas, all of which are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), ON Reg. 191/11.

- Customer Service
- Information & Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (and Built Environment)

There are also a number of General Requirements that apply across all of the accessibility standards.

Any updates to the IASR and any new goals established under each of the accessibility standards in the coming years will be reflected in the Annual Status Update Reports to the 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan.

Compliance

As of December 31, 2021, the County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities are compliant with most of the applicable requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The only exception is one of the requirements under the Information and Communications Standard.

The Information and Communications Standard states that municipal websites and web content must meet the requirements of the World Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA. Third party documents comprise part of all Council agenda packages, and some of those documents are not accessible to screen readers. The County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities do not currently have the resources to remediate third party documents, which means that some parts of the agenda packages posted on municipal websites are not in an accessible format. Alternate formats of the agenda packages are available upon request.

WCAG 2.0 has a provision for Partial Conformance due to third party content. In these cases, a statement of partial conformance may be made indicating that the page does not conform but could conform if certain parts were removed. This statement can be applied to content that is not under the author's control and is described in a way that the users can identify. In the case of Perth County and Lower Tier websites, this would apply to third party content received to include in County Council agenda packages (i.e., consent agenda items).

General Requirements

Procurement

People with disabilities will be treated equitably with respect to the procurement, use and benefit of County services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, and integration. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities. Furthermore, the County will ensure that accessibility is integrated into all County initiatives, business practices, boards, committees, departments and divisions. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into the procurement of goods, services or facilities, an explanation will be provided upon request.

Reporting

Reports will be produced annually on the progress and implementation of the multi-year Accessibility Plan, and this information will be posted on the County website and will be available in alternate formats upon request. The multi-year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated once every five years. The County and Lower Tier Municipalities, as legislated, will file Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Training

All employees, volunteers and persons developing policies for the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities are trained on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities. This includes all members of the County and Lower Tier Municipal Councils. Persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the County must also be trained.

The Corporate Accessibility Policy is updated to reflect changes to any of the standards, and training is provided in order to ensure an understanding of any changes.

In 2020, Perth County implemented ongoing staff training. The first session was on the Information and Communications standard with a specific focus on WCAG 2.0. This session was provided to all Lower Tier municipalities and allowed for questions/concerns for each municipality as we approach a bi-annual compliance report deadline in 2021. This initiative continued into 2021, as Perth County staff provided quarterly training sessions to County and Lower Tier Municipal staff, each focused on one of the five IASR standards or other topics related to accessibility compliance. Topics for 2021 included:

- Maintaining accessible customer service during COVID
- Accessibility and Perth County Connect
- Review of the 2021 AODA Compliance Report

- Overview of accessible Microsoft Word and PDF documents

Records will continue to be maintained for training provided on accessibility, including the dates of the training and the number of individuals who attended.

Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC)

The Perth County JAAC currently has nine (9) voting positions, which provide representation for each Municipality within Perth County, consistent with the expectations of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001. Currently, 8 of those seats are filled, with one vacancy at the time of this update. The majority of the members are persons with disabilities. A new Organization member position was added to the Accessibility Advisory Committee in 2018, and was filled by the Alzheimer Society Perth County. They represent the "voice" of the growing numbers of people with dementia across the County.

The JAAC met 10 times over the course of 2021, on the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding July and August) virtually via ZOOM, unless otherwise noted. Committee agendas and minutes are posted on the Perth County website. At this time, the meetings are being held virtually via ZOOM due to the COVID-19 pandemic – as always, the public is welcome to request to join the meetings at any time. Alternate formats of the agenda packages are available upon request.

In addition to Accessibility Plans, the County and the Lower Tier Municipalities are required to consult with the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee under several of the Accessibility Standards of the IASR, and under the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees section of the AODA, including:

- **Transportation Standard**
  - On the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community;
  - Accessibility features required for PC Connect Transit Service

- **Design of Public Spaces Standard**
  - On specific technical requirements for Recreation Trails;
  - On the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities for Outdoor Play Spaces;
  - On the design and placement of rest areas along the Exterior Paths of Travel; and
  - On the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces

- **Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees (Part VII of the AODA)**

- o **Site Plan Reviews** – Councils are required to seek advice from the committee on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building structure or premises for all municipally owned or leased facilities. In addition to all municipal properties, the Committee is responsible for reviewing the site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act that the Committee selects.

