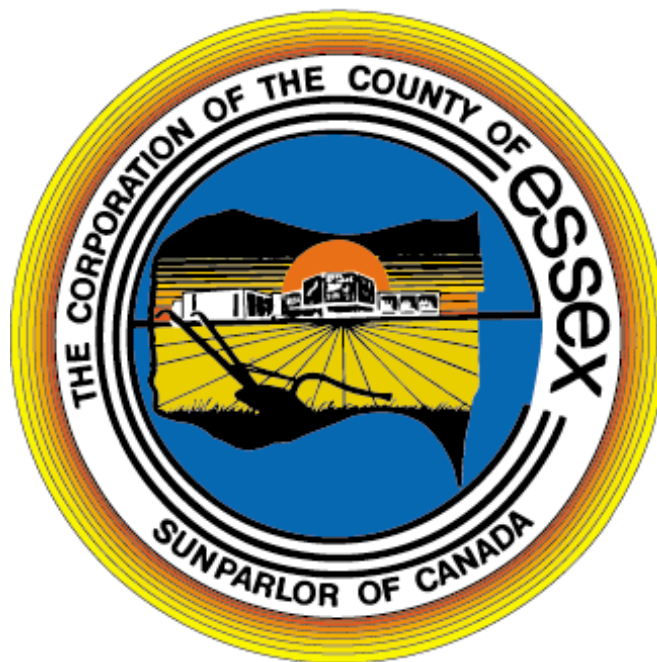


# **Corporation of the County of Essex**

**Adopted February 20, 2013**



## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013-2017**

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

# Table of Contents

Background.....	1
Customer Service .....	1
Information and Communications.....	1
Employment.....	2
Transportation.....	2
Built Environment .....	2
About Essex County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan .....	2
Statement of Commitment to Accessibility Planning .....	3
The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee .....	3
The Essex County Accessibility Plan Working Group .....	4
Accomplishments From Prior Accessibility Plans .....	5
Description of the County of Essex.....	7
Facilities Owned/Leased by the Corporation of the County of Essex .....	8
Essex County Civic and Education Centre .....	8
Transportation Services Facilities .....	10
Sun Parlor Home for the Aged and Victoria Street Manor .....	11
Emergency Medical Services Facilities .....	12
Essex County Library Facilities and Services .....	14
Outstanding Recommendations Approved in Prior Years Accessibility Plans	17
Accessibility Initiatives Identified in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.....	17
Review and Monitoring of the Progress.....	18
Communication of the Plan .....	18
Feedback .....	18
Schedule A - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Initiatives 2013-2017.....	19

## Background

Ontario currently has two active accessibility acts – the **Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001** (ODA) and the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** (AODA).

In 2008 the Customer Service Standard was the first accessibility standard under the AODA to become law. Designated public sector organizations were required to comply by January 1, 2010.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard (Ontario Regulation 191/11), which regulates Information and Communications, Employment and Transportation, came into effect on July 1, 2011 and is now law. Requirements under this standard will be phased in over time (2011-2021).

The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in Ontario by identifying, preventing and removing physical and other barriers that may limit opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in society.

Under the AODA, private, public and non-profit organizations are required to identify, remove and prevent barriers in order to make the Province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025. Through the AODA, the provincial government has identified key areas for the development of “common” accessibility standards intended to set requirements across all organizations and sectors:

### Customer Service

- Addresses how organizations are required to provide their goods and services in an accessible manner – influencing attitudes and behaviour.

### Information and Communications

- Outlines how organizations are required to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

## Employment

- Builds upon the existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code in relation to how to accommodate individuals with disabilities throughout the recruitment process and employment relationship.

## Transportation

- Intended to prevent and remove barriers in transportation, making it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario including people with disabilities, older Ontarians and families traveling with children in strollers.

## Built Environment

- Intended to address access to and within buildings and outdoor spaces. The standards for public spaces will **only** apply to new construction and planned redevelopment. Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will happen at a later date through Ontario's Building Code, which governs new construction and renovations in buildings.

## About Essex County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Under the AODA, accessibility planning requirements have been broadened from requiring annual Accessibility Plans to now requiring Multi-Year Accessibility Plans. This Multi-Year Plan outlines Essex County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the AODA, Accessible Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11, as amended.) The Corporation of the County of Essex continues to identify new accessibility initiatives which have been incorporated in this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the period 2013 to 2017.

This Plan was prepared by the Essex County Accessibility Plan Working Group, in conjunction with the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Public consultation was sought on the draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for a three week period prior to the Plan being presented to Essex County Council for adoption.

