



County of
Essex

**The Corporation of the County of Essex
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
2023-2027**

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Definitions

"Ableism" mean attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities are assumed to be less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and take part, and of less value than other people. Ableism can be conscious or unconscious and is embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society.

"Accessibility" a general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

"Adaptive technologies" means products that help people (primarily people with vision, hearing, mobility or other disabilities) who cannot use regular versions of products.

"Alternative (alternate) format" means a method of communication that takes into account a person's disabilities. Examples include providing a text version of a website, or a large print version of a document for someone with a visual disability.

"Assistive device" means devices to help people – primarily people with disabilities – to perform a task. Examples are a wheelchair, personal oxygen tank, assistive listening device, electronic device with adaptive technology, or visible emergency alarm.

"Barrier" means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; ("obstacle")

Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

"Disability" covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. There are physical, mental and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and

alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, and other conditions. Disability, under the Ontario Human Rights Code, is defined as:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

“Inclusive design” means taking into account differences among individuals and groups when designing something, to avoid creating barriers. Inclusive design can apply to systems, facilities, programs, policies, services, education, etc.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Requirement

Municipalities must meet the requirement to develop a multi-year plan to assist and guide them in achieving accessibility goals. These plans must:

- be developed in consultation with people with disabilities and with an accessibility advisory committee while establishing, reviewing and updating your plan;
- be posted on the municipality's website and be publicly available;
- be provided in an alternate accessible format of choice, upon request;
- be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

Background

The **Ontarians with Disabilities Act** (ODA) was passed in December, 2001 with the purpose of improving 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.

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**, (AODA) was passed in 2005 with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The AODA gave the Province the mandate to create sets of standards in accessibility which will apply to both public and private sector organizations. The AODA is more comprehensive and prescriptive than the ODA.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (**Ontario Regulation 429/07**) was passed in January, 2008.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards which regulate information and communications, employment and transportation came into effect on July 1, 2011, with requirements under this standard to be phased in over time.

The Design of Public Spaces Standards (**Ontario Regulation 413/12**) came into effect on January 1, 2013. Also known as the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment, these standards provide technical requirements for the design and construction of external elements, including:

- Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes
- Public Use Eating Areas
- Outdoor Play Spaces

- Exterior Paths of Travel
- On and Off Street Parking
- Service Counters, Fixed Queuing Lines and Waiting Areas
- Maintenance

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.

Designated public sector organizations are defined by **Ontario Regulation 191/11** of the AODA. This category consists of the broader public sector, municipalities and other organizations described under the AODA.

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 to persons 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.

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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 192,700 (according to the Canada 2021 Census) and an overall area of 1720 km².

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, a long-term care home, 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.

A Message from the Warden and CAO

(A personal message from your CAO illustrates the importance the leadership of your organization places on accessibility. You may want to include a specific achievement, success story or best practice that demonstrates your organization's leadership in implementing accessibility initiatives. You may also want to incorporate the statement of commitment to accessibility into this message.)

Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

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.

Executive Summary

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 2023 to 2027.

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

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians. The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

This plan outlines the structure, policies and fundamental practices that have been put into place for the County of Essex over the past several years, in relation to accessibility and removing barriers. It further summarises past achievements and identifies areas of focus, as an action plan, for the further removal of barriers to accessibility, over the next 5 years and into the future, as the County of Essex helps to achieve the goal of an accessible Ontario.

Overview

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC)

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) was established by Council resolution on September 18th, 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

Members of all 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 and in County activities/initiatives.

Facilities Owned and/or Leased by the County

Essex County Civic Centre and Other Facilities

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

In November of 2017, the Corporation of the County of Essex assumed full ownership of the Essex County Civic Centre, and continues to lease certain areas of the building to legacy tenants, Essex-Region Conservation Authority, Student Transportation Services, the GECSB Media Centre, Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority and Essex County Library Administration.

The primary administrative offices for several County departments and divisions, including the Warden's Office, County Administration, Legislative and Community Services, Communication and Organizational Development, Financial Services, Information Technology, Human Resources, Infrastructure and Planning Services, Facilities Management, as well as Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Management are housed at the Essex County Civic Centre. Some departments have satellite locations, bases, and primary facilities at other locations throughout the County and City of Windsor.