Feedback

The County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities welcome input from the public in order to help identify ways in which we can improve accessibility in facilities, goods and services. Members of the public are encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Clerk at the County of Perth or complete the Contact Us [1] section on the County of Perth website.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

Phone: 519-271-0531 x 210
Email: clerk@perthcounty.ca
Mail: Corporation of the County of Perth
            1 Huron Street
            Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

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[1]
https://www.perthcounty.ca/Modules/contact/search.aspx?s=uJRqyPbMwIWHcHH8PySJQQeQuAIeQuAI

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Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Ontario (IASR)

(Ontario Regulation 191/11)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

Commitment

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities are committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of County services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, integration and is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, employees, visitors and other stakeholders with visible and non-visible disabilities.

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth and Lower Tier Municipalities

Accomplishments:

The County and the Lower Tier Municipalities are meeting the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, which includes:

- Establishment of policies governing the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities;

- Use of service animals and support persons by persons with disabilities;

- Notice of temporary disruptions to goods, services or facilities used by persons with disabilities;

- Training about the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities for staff, volunteers, policy developers, and providers of goods, services or facilities;

- Establishment of a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which they provide goods, services or facilities, ensuring that the feedback process to accessible to persons with disabilities.

- Provision of accessible formats of documents or communication supports upon request.

Goals:

The Councils of the County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities have all committed to working with the Alzheimer Society of Perth County in the roll-out of

training for all front-line staff on Dementia Friendly Communities, which was anticipated to happen in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, timelines have been shifted.

County of Perth

Accomplishments:

- o New Horizons for Seniors Fund utilized for training on age friendly initiatives in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society and accessibility consultant Julie Sawchuk.
- o POA Court Services continues to offer remote options for fine payments, filing documents, telephone meetings with prosecutor, providing more accessible options for all POA clients.
- o Economic Development and Tourism and Planning staff continue to work out of 1 Ontario St. (Scotiabank building), which is accessible to the public via an elevator.
- o Continue to reach out to Economic Development and Tourism clients for alternate formats, as required.
- o Ensured new hires have received training in accessible customer service standards.
- o The development of a new Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter was completed in 2021 and supports the goals of Accessibility by encouraging it to be considered in all aspects of County operations.
- o A new Community Engagement Framework was created which supports project planning and public engagement while ensuring activities are accessible to all.
- o Paramedic Services to investigated the addition of auto load systems in ambulance units to be able to accommodate patients of different sizes for safe ambulance transport.

Goals:

- o Public Works and Facilities will oversee the development and installation of an elevator and accessible washroom at the Courthouse for better building-wide access.
- o Continue to provide accessible options for meetings with applicants and stakeholders.
- o Continue to offer alternative delivery formats for programing and documents.
- o Continue to provide quarterly accessibility training sessions for County and Lower Tier staff.

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- o Roll out campus renovations with accessibility as a key component to the overall plan.
- o Ensure the use of inclusive and plain language whenever possible in the development of new County policies and communications.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments:

- o Pedestrian Crossovers installed with audible controls, tactile warning plates on Wallace Street South at Krotz Street and on Wallace North at Inkerman Street.
- o Mental Health First Aid training being provided to Child Care Workers.
- o Partnered with Gateway Centre of Excellence for Rural Health to offer "Lonely No More" training for Seniors and Rural individuals. Related information and resources are on website available in an accessible format.
- o Speaker system installed at front counter when barrier installed.
- o Had our accessible facilities available for COVID-19 vaccine clinics.
- o New staff members completed AODA training.
- o The North Perth Fire Department continued to provide all new recruits with IASR and Accessible Customer Service training.
- o The New microphones at the reception area have a new feature that will allow those with hearing devices to better hear and communicate.
- o At the accessible reception area work station, we have the extra feature for hearing for those with hearing device as well as we have purchased a wireless scanner which will allow us to scan invoices. To make tax payments easier for seniors or residents with mobility issues, staff have been going directly to their vehicles to assist with their transaction.
- o Library board meetings are now accessible on YouTube.
- o New Accessibility in the Library policy reflecting outcomes from the Accessibility report.

Goals:

- o Additional crossings to be reviewed for Wallace North Corridor in conjunction with North East Development Plan.
- o Additional Accessible Documents training for new Staff.
- o Ongoing Mental Health Facilitator training to child care workers.
- o Continue offering LNM based on need.