## **Statement of Commitment to Accessibility Planning**

Essex County Council recognizes that improving accessibility is important to all residents. Approximately 15.5% or 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability – that's one in seven. That number is expected to grow significantly in the next 20 years as the population ages.

The Corporation of the County of Essex, is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a respectful, equitable and timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA.

## **The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) was established by Council resolution on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The Committee consists of 7 members representing the following groups:

- 1 member from Essex County Council
- 2 members who are professionals from the stakeholder community
- 4 members who are people with disabilities

The Director of Council Services/Clerk, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, County Engineer, Manager Planning Services and other County staff deemed necessary are identified in the Terms of Reference as technical support staff to the Committee.

The following individuals were appointed by County Council to serve on the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) for the term January 1, 2011 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014:

- Linda Saxon
- Charlie Wright (Council Representative)
- Robert Bahry
- John Boyko
- Christine Easterbrook
- Rosemary Florence \*(appointed Feb. 2012)
- Therese Lecuyer

Members of both the previous and current Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committees (ECAAC) have been instrumental in continuing to identify for the County of Essex, the barriers that they believe should be addressed in the Essex County Accessibility Plans. Their recommendations have been taken into consideration and to a great extent, are the areas that have been addressed in past Plans. As well, they have continued to monitor

the implementation of the recommendations identified in the previous Accessibility Plans and report annually to County Council on their progress.

In 2007, the ECAAC reviewed the original Terms of Reference that were adopted when the Committee was originally established in 2002. They were successful in having their recommended amendments to the Terms of Reference adopted by County Council, which has provided the Committee with some clearer guidelines as to their roles and responsibilities.

The Committee continues with the publication of the annual newsletter which they began in 2006. The ECAAC hosted a very successful 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Accessibility Workshop in October 2012. The workshop was attended by over 110 delegates and offered six informative concurrent workshop sessions and a keynote speaker. The ECAAC is looking forward to planning future Annual Accessibility Workshops and hopes to attract even more delegates every year.

## The Essex County Accessibility Plan Working Group

The Director of Council Services/Clerk, Mary Brennan, is the Coordinator of the Accessibility Plan Working Group. The 2013-17 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Working Group consisted of the Essex County Management Team, as well as some senior managers.

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<b>Working Group Members</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
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The members of the Working Group have each been responsible for the implementation of the recommendations approved in prior years Accessibility Plans, which fell within their realm of responsibility.

## **Accomplishments From Prior Accessibility Plans**

Since September of 2003, when the first generation Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the County of Essex was adopted by Essex County Council, the Corporation has been making every effort to implement the initiatives approved in the annual Accessibility Plans.

Many physical changes to County owned or operated facilities have been made to remove barriers. As noted in previous Accessibility Plans these have included:

- the removal of the exterior lift at the Essex County Civic Centre and the installation of a new ramp
- relocation of accessible parking at the Civic Centre, including line painting and signage
- the construction of a family washroom on the main floor of the Civic Centre, complete with automatic doors
- renovations to other existing washrooms within the Civic Centre to make them more accessible
- additional automatic doors were installed at the east entrance of the Civic Centre
- ramp to the shade rock garden/fountain at the Civic Centre
- adjustable table in the Civic Centre Cafeteria
- replaced chairs in the Committee Rooms in the Civic Centre with chairs that are adjustable, swivel and have casters

- renovations to County Administration reception desk to improve Accessibility
- continuing renovations to the Sun Parlor Home for Senior Citizens in Leamington to improve the accessibility of that entire facility for the residents and visitors
- renovation of County Council Chambers to remove physical mobility barriers and installation of FM system for audio enhancements
- relocation of some branches of the Essex County Public Library to accessible facilities

Other accessibility initiatives in previous Accessibility Plans have included:

- sensitivity training for County of Essex employees to enhance their awareness of accessibility issues and to provide them with knowledge on how to effectively serve people with disabilities and how to remove attitudinal barriers
- the annual Accessibility Workshop, designed to provide a day filled with motivational/inspirational speakers and educators who focus on ways in which to make communities barrier free from both physical and attitudinal barriers
- partnership to provide a 211 service in Windsor-Essex County providing improved access to community, government, health and social services
- continual expansion of the eBook and eAudiobook collections available through the Essex County Library website
- implementation of employee return to work and accommodation policies for County of Essex employees
- annual promotion of National Accessibility Awareness Week through activities and education such as wheelchair basketball games in schools and the production of a video identifying barriers within the County
- annual publication of a newsletter providing information on activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committees throughout the region
- development of Accessible Customer Service Policy, Practices and Procedures for services provided by the County of Essex and Accessible Customer Service training for all employees and Council of the County of Essex
- formation of a working group to investigate the feasibility of developing a registry containing data related to functional and accommodation needs of some residents of Essex County, who choose to self-register, which would be accessed by emergency personnel in the event of disasters requiring such actions as evacuation
- adoption of a County Wide Active Transportation Plan which sets out a framework for the development of trails throughout the County of Essex which are to be accessible