The County of Essex Council Chambers, as well as a number of Committee Rooms are utilized primarily by the County of Essex, agencies, boards, committee meetings, tenants of the building and occasionally by community organizations.

Facilities, which are accessed only by vehicular traffic, such as the Essex County Regional Landfill and Transfer Station 2 are owned by the County of Essex and operated by the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority.

Many of the barriers identified in the previous Accessibility Plans which related to physical accessibility barriers in the Civic Centre have been addressed over time. In 2013, improvements to the accessibility of the West building access provided a ground level entrance and access to all floors by means of a new elevator inside the building as well as a new ramp to the patio area under the Council Chambers, and a new ramp at the entrance located on the South side of the building. In 2015 and beyond the replacement of plumbing fixtures, when appropriate, have been installed with automatic features to improve accessibility and water savings. Since the County assumed full ownership of the facility in 2017, several renovations

have taken place to large office spaces for Essex-Windsor EMS, IT Services and Infrastructure and Planning Services, while others are still pending for the remaining office spaces and common areas.

In 2020/2021 renovations to the bathroom facilities at the lower level of the building were completed, addressing the need for a universal washroom, including an adult change-table and a lift. In 2022, in response to security and safety concerns with the building accesses, the County commenced the replacement of exterior doors, with automatic touch-free sliding doors.

The Civic Centre is an important gathering place for a cross-section of the community and given that the Civic Centre is approaching 50 years old, a number of significant deficiencies have been identified with the facility which must be addressed in the near future. Many of the issues with the building are not necessarily related exclusively to accessibility, however, the renewal and/or rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure will allow for an opportunity to remove additional barriers in the facility. Each renovation fosters an opportunity for the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee to review drawings with the architects, and provide comments on plans, to ensure accessibility is considered and barriers are removed.

Infrastructure and Planning Services

The Infrastructure and Planning Services department, which includes, Facilities, Design and Construction, Transportation Planning and Development, and Planning Services divisions currently operate from offices on the upper floor of the Essex County Civic Centre, in Suite 215. In mid-2018 the space underwent a complete renovation, and modernization. Renovations were conducted in accordance with the Ontario Building Code, consideration for the Integrated Accessibility Standards of Ontario and with a review of the plans by the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The Roads Maintenance Operations 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, 7101 North Sideroad, Amherstburg
- West Pike Creek Depot, 11965 County Rd 42, Tecumseh
- Tilbury North Depot, 2400 Comber Side Rd, Lakeshore.

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.

Sun Parlor Home (Jayne Brooks Keller is reviewing)

The Sun Parlor Home, located at 175 Talbot Street East in Leamington, is a long-term care home that was built in 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, over the past decade, general wear on some fixtures and furnishings, as well as the increasingly complex nature of the health needs of the residents, has created some accessibility issues. To address these issues, the management team in cooperation with the Accessibility Advisory 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 related to upgrading the elevators, adding evac-chairs, 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.

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 health circumstances of the residents being admitted to the Home highlight the increasing demand for improved accessibility of the facility and the need for bringing accessibility to the forefront of any conversation about updating the Sun Parlor Home's facilities.

As well as the enhancements to physical assistive devices and removal of physical barriers in the Home, the life enrichment staff provide and coordinate a number of social activities and services designed to promote inclusiveness and enhancements to the quality of life of residents.

Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Facilities (Bruce Krauter is reviewing)

The administration offices for Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services (EWEMS), for Essex County, Windsor and Pelee Island are located on the main floor of the Essex County Civic Centre, in Suite 218. In 2018, this office space was fully renovated in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard and to the Building Code and with a review of the plans by the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee.

There are secondary EWEMS offices and an ambulance base located at 920 Mercer Street in Windsor. This facility is closed to the public, and is a two-storey structure. The facility was partially renovated in 2004 including modernized office spaces on the main and second floor as well as accessible washrooms were constructed on the main floor.

There are 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 leased this property until purchase and re-construction in 2017.