- o Continue to ensure new staff receive the appropriate AODA training.
- o Continue to provide all North Perth Fire Department recruits with IASR and Accessible Customer Service training.
- o Continue to update templates for accessibility.

Township of Perth South

Accomplishments:

- o Continue to promote "Report It and Get Involved Perth South" platforms for resident engagement.
- o Post municipal news and activities regularly to Facebook to communicate with entire community.
- o Participated in COVID Customer Service Training provided by Perth County.

Goals:

- o Continue to ensure that new employees receive the appropriate AODA customer service training.
- o Ensure that 2022 Municipal Election is accessible for all electors.

Township of Perth East

Accomplishments:

- o Corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements.
- o Continuing to convert documents to accessible and form fillable formats.
- o New documents and forms all meet accessible standards (e.g. dog tag application, community guide).
- o Livestream council meetings to YouTube.
- o Distribution of accessible fire safety material that meets standards. Staff performed deliveries to homes to eliminate the need for our residents to travel.
- o Access forward customer service standard training completed by all employees.
- o Cloud permit available for all residents and builders.
- o Accessible documents via internet, or provided in office.
- o Staff continue to ensure that items are not placed on lower shelves in the adult section. (Library)

Goals:

- o Providing more accessible library programming to communities outside of Milverton.

- o Purchase and introduce more accessible material formats at the Library – gather feedback from community. Ongoing review to ensure corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements as required.
- o Ongoing review to ensure corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements as required.
- o The Fire Department will continue distribution of accessible fire safety material and investigate making other material accessible.
- o Invest in expanding the e-collection and large Print collection (Library).
- o Provide education to the public on the eLibrary.
- o Ongoing review to ensure corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements as required.
- o Digitize older documents, and work to make them more accessible.
- o Look to implement more options with cloud permit for clients (e.g. payment through the website).

Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments:
- o Distributed accessible fire safety material that met AODA standards.
- o Implemented Visiting Library Service for residents who cannot access West Perth Public Library.

Goals:
- o Continue distribution of accessible fire safety material.
- o Conduct hybrid municipal election in accessible polling locations with accessible voting methods.
- o Continue to identify and remove barriers to municipal services.

Information and Communications Standard

Commitment

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities are committed to ensuring that information and communications about our goods, services and facilities are available and accessible to people with disabilities. The County and its Lower Tier Municipalities will follow universal design principles and best practices as a minimum, based upon the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Information and Communications Standard of the IASR, when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communication

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strategies and products. This includes website, intranet sites, communication materials, telephone communications and face-to-face interactions. If our organization determines that it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications, or the technology to convert the information is not readily available, we will be obligated to provide the person who requires the information with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible, and with a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Progress

<u>The Corporation of the County of Perth</u>

Accomplishments:

- o Provided training sessions to County and Lower Tier staff on the "Accessible Word and PDF Documents".

- o Provided training sessions to staff regarding the iCompass Software to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA when producing Council Reports.

- o County Council meetings continue to be livestreamed to facilitate access for those who would like to watch. Recordings are available at www.youtube.com/user/PerthCountydotca to watch after Council meetings have finished. This allows for an additional level of transparency and accessibility regarding our County Council communications. Additionally, YouTube provides a number of integrated accessibility features such as adjustable playback speeds, automated closed captioning and adjustable viewer size.

- o POA Court Services continues to provide a "remote court" model due to the pandemic. This model change allowed for the removal of all physical barriers to persons attending court. Clearly worded instructions are provided to defendants/agents/counsel/prosecution.

- o Accessible formats and communication supports are available for persons with disabilities, upon request, and are responded to in a timely manner. Policies are in place to ensure that accessible formats are provided at a cost no higher than other documents available to the public. This is made clear to all employees as well as the public on any public communications, including the new County of Perth website.

- o All new County employees trained on the Information and Communications Standard through online Moodle module or instructor led sessions, as applicable to their duties.

- o Ongoing use of Communications Plan & Policy, which outlines guiding principles, goals and an implementation schedule for improving the quality of internal and

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external communications, and supporting and encouraging an engaged community, with accessibility considerations.