- development of policies in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard
- commencement of employee training on how to create accessible documents
- Emergency and public safety information developed by the Essex County Emergency Management Coordinator available in accessible formats
- Essex County employees advised that workplace emergency response plans and information will be developed to accommodate any employees with disabilities specific accessibility requirements

The Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex remains committed to ensuring that the facilities, services and programs provided by the County are available to all residents including people with disabilities. The process of identifying barriers is constant.

## **Description of the County of Essex**

Essex County is Canada's southernmost county, located on a peninsula of land surrounded by Lake St. Clair to the north, the Detroit River to the West and Lake Erie to the south. The County has a population of over 177,000 and an overall area of 1720 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Corporation of the County of Essex is an upper tier municipality comprised of 14 members being the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of each of the 7 local municipalities within the County of Essex. One of the 14 County Councillors is elected as the Warden who serves as the Head of County Council.

The Corporation of the County of Essex is responsible for providing services that are common to all municipalities in Essex County thereby minimizing the need for duplicate services and administration. These services include transportation services, libraries, homes for the aged, planning, emergency management co-ordination, community services, emergency medical services and general government administration.

As well, the County of Essex is a funding partner for regional services including social services, child care, social housing, public health, economic development, tourism and property assessment.

# Facilities Owned/Leased by the Corporation of the County of Essex

## Essex County Civic and Education Centre

360 Fairview Avenue, Essex, N8M 1Y6

The building at 360 Fairview Avenue (also known as the Essex County Civic and Education Centre) became home to the County Administration offices in October of 1975.



The administrative offices for Essex County Council Services, Corporate Services, Engineering, Human Resources, Planning, Emergency Management Co-ordination, Emergency Medical Services, Community Services and the Essex County Library are all located in the Civic Centre. The County of Essex Council Chamber is also located in this building, as well as a number of Committee Rooms which are utilized by the owners and tenants of the building and other community organizations.

The building was a joint effort between the County Public School Board, the County Roman Catholic School Board and the Corporation of the County of Essex. In January of 1981, the Essex Region Conservation Authority became a partner in the ownership of the Civic Centre.

The capital costs and operating expenses are shared as follows, based on the square footage occupied by each partner:

Essex Region Conservation Authority	7.87%
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Greater Essex County District School Board	24.75%
Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board	16.54%
Corporation of the County of Essex	50.84%

The construction and joint furnishing debt was paid in full in 1996.

There are currently numerous tenants in the building. The Windsor Essex County Health Unit, the Essex County Federation of Agriculture, the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority, the Media Centre and Transportation Services are all located in the Civic Centre. The operation of the building is under the direction of the Building Management Committee and is governed by policies established by agreement among the four owners.

Renovations, alterations or improvements to the Civic Centre are approved by the Building Management Committee. The Corporation of the County of Essex is not able to unilaterally undertake renovations to the facility.

Many of the barriers identified in the previous Accessibility Plans which related to physical accessibility barriers in the Civic Centre have been addressed.

The latest renovation to improve accessibility in the Civic Centre was in the Council Chambers. As the primary user of the Chambers, Essex County Council decided to proceed with renovations to the Chambers in 2010/11, at its own cost. Renovations were completed in March 2011.

The Civic Centre is an important gathering place for a broad array of the community and given that the Civic Centre is in excess of 37 years old, a number of significant deficiencies have been identified with the facility which must be addressed in the near future. Many are not accessibility related, however, the renewal and/or rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure will allow for an opportunity to remove additional barriers in the facility.

Pending budget approval for 2013 it is anticipated that renovations in the current year would focus on the South access of the building to provide ground level access at that entrance, with a new elevator to be accessible from ground level from inside the building, a new ramp to the patio area under the Council Chambers, and a new covered ramp at East entrance. In 2014, pending budget approval, it is anticipated that a complete restoration of the parking lot with improved lighting and security cameras. It is anticipated that a proposal for the development of some trails around the facility will be considered as well. In 2015 and beyond the replace of

plumbing fixtures with automatic features to improve accessibility and water savings is proposed.

## **Transportation Services Facilities**

The Engineering, Transportation Planning and Construction Services Divisions operate from offices in Suite 201, on the main floor of the Essex County Civic Centre, 360 Fairview Avenue West in Essex.