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

- LaSalle Station – A new, joint Police, Fire and EMS facility was constructed in 2014 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 is a new station, constructed in 2013 and is located on Lesperance Rd.
- 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, the new Essex EMS base was 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 intended for public access. As bases are newly constructed and those that have been recently renovated, have been designed with accessibility features in mind. Future bases are designed in accordance with the Built Environment Standard and amended Building Code.

Essex County Library Facilities and Services (ROBIN GREENALL TO REVIEW)

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.

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, where Administration, computer network services, ordering and processing of library materials are centralized. Only library staff has access to the library administration offices.

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 four 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 Essex County Library produces its own Accessibility Plan and Policies and Procedures and the library branches are observed for accessibility via the seven municipalities' own accessibility advisory committees.

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Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

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. Past achievements to remove and prevent barriers have included:

Customer Service

- Review and update Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures as required, ensuring compliance with legislation.
- Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers
- Ensure Vendor Accessible Training Certificates are being received.
- 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.
- Essex County employees advised that workplace emergency response plans and information will be developed to accommodate any employees with disabilities specific accessibility requirements;
- Installation of a Nurse Call System at the Sun Parlor Home addressing safety and accessibility home-wide;
- Implemented the use of a software program, "Site Improve", for the external websites of the County of Essex and CWATS in order to consistently monitor for website accessibility concerns to make speedy corrections in accordance with WCAG 2.0 website standards;
- Construction of a new administration reception desk for even greater accessibility at the Essex County Civic Centre.
- Construction of a new EMS reception desk for even greater accessibility at the Essex County Civic Centre.
- When planning events, ensuring that accessibility is considered and using the Ontario Planning Accessible Events Guide.

- Continued individual resident needs assessments and procurement of resultant assistive devices for Sun Parlor Home;
- Sun Parlor Home - Continually enhancing the accessibility of the facility and services for residents, visitors and staff;
- Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee activities which include:
 - Annual Accessibility Workshops and/or events/initiatives
 - Annual Promotion of National Access Awareness Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities through activities/information sharing.
 - Partnering with the Essex Regional Conservation Authority (ERCA) to provide consultation of matters related to accessibility in regards to ERCA projects such as trail construction and other outdoor spaces.

Information and Communications

- Review, consult on and update 5 year Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Information and Communications Standard including the use of accessible formats or communication supports.
- Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee launched a social media platform to help share information and awareness surrounding accessibility;
- Developed templates for letters, documents and presentations for staff use in accessible formats.
- Contracted with National Captioning Services of Canada to provide live closed captioning services for broadcasts of Essex County Council meetings.
- Annual promotion of National Accessibility Awareness Week through activities and education;
- Annual publication of a newsletter providing information on activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committees throughout the region;

Employment

- Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard.
- Implementation of employee return to work and accommodation policies for County of Essex employees;
- Developed 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;
- Developed practices and procedures for notifying successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment;
- Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
- Conduct employee workshops and sensitivity training to help remove attitudinal barriers surrounding working with persons with disabilities.
- Employee workshops and information sessions surrounding mental health, aimed at removing attitudinal barriers surrounding friends and coworkers that may be experience mental health concerns;

Procurement

- Ensure Vendor Accessible Training Certificates are being received.
- Developed accessible document requirements for consultants and other third parties engaged to prepare public documents on behalf of the Corporation;
- The implementation and use of a formalized electronic procurement system, "Bids & Tenders", that allows for fair and accessible procurement process and documents available in accessible formats;
- Continue employee training on how to create accessible documents in 'Microsoft Word' and PDF formats.

- Re-development of a new corporate website, ensuring WCAG AA and AAA compliance as well as mobile technology compliance.
- Investigate screen reader technology integration for the new website (i.e.: browsealoud)
- 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.
- Ensure all items posted to the employee intranet system are in accessible formats and available in additional accessible formats as per the IASR.
- Ensure any marketing and communications efforts reach people with disabilities. Include people with disabilities of all generations in photos, testimonials and other communications. Ensure marketing collateral such as flyers, brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos, are accessible.
- When planning events, ensuring that accessibility is considered and using the Ontario Planning Accessible Events Guide.
- Continue to ensure the electronic procurement system for the County of Essex remains accessible and is compliant with the latest accessibility requirements.
- Sun Parlor Home purchase and installation of new resident room furnishings that consider and improve accessibility (ease of opening drawers, space, etc.)