- o Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to accessible formats.
- o Archives digitizing and making available more digital versions of finding aids and resources to provide more avenues to accessing archival information, including remote access.
- o Planning division has reviewed and redesigned Notices to ensure accessible formatting.
- o Ensure the use of inclusive and plain language whenever possible in the development of new County policies and communications.
- o Updated Accessible Documents Guidelines, and share with applicable staff across the County.

Goals:

- o IT Department is planning on the installation of a new audio system, including microphones and speakers, for the County Courthouse Council Chambers.
- o Archives plans to continue to convert existing paper-based finding aids to electronic files.
- o Ongoing review of County website to ensure content that is being published is as accessible to all audiences as possible.
- o CAO's Office to review corporate communications strategy to ensure it is continuing to communicate the County's achievements regarding accessibility to the larger public.
- o Organize ongoing Accessible Documents Training for new staff and for all staff uploading to the County website.
- o Paramedic Services to investigate technological linkages to provincial communication systems and health records. This will improve the patient experience and emergency patient care by providing greater real time information.
- o Work on new Accessibility Standards Policy and Procedure Manual for the County and the Lower Tier Municipalities.
- o Continue to ensure that County of Perth website, County of Perth internet and intranet websites and web content, with some exceptions, conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.
- o Continue to update templates for accessibility.

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- o Use of "Administration of Social Media: Guidelines" document created for staff, including section on Accessibility.
- o Continue to provide inclusive plain language whenever possible and continue to work on ensuring that economic development and tourism information is accessible and following the county's accessibility policy.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments:

- o Website and Public Information Sessions for all Public works projects held in accessible format as per municipal guidelines.
- o COVID-19 resources shared via social media and websites available in an accessible format.
- o In Cash receipts parameters, we can now flag accounts so a window pops up stating that "Accessible Receipt Required" for customers. It is a reminder that the user needs to produce the receipt in an accessible format for the customer.
- o Continued adherence to WCAG 2.0 standards.
- o All social media posts (where available) include ALT text and closed captioning.

Goals:

- o Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to more accessible formats.
- o Monitor community needs and requests and update information on website as needed.
- o The NPFD will work towards ensuring all public fire and life safety materials distributed are accessible.
- o The NPFD will work towards completing a Community Risk Assessment in compliance with Ontario Regulation 378/18, which considers the fire safety needs of the all community members.
- o Review accessibility and compatibility with screen readers for PDFs uploaded to website (policies and procedures).

Township of Perth South

Accomplishments:

- o The Clerk's Office implemented the use of iCompass software in 2020 for the creation of agenda packages. This software meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.
- o The Finance Department implemented e-Billing to become more efficient and effective in the processing of Property Tax, Water and General Receivable bills.

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- The Building Department implemented Land Manager software to provide more efficient building permit processes and e-permit capability.
- Printed newsletters in January and August to be included with tax bill mail-outs to keep residents informed.
- Participated in AMO and Perth County information sessions regarding year end accessibility compliance reporting.

Goals:

- Continue to enhance council meetings for improved accessibility for all members of the community. Working on having Council meetings livestreamed through YouTube for best ease of access for those who would like to watch. Meetings currently livestreamed on the Township Facebook page.
- Ongoing review of Township website to ensure content that is being published is as accessible to all audiences as possible.
- Continue to update form templates for best possible accessibility.

Township of Perth East

Accomplishments:

- Ongoing website updates and reviewing website content to ensure accessibility.
- Social media posts all accessible.
- Upgraded the newly installed telephone system to further enhance the system's accessibility.
- Purchased a fully accessible fire safety house to allow all members of our community the opportunity to learn about fire safety.
- Posting training documents for FD staff on the employee portal of the Municipal website.
- All information/documents released follow accessibility standards.
- Ensure Library website continues to be updated to meet accessibility status.
- Website continues to be updated to meet accessibility status. (Library)

Goals:

- Ongoing review and training for staff.
- Strive to make council agendas more accessible based on agenda content.
- Evaluate transcription programs for virtual meetings.
- Complete more phone system upgrades.

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Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments:

o Purchased a fully accessible Fire Safety House to allow all members of our community the opportunity to learn about fire safety.

o Implemented online Marriage License Applications.

Goals:

o Utilize the accessible fire safety house throughout the communities that we protect.

o Arrange staff accessibility training for producing accessible documents and develop potential training program.

o Continue to review website and forms to ensure alternative and accessible formats are available.

o Promote availability of accessible formats on external documents.