The Maintenance Operation Division operates from four year round depots and one seasonal depot.

Year Round Maintenance Facilities:

- Maintenance Depot, 1941 Road 4 E, Kingsville
- West End Depot, 2100 Cty Rd 12, Essex
- West Pike Creek Depot, 11965 Cty Rd 42, Tecumseh
- Tilbury North Depot, 2400 Comber Side Rd, Lakeshore.

Seasonal Maintenance Facility:

- Harrow Yard, 970 Cty Rd 41, Harrow.

All Maintenance Depots have varying degrees of material storage, equipment housing, office and washroom facilities. These maintenance depots are not service locations that the general public would readily visit. Primarily, only roads maintenance staff have occasion to frequent these facilities.

It is anticipated that over the next two years, a new year round maintenance depot will be built to replace the West End Depot. While this facility will also only be accessed on a regular basis by County Employees, it will be constructed in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard and any amendments to the Building Code which result from the Built Environment Standard.

## Sun Parlor Home for the Aged and Victoria Street Manor



The Sun Parlor Home for the Aged (SPH), located at 175 Talbot Street East in Leamington, was completed in early 1992. The Home has a capacity of 206 residents.

While the SPH was designed to exceed accessibility standards from the day when it was constructed in 1992, over the past decade, general wear on some fixtures and furnishings, as well as the increasingly frail nature of the residents, has created accessibility issues. To address these issues, a Home Improvement Committee was formed at the Sun Parlor Home. This Committee continues to investigate options for refurbishing areas of the Home, particularly with respect to enhancing the accessibility of the facility for residents, visitors and staff, and is always pleased to receive suggestions.

Some examples of improvements over the past several years have been the purchase of a new telephone system that included options for residents' phones with louder volume controls, flashing ringers, programmable phone numbers and larger buttons; new flooring, doors equipped with automatic openers, doorway widenings, replacement of threshold moldings, accessible walkways in the courtyard, the relocation of accessible parking spaces from the side to the front of the building and the installation of some directional signage to reflect the changes.

The Home encourages both management and staff to be “thinking accessibility” at all times. For example, new flooring was purchased for selected areas on a trial basis only. Although everyone liked its look, it was found to be a bit more difficult for some wheelchairs and lift devices to maneuver, due to its softer surface. As a result, the Home will be seeking a firm surfaced flooring as the home improvement project proceeds. Likewise, new dining room chairs will allow for easier sliding on the new soft flooring.

As always, on an individual resident needs basis, the Home makes every effort to facilitate the acquisition of a variety of assistive devices as may be required. The increasingly frail residents being admitted to the Home have many needs to be met. The Home has increased its planned purchase of electric hi-low beds such that with 2013 acquisitions, 100% will be new beds. These have many benefits including being better for residents to get in and out as well as reducing the likelihood of falls.

As well as the enhancements to physical assistive devices and removal of physical barriers in the Home, the activation staff provide and coordinate a number of social activities and services designed to promote inclusiveness and enhancements to the quality of life of residents. Most recently, the services of registered Music Therapists have been engaged. Music therapy can improve motor, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal skills and has been proven effective in helping seniors with dementia and Alzheimers.

The Sun Parlor Home has also had a volunteer program in place for many years. In 2005, the Home’s volunteer program was featured in a video produced by Community Living Essex, entitled “Include Me”. Volunteers are always encouraged to participate at the Home through the part-time Volunteer Coordinator and an active Volunteer Auxiliary.

Since September of 1991, the Corporation has also operated a 14 bed supportive housing facility called the Victoria Street Manor. It is located at 184 Victoria St., Amherstburg. Like the Sun Parlor Home, as renovations are required at this facility, enhancements which are undertaken are done so with the goal of removing barriers to accessibility for residents, visitors and staff. For example, new flooring thresholds have removed the “bump” that was a hindrance to any wheeled device.

## **Emergency Medical Services Facilities**

The administration offices for Emergency Medical Services (EMS), for Essex County, Windsor and Pelee Island are located on the ground level of the Civic Centre, Suite 115, located at 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex.

Beginning January 1, 2009, the County of Essex took over the delivery of Emergency Medical Services for the entire County. Previously, the County contracted with two private services and one volunteer service for the provision of EMS services throughout much of the County. There are EMS administrative offices and an ambulance base located at 920 Mercer Street in Windsor. This facility is a two-storey structure, not utilized by the general public. The majority of the administrative offices are located on the second floor of the building. While the budget for the renovations of the building in 2004 did not allow for the installation of an elevator to the second floor, additional office space and accessible washrooms were provided on the first floor.