Self-Serve Kiosks

This section was not applicable in previous years.

Training

- Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers
- Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Information and Communications Standard including the use of accessible formats or communication supports.

- 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;
- Employee training on how to create accessible documents;
- Provide training to employees on the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities

Design of Public Spaces

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

- Construction of a new administration reception desk for even greater accessibility at the Essex County Civic Centre.
- Construction of a new EMS reception desk for even greater accessibility at the Essex County Civic Centre.
- 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;

- Renovations to County Administration reception desk to improve Accessibility;
- Continuing renovations to the Sun Parlor Home to improve the accessibility of that entire facility for the residents and visitors.
- Construction of a new West End Depot for Infrastructure Services that was constructed in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard and to the Building Code;
- Construction of a new Tecumseh Station (2013/14) and Dougall Station (2017/18) for Emergency Medical Services that was constructed in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard and to the Building Code;
- Redeveloped existing exterior off-street parking and pathways at the Essex Civic Centre that meet the technical and general requirements of 80(21) – 80(23) and 80(32) – 80(37) of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation;
- Continued improvement projects at the Sun Parlor Home including:
 - Flooring renovation to eliminate carpet and flooring in the Special Activation Room for ease of mobility and safety.
 - New dining room chairs which allows for easier sliding
 - Purchase of additional electric hi-low beds, and specialized lifts.
- Sun Parlor Home Exterior Courtyard Refresh to include new concrete with slight ramp, to ease mobility for residents and visitors with wheelchairs and walking aids.
- Consultations with the Infrastructure Services department on the redevelopment of roads and intersections, crosswalks and other infrastructure projects to ensure accessibility compliance;
- Renovations to upgrade washrooms on the top floor of the Essex Civic Centre to ensure accessibility.
- Renovations to upgrade washrooms on the basement level of the Essex Civic Centre to ensure accessibility.
- Renovations of the interior office space of the Essex Civic Centre.

- Installation of security cameras and additional lighting for the Civic Centre parking lot.
- Removing barriers and enhancing the accessibility of the facilities of the County of Essex.
- The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee visits the Sun Parlor Home to make recommendations for improved accessibility;
- Infrastructure Services – ensuring new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Standard and Ontario Building Code;
 - Any improvements or development of depots will be done in accordance with Built Environment Standard and the Building Code.
 - Ensure all consultants follow the AODA, IASR and other accessibility regulations and guidelines for Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment and Built Environments when working on a project on behalf of the County of Essex.
 - Ensuring all plans for design are brought forward to the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to final approval.
- Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Base Construction and Renovations, ensure new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Standard and Ontario Building Code and Any improvements or development of offices/stations will be done in accordance with Built Environment Standard and the Building Code.
- Active Transportation - New initiatives related to the development of on and off road pedestrian and cycling facilities under the County's jurisdiction will be accessible;
 - The County Wide Active Transportation Strategy (CWATS) is phased over a 20 year period. An Inter- municipal Active Transportation Committee is guiding 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) is incorporated into the implementation plans.

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.

Transportation

The County does not currently operate or contract public transit services or license taxicabs.

Other

- 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;
- Development of policies in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard;
- Sun Parlor Home - Annual review of the facility by the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee to provide continued suggestions for improvement.
- Maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces:
 - Develop policies and procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements of public spaces.
 - Develop procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order.

Strategies and Actions

(In the years between MYAP Reporting, See 'Appendix A' For Updated List)

Identify the projects and programs your organization plans to accomplish to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Customer Service

The County of Essex is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

| Customer Service Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Deliver, on an ongoing basis, and as soon as practicable, Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers of the Corporation. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Review and update Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures, to ensure compliance with the established policy review parameters and legislative requirements. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure proof of compliance