Employment Standard

Commitment & Progress

A commitment has been made by the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities to inclusive and accessible employment practices that ensure the process of finding, hiring and retaining employees who have disabilities is inclusive. The County and the Lower Tier Municipalities are in compliance with the requirements of this standard.

All of the requirements in the Employment Standard continue to be maintained by the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities, including those pertaining to the following:

- Recruitment, assessment and selection
- Accessible formats and communication supports for employees
- Workplace emergency response information
- Documented individual accommodation plans
- Return to work process
- Performance management
- Career development and advancement
- Redeployment

Policies and procedures will be adjusted when the legislation is updated.

County of Perth

Accomplishments

- New staff at the County completed AODA training through the County's Moodle platform to ensure an understanding of all Accessibility Standards.
- Human Resources has added an accessibility and inclusion statement to job postings.
- Provide hiring managers with the opportunity to acknowledge personal biases that they may not be aware of by using the Harvard Implicit Association Test.

Goals:

- Continue to focus on ensuring compliance with all accessibility requirements of the employment standard.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

- Use of online recruitment available in an accessible format.
- Evaluation of language in library recruitment.

Goals

- Continue to ensure online recruitment for new positions is available in an accessible format.

Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- All staff are provided with accessibility training.
- Offered interviews virtually/through zoom.
- All staff undergo accessibility training.
- Purchased a VPN so all staff have the opportunity to work remotely if necessary.
- Completed interviews via zoom.

Goals

- Purchase cart for staff to use when providing homebound library services.
- Staff be provided with updated training and relevant legislation.
- Continue to post employment opportunities on the Municipal website in an accessible format.
- Continue training all employees.

Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o Implemented standardized paragraph to offer accommodations for training and recruitment to optimal participation.

Goals

- o Continue to train new staff on AODA and provide additional specialized training where necessary.

Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- o Interviews completed virtually for summer co-op positions.

Goals

- o Continue to work with Perth County Accessibility to endeavor to have inclusive and accessible employment practices.

Transportation Standard

Commitment

The County of Perth is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to accessible public transportation.

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth and Lower Tier Municipalities

The County is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have information on accessible public transportation services available within the County. There is a listing of available accessible transportation services provided by organizations servicing the Lower Tier Municipalities, the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys, and surrounding areas within the County of Perth.

This information is all available and is maintained on the Southwest Healthline website, under "Transportation - Accessible - Huron and Perth" at the following link:

[Southwest Healthline](http://www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10109&region=HuronPerth) [2]

This link is provided on the County of Perth website.

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[2] http://www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10109&region=HuronPerth

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Accomplishments

Perth County Community Transportation Network:

Launch of accessible PC Connect community transportation service using two fully accessible buses. The County of Perth and the City of Stratford have each received provincial funding through the Ministry of Transportation's "Community Transportation Grant Program - Municipal Stream" to establish new public transit for a pilot period from commencement to March 31, 2023.

On June 28, 2021, the Ministry of Transportation announced additional funding in order to extend Community Transportation projects an additional 2 years. PC Connect is now projected to operate until March 31, 2025 or until funding is exhausted.

Perth County, its Lower Tier Municipalities of North Perth, West Perth, Perth East and Perth South, along with the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys, worked in partnership to submit the synergistic proposals that will benefit all of Perth County's residents as one joint project.

The joint project will involve the creation of an inter-regional transit service connecting London, St. Mary's, Stratford and Kitchener. Service between Listowel and Kitchener is also planned. A separate but related commitment will create a transit system to link the communities of Stratford, St. Marys, Mitchell, Sebringville, Monkton, Atwood, Milverton, Listowel and Millbank.

- o Offered service on fully accessible buses with high floor ramp access and capacity for 2 wheelchairs.
- o Operated fleet that are equipped with lifting devices, steps, grab bars and handrails, the appropriate signage required, as well as priority seating.
- o Provided free service to all support persons riding PC Connect, and welcomed support animals on board.
- o Provided route and schedule information through a variety of accessible channels such as the County's fully compliant corporate website.
- o Developed and distributed a fully accessible PC Connect route brochure in both print & PDF format.
- o Co-hosted an internal Accessibility Information Session on the Transportation Standard and PC Connect Accessibility Features.