There are currently two other ambulance stations in Windsor which are located at:

3180 Jefferson Avenue - The County of Essex leased this property until 2010, at which time it was purchased.

2620 Dougall Avenue - The County of Essex has a lease agreement for this facility.

Throughout the County, Ambulance stations are situated at the following locations:

- LaSalle Station – A new, joint Police, Fire and EMS facility is being constructed in 2013/14 by the Town of LaSalle, to replace the existing municipal complex.
- Leamington Station – This was the former Leamington Day Care building and renovated as an ambulance station in 2010. It is owned by the County of Essex.
- Lakeshore Station – This was a new station, constructed in 2011 on Renaud Line. This station is owned by the County of Essex.
- Tecumseh Station – This station is leased. It is located on Tecumseh Rd, near Shawnee. It is anticipated that renovations will be made to the former Tecumseh Day Care (on Lesperance Rd) in 2013/14 to replace the existing leased Tecumseh station.
- Kingsville Station – This station is located in a joint facility with the Town of Kingsville Fire Station on Division Road. This station is leased from the Town of Kingsville.

- Harrow Station – This was a new station constructed in 2010 on Queen Street in Harrow. This station is owned by the County of Essex.
- Amherstburg Station – The County of Essex purchased the former AA & M Ambulance Station on Simcoe Street in 2009 and renovated it.
- Essex Satellite Station – In 2013, a new Essex EMS base is being located in the newly constructed joint facility with the Essex Centre Fire Station.
- Pelee Island Station – The Station on Pelee Island is located in part of the Medical Centre.

None of these ambulance bases are service locations that the general public would readily visit. Primarily, only EMS staff frequents these facilities however, the newly constructed bases and those that have been recently renovated, have been designed with accessibility features in mind. Future bases will be designed in accordance with the Built Environment Standard and amended Building Code, once enacted.

## Essex County Library Facilities and Services

The Essex County Library operates a system of 14 branch libraries that provide library materials and services, free of charge, to all residents of Essex County. On January 23, 2013, the Essex County Library Board approved the following mission statement: Essex County Library welcomes you to a world of discovery, creativity and lifelong learning through accessible resources, programs and innovative services.

**Library facilities are provided by the local municipalities** with one facility located in each of Amherstburg, LaSalle, Leamington and Tecumseh, three facilities in both Essex and Kingsville and four in Lakeshore. The local municipalities are responsible for access into the buildings and for designating accessible parking adjacent to the facilities. While the local municipalities provide the facility for the Library Branches, the Essex County Library Board is responsible for furnishing the inside of the buildings with shelving, furniture, equipment, library resources and employs the staff who deliver all the services the Essex County Library provides.

Library administration offices are located in the lower level of 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex in Suite 101. Administration, computer network services, ordering and processing of library materials are centralized there, so branches can focus exclusively on serving the public during hours that range from 59



hours a week at the largest branches to 12 at the smallest. Only library staff has access to the library administration offices.

Beginning in 2008, the LaSalle, Leamington and Tecumseh branches began to have Sunday hours in addition to their regular weekday and Saturday hours of operation. Sunday hours are not, however, available during the months of June, July, August and September.

The Essex County Library is funded primarily through the County of Essex. A Library Board, appointed every four years by Essex County Council, in accordance with the Public Libraries Act, has 4 members from the current County Council. There are 3 lay appointees. The Board is responsible for setting policy and reviewing the overall performance of the Library. The Board's budget is approved annually by County Council.

The local municipalities have been striving to address the physical barriers that exist in some of the older library facilities in order to make the buildings more accessible for all patrons. In some instances, like in the Town of Essex, library branches have been relocated to more accessible buildings. The McGregor Library was relocated to a new Community Centre, providing a larger, more accessible facility. The Town of Kingsville also opened a new library in March 2010, replacing the inaccessible Carnegie Library.

In 2012, the LaSalle Library temporarily relocated to an accessible building at Crossings Outlet Mall, while a new, accessibility facility is constructed to house that branch. As well, in 2014 the Town of Lakeshore will be constructing a new Library in conjunction with a multi-purpose recreation complex. Input was provided by the Essex County Library to ensure an accessible design for both branches. Shelving will be at a lower height (5 feet) and aisle widths increased to meet the AODA standards. In addition the reception desk and self-check computers will be wheelchair accessible. Planning is underway for a renovated facility in Woodslee. As municipalities upgrade or rebuild their library facilities, Essex County Library will ensure that they meet the AODA facility standards.