Goals

The County of Perth and Lower Tier Municipalities are committed to continuing participation in the Perth County Community Transportation Network, and to ensuring that they meet the requirements under the Transportation Standards. Continue to make

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improvements (asphalt/paving) to existing PC Connect bus stops to further enhance accessibility.

  o Support enhancement of all PC Connect bus stop locations so that they are fully accessible for all riders (cement waiting pads, etc.).

Duties of Municipalities – Specialized Transportation Services

The County of Perth and three of the Lower Tier Municipalities do not license Specialized Transportation Services for persons with disabilities. However, there are some Specialized Transportation services available within these communities, including:

- **VON – Easy Ride** – for residents of North Perth

- **Perth East Transportation** – for residents of Perth East

There are also Specialized Transportation Services within the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys, which travel to locations within the County of Perth, including:

- **Parallel Transit** – Located in the City of Stratford, but will travel to locations in Perth County

- **Easy Ride** – Located in the City of Stratford, but will travel to locations in Perth County

- **St. Marys & Area Mobility Services** – Located in St. Marys, but will travel to locations in Perth County. The Township of Perth South provides grant funding to support these services in their area.

<u>Municipality of North Perth</u>

Accomplishments:
- Partnerships to support PC Connect and VON easy Ride.
- Bench installed for North Perth library stop of the PC Connect.

Goals:
- Expansion of accessible PXOs project.

- Planning a public meeting to determine the demand for on-demand accessible taxis in North Perth.

- Continue to work with Taxi Owners to ensure all AODA regulations are been adhered to.

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Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments:

- o Henry Street Bridge construction project was completed and is AODA compliant.

- o Lions Park Trail system loop was completed.

Goals:

- o Continued support of Mitchell and Area Mobility Bus.

Township of Perth East

Accomplishments:

- o Worked in coordination with PC Connect for the identification and installation of bus stop locations within Perth East to provide accessible and safe community transportation accessible bus stops.

Goals:

- o Ongoing maintenance to ensure accessible and safe stop locations.

Township of Perth South

Accomplishments:

- o Participated in Transportation Standard Accessibility training provided by Perth County.

Goals:

- o Continue supporting St. Marys and Area Mobility Bus Service.
- o Continue to support PC Connect and monitor for effectiveness.

The Built Environment

Commitment

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment focus on removing barriers in two areas:

1. Public spaces, and
2. Buildings

This will make it easier for all Ontarians — including people with disabilities, seniors and families — to access the places where they work, travel, shop and play.

As a large public sector organization, the Design of Public Spaces Standard only applies to new construction and planned redevelopment on or after January 1, 2016.

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On January 1, 2020, new construction and renovations are subject to updated accessibility requirements under Section 3.8 Barrier-Free Design of the Ontario Building Code.

Maintenance of Public Spaces

The County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities will reasonably maintain public spaces as required under the Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (Municipal Act, 2011). In addition, the accessible elements of all accessible trails and playgrounds will be maintained from May to October, unless otherwise stated or posted. Elements such as external pathways (sidewalks) will be maintained year-round by the County and the Lower Tier Municipalities to ensure the safety of citizens and to prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

If a public space is temporarily disrupted or not functioning, the public will be notified in a variety of formats about the scope of the disruption.

Please refer to Appendices A through E of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for County and Member Municipality specific procedures for Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces.

Progress

<u>The Corporation of the County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities</u>

In 2021, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) provided feedback across the County for external pathways, play spaces, recreational trails and site plans.

The County and the Lower Tier Municipalities will continue to:

- o refer to the Perth County Site Plan Design Guidelines, the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public Spaces Standards for any new construction or development; and

- o consult with the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee on accessibility plans, recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel and on-street parking spaces; and

- o consult with the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee on site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act that the committee selects.

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The Corporation of the County of Perth

Accomplishments

o   Return to Work renovations at Stratford PS to accommodate accessibility and COVID concerns, purchase of sit/stand desks for new offices at Courthouse, Green Running Man Emergency lighting upgrades at all exits at Courthouse.

o   Planning Division continued dialogue with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure accessibility review for site plans within the County.