Over the past several years, the Library has been improving technology to enhance services for all patrons, as well as for staff. JAWS software, which was recently upgraded, is installed on computers at the Tecumseh, Essex and LaSalle Branches. There is a Braille printer at the Essex Branch. SARA, a scanning and reading appliance which makes printed documents accessible for people with low vision or who are blind through magnifying the print or having the document read out loud in 12 different languages, is available at the Leamington Library. Zoom Text, which provides computer access through an enlarged screen, is also available at the Cottam, Kingsville and Ruthven branches.

The library website is controlled by third party software, the integrated library system, Sirsi Dynix. They have been consulted and the status of the website design is as follows. The first page of the website has been modified into columns. All other pages follow the pre-designed themes. As an American company, all pre-designed Sirsi Dynix themes are ADA-compliant at the Priority 2 level. This means that these themes, when displayed in the Searching interface, accommodate all web content accessibility guidelines published by the World Wide Web Consortium at the Priority 2 level, in conjunction with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. When loading the website, the default is to ADA mode "on" which specifies that the Searching interface for the profile opens in the mode that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA mode makes the Searching interface easier to navigate without a mouse. For example, item detail displays open on a new page instead of in a modal window, and the Select an Action menu in the search results and item detail display opens in a default drop-down list. The Essex County Library will continue to work with the vendor to ensure that the website improves and meets Ontario standards.

The Essex County Library Board continues to expand and enhance their on-line library services by providing eAudio Books and eBooks available for download through their website. In 2011, the Essex County Library began offering a free online download music service. People are able to download up to three songs per week from the Sony Canada Music database. In 2012, digital magazines were also added to the collection, allowing residents to download current copies to their home computers or personal devices. As well, as the online resources available, the library has growing collections of books in large print format, audio books on CD and Playaways (self-contained preloaded MP3 players) and some DVD's with closed captioning. The growth of the on-line, virtual collections has provided enhanced service delivery options for people who are not able to physically get to a library branch. Reference collections, which provide access to over 31,000 works ranging from encyclopaedias, journal articles and research papers are available through the library's website. In addition, for residents who do wish to get a print copy of a book or audiobook, but cannot get to a library branch due to medical reasons, staff at their local branch will deliver materials. Collections are also sent to local long term care facilities.

In 2012 the Essex County Library introduced a TTY service at the Tecumseh branch. The telephone number is 519-735-9831. In 2013, this service will be expanded to the LaSalle and Leamington branches, so that all residents in the County will have TTY access.

As well as addressing the accessibility of services to the public, the Essex County Library has been addressing the accommodation requirements of staff. In 2011 one employee's workstation was replaced in order to accommodate a disability. Included in the workstation is a larger, touch screen monitor; voice recognition software (Dragon Speak Pro) and an ergonomically designed mouse which utilizes the whole arm rather than just the wrist. Each year a staff workstation is evaluated by a qualified ergonomist.

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard, in 2011 the Essex County Library developed evacuation procedure documents for all its branches. These documents have been printed in large format and posted at the branches. They are also available in alternate formats upon request.

As part of the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standard, staff will receive ongoing training on the AODA legislation at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Policies are reviewed and all Accessibility policies are posted on the Library's Intranet for staff to view. All new staff receive training on all Accessibility policies as part of their orientation to the Essex County Library.

## **Outstanding Recommendations Approved in Prior Years Accessibility Plans**

Since the adoption the first Essex County Accessibility Plan, Essex County Council has made every effort to implement the approved recommendations. There are, however, some initiatives that have been identified in prior years' Accessibility Plans which have not been completed. A complete report on the status of recommended initiatives in prior years Accessibility Plans was presented to Essex County Council at their meeting held December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

As the County of Essex moves forward with multi-year accessibility plans, outstanding recommended initiatives from prior plans have been incorporated into the new multi-year plan.

## **Accessibility Initiatives Identified in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan**

The attached Schedule "A" of the County of Essex Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines strategies and actions to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities to be undertaken over the next five years. These

initiatives include our strategy for meeting the timelines established in Regulations enacted under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

## **Review and Monitoring of the Progress**

The Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be updated at least once every five years. The Working Group will review the progress of the initiatives undertaken in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an on-going basis. Progress reports from the Working Group will also be provided to the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Feedback from the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee on the progress of the initiatives will be reported to Essex County Council through their Committee minutes.

In December of each year, the Working Group will provide County Council with an evaluation and status report of the accessibility initiatives identified in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that were undertaken in the current year. This evaluation will be available to the public from the County of Essex website, or through other means, upon request.

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee will also complete a report on their accomplishments from the current year and provide it to County Council annually.

## **Communication of the Plan**

Copies of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the County of Essex will be available at the County of Essex Administration Office located at 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex, Suite 202 and at all branches of the Essex County Library. The Plan will also be posted on the Essex County website [www.countyofessex.on.ca](http://www.countyofessex.on.ca) once approved. Copies of the Plan will be available in alternate formats, upon request.

## **Feedback**

Essex County welcomes public input as feedback helps to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which we can improve facilities, goods and services. Should a member of the public wish to provide general feedback, comments or suggestions on how to improve accessibility in our facilities, goods or services, please contact us through our [Customer Services Feedback/Comment Process](#).

## Schedule A - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

### Accessibility Initiatives 2013-2017

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Timeframe
<b>Accessible Customer Service</b> Addressing any barriers in the delivery of accessible goods and services to customers	Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers	Ongoing 2013 – 2017
	Ensure Vendor Accessible Training Certificates are being received.	Ongoing 2013 – 2017
	Review and update Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures as required	Ongoing 2013 – 2017
<b>Information and Communications</b> Addressing barriers to providing information and communication in accessible formats	Training of employees on the Essex County <a href="#">Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy</a> #12-001, on requirements of the Information and Communications Standard including the use of accessible formats or communication supports.	2013
	Continue employee training on how to create accessible documents in WORD and PDF formats	2013-2014
	Develop and provide accessible Council/Committee report and policy templates to staff for use in preparing accessible documents for Council and the public	2013
	Develop accessible document requirements for consultants and other third parties engaged to prepare public documents on behalf of the Corporation	2013

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Timeframe
	Monitor feedback process to ensure that receiving and responding to feedback is made available in an accessible format upon request or with appropriate communication supports	Ongoing 2013 – 2017
	Investigate options for development of a new Corporate website which would conform with the World Wide Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) initially at Level A with the ability to increase to Level AA	2013-2014
	Monitor that content posted to the existing Corporate website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level A, unless it is not practicable to do so	2013
<b>Employment</b> Addressing barriers to employment with the County of Essex for people with disabilities and addressing accommodation requirements of existing employees with disabilities	Training of employees on the Essex County <a href="#">Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001</a> , on requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard.	2013
	Develop practices and procedures to notify internal and external job applicants that accommodations for disabilities will be provided upon request	2013-2014

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Timeframe
	Develop practices and procedures to notify job applicants who have been invited to participate in the recruitment, assessment or selection process that accommodations for disabilities are available upon request	2013-2014
	Develop practices and procedures for notifying successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment	2013-2014
	<p>Review of existing County of Essex Accommodation Policy #08-003 in conjunction with requirements of Essex County <a href="#">Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy</a> #12-001 to determine if additional practices and procedures are required regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing new and existing employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities</li> <li>• Consultation with employees with disabilities in order to provide them with accessible formats and communication supports</li> <li>• Development of written individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities</li> </ul>	2013-2014

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Timeframe
	<p>Review of existing County of Essex Early and Safe Return to Work Policy #08-001 in conjunction with requirements of Essex County <a href="#">Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy</a> #12-001 to determine if additional practices and procedures are required regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the documentation of a process for supporting employees who return to work after being absent for reasons related to their disability</li> <li>• that accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into consideration if they are redeployed to another position</li> </ul>	2013-2014
	Review performance management process to ensure that accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account	2013-2014
	Review career development and advancement practices and procedures to ensure that such opportunities, when available, take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities	2013-2014



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<b>Transportation</b> Not Applicable at this time	The County of Essex does not currently operate or contract public transit services or license taxicabs. Consultation on the Essex County Transit Assessment Report, exploring the possibility of the development of a public transit system throughout the County of Essex was undertaken in 2010. Essex County Council opted to not proceed with the implementation strategy on a County-wide basis. Local municipalities, however, may consider proceeding with their own public transit systems. If during the life of this multi-year plan a County-wide Transit Service were to be developed, the requirements of the Accessible Transportation Standard will be addressed in an amendment to this Plan.	Not Applicable at this time.
<b>Procurement Practices</b> Ensuring accessible goods, services and facilities are purchased when available	Development of practices to ensure that accessibility criteria and features are being taken into consideration in all procurement practices in accordance with the Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001	2013
	Amend Essex County Purchasing Policy #04-002 to reflect requirements set out in the Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001 regarding the procurement of accessible goods, services and facilities	2013