Goals

o   Complete the accessible walking path through the native plant garden at Stratford-Perth Archives with accessible signage and seating.

o   Planning Division intends to continue a dialogue with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee at the County for conversations around site plan reviews, built spaces, and other relevant planning/building activities within the County.

o   To build a procedure around circulating every site plan to the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee for review.

o   Initiate elevator installation at 1 Huron Street (Courthouse), including construction of an accessible washroom on level 2.

o   Ensure accessibility requirements feature into the design of 5 Huron Renovations.

o   Return to Work renovations at Stratford PS to be completed in early 2022 with accessible components as accounted for during the design process.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

o   Expansion of trail system between Listowel and Gowanstown.

o   With paving of WWTP, administration building is now wheel chair accessible.

o   Accessibility and "silver friendly" needs considered for library within United Way Project.

o   A Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is to be in final draft by end of 2021. Components of the plan include accessible design, traffic calming and active transport design and policy recommendations.

Goals:

o   Completion of updates to Atwood cenotaph, including accessibility improvements.

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- o Maintain high priority for accessibility and "silver friendly" needs as United Way project develops.

- o Develop implementation process and policy to reflect short and long-term goals of the TMP.

Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- o Downie Optimist Hall renovations started in 2021 and includes barrier free doors to kitchen. New kitchen cabinets will also be installed early in 2022 and will meet accessibility standards.

- o Downie Optimist Hall parking lot repaved and extended and will include more accessible parking spaces.

- o Sidewalk in St. Pauls (north on Road 122) extended with stone dust.

Goals:

- o Old Township Office to be renovated to update for more office space and an accessible entrance.

- o Review the trail system at the Kirkton Arboretum (the Kirkton Arboretum Committee has requested assistance from the Township) to enhance and allow for better accessibility.

- o Continue to refer to the Perth County Site Plan Design Guidelines, the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public spaces Standard for any new construction or redevelopment.

Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- o Ongoing reviews by the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee of accessibility plans, recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, on-street parking spaces and site plans.

- o Ensured Library Dropbox is accessible, especially for those in a wheelchair/scooter (relocated the bench and garbage bin)

- o Ensured all building permits follow the building code's accessibility requirements.

- o Final paving at the Milverton Fire Station eliminated the step to the curb and an accessible parking spot was created at the front entrance (automatic door opener).

- o New sidewalk on Thompson street and Galt Street by the public school.

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- o Installed hands free systems at the Perth East Recreation Complex (e.g., doors, faucets, lighting).
- o Installed accessible washroom, parking spot, and sidewalk at Newton Park.

Goals

- o Continue to refer to the Perth County Site Plan Design Guidelines, the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public spaces Standard for any new construction or redevelopment.
- o Continue to upgrade municipal facilities to be more accessible.
- o Identify and address accessibility needs at Morningdale Park.
- o Identify and address accessibility needs and extend the Mill St. Trail.
- o Update sidewalks in Milverton to maintain accessibility standards.
- o Continue to look for opportunities to improve accessibility to the fire stations for our residents.
- o Upgrade our Council Chambers to provide a more accessible environment.
- o Continue to keep up to date with any other accessibility standards to ensure the Township is leading the way.

Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o Received a grant to install a power door operator at the Brodhagen Community Centre.
- o Supported the Optimist Club of Mitchell for the accessible, inclusive, multi-generational playground installation at Lions Park.
- o New accessible Administration Office building started construction Sept. 14.
- o Lions Pool power door installed and an accessible washroom was built.

Goals

- o Refurbish the Dublin Community Center outdoor washrooms and include an accessible washroom.
- o Construct accessible pathway at Keterson Park.
- o Install power door operator at the Brodhagen Community Centre.
- o Continue to implement built environment standards with Ontario Provincial Standards, Specifications, guidelines and to consult with Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee on proposed developments.

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Our Commitment to Accessibility

A commitment has been made by the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities to make accessibility in County services, programs, goods and facilities a reality. Progress to date has been and will continue to be a collaborative effort between the County and Lower Tier Municipalities. As well, the sharing of knowledge and documentation between Municipalities and other Organizations in Ontario has been invaluable, and illustrates the commitment that the people of Ontario have made to the AODA.

There is much work to be done, and we will continue to identify and remove barriers in order to create accessible spaces and services that everyone can use. Our success is dependent upon continued collaboration and feedback from the public. We encourage employees, residents and visitors to Perth County to share their suggestions and comments on how we might make improvements in order to create a more accessible County.

Please contact us through one of the following methods:

County of Perth Website:[3]

Phone: 519-271-0531 x 210

Mail: Clerk's Division
County of Perth
1 Huron Street
Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Email: clerk@perthcounty.ca

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[3] https://www.perthcounty.ca/en/index.aspx

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