<b>Accessibility Initiatives</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Ontario Human Rights Code Training</b> Increasing obligations of the 'duty to accommodate'	Provide training to employees on the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities	2013
<b>Emergency Public Safety Information</b> Making this information available to the public in accessible formats	As new emergency procedures, plans and public safety information becomes available, continue to ensure that the information is developed in formats which are easily convertible to alternate formats upon request	Ongoing 2013-2017
<b>Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</b> Ensuring the accessibility plans of the County of Essex continue to address the needs of the community	Review, consult on and update 5 year Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the period 2018-2022	2017
<b>Essex County Library Services and Facilities</b> Ensuring accessible facilities as branches are renovated or relocated to new facilities and expanding the large print and audio collections as well as other accessible services	Replacing door handles at entrances to Library Administration Offices to levers	2013
	Procuring large screen computer monitors as workstations are replaced or touch screens if requested by staff	2013

Accessibility Initiatives	Action to be Taken	Timeframe
	Expanding and promoting the TTY Service to LaSalle and Leamington Libraries in addition to the current Tecumseh location	2013
	Expanding the large print and audio book collections	2013
	Opening of new LaSalle Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelves lowered to 5 feet to allow for ease of access</li> <li>• Aisle widths increased</li> <li>• Lower reception area and self-check machine</li> </ul>	2013
	Library website is controlled by third party software, the integrated library system, Sirsi Dynix Work which is compliant with American Disabilities Act Section 508. The Library will continue to work with this vendor to meet AODA website requirements	Ongoing 2013-2017
	Training on Library Accessibility Policies and communication supports for existing and all new employees.	Ongoing 2013-2017
	Opening of new Lakeshore Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelves lowered to 5 feet to allow for ease of access</li> <li>• Aisle widths increased</li> <li>• Lower reception area and self-check machine</li> </ul>	2014

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	Planning for new or renovated accessible library facility in Leamington subject to approval by the Municipality of Leamington Council	2015
	Planning for renovations to Millen Centre – Woodslee Library, subject to approval by the Town of Lakeshore Council	2016
<b>Sun Parlor Home Facilities and Services</b> Continually enhancing the accessibility of the facility and services for residents, visitors and staff	Continued home improvement projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• firm surfaced flooring</li> <li>• new dining room chairs which will allow for easier sliding</li> <li>• purchase of additional electric hi-low beds, subject to annual budget approvals</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2013-2017
	Continued individual resident needs assessments and procurement of resultant assistive devices, subject to annual budget approvals	Ongoing 2013-2017
<b>Essex County Civic Centre Renovations</b> Removing barriers and enhancing the accessibility of the facility	Renovations focusing on the South access of the building to provide ground level access at that entrance, with a new elevator to be accessible from ground level from inside the building, a new ramp to the patio area under the Council Chambers, and a new covered ramp at East entrance, pending budget approval	2013

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	Restoration of the Civic Centre parking lot with improved lighting and security cameras, as well as the development of a proposal of some trails around the facility, all pending budget approval	2014
	Replacement of plumbing fixtures with automatic features to improve accessibility and water savings, pending budget approval	2015-2017
<b>Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee Initiatives</b> Continually promoting accessibility awareness	Annual Accessibility Workshops	2013-2017
	Annual publication of AAC YAK Newsletter	2013-2017
	Annual Promotion of National Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities through activities such as Wheelchair Basketball games and public presentations.	2013-2017
<b>Accessibility and Functional Needs Registry Working Group</b> Providing additional data for emergency service providers in the event of a disaster or large scale emergency	Continued investigation of the feasibility of developing a registry containing data related to functional and accommodation needs of some residents of Essex County, who choose to self-register, which would be accessed by emergency personnel in the event of disasters requiring such actions as evacuation	2013

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	If it is determined that it is feasible to proceed with the development of an Accessibility and Functional Needs Registry, continued work by the Working Group will be required for the development of the registry, registration process, Privacy Impact Assessment, promotion, renewal process, etc.	2014-2017
<b>Transportation Services Maintenance Depot</b> Ensuring new facilities meet Built Environment Standard and amended Ontario Building Code	Build new west end maintenance depot in accordance with Built Environment Standard and amended Building Code once enacted	2013-2014
<b>Emergency Medical Services Base Construction and Renovations</b> Ensuring new facilities meet Built Environment Standard and amended Ontario Building Code	New or renovated EMS bases to be built in accordance with Built Environment Standard and amended Building Code once enacted	2013-2017

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<p><b>Active Transportation</b></p> <p>New initiatives related to the development of on and off road pedestrian and cycling facilities under the County's jurisdiction will be accessible</p>	<p>A County Wide Active Transportation Strategy was approved by Essex County Council and local municipalities in Essex County in 2012. Implementation of the Strategy is phased over a 20 year period. An Inter-municipal Active Transportation Committee is developing recommended policies and will guide the process of implementation. Requirements established in the Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment – Design of Public Spaces Standards (Part IV.1 of Ontario Regulation 413/12) will be incorporated into the implementation plans.</p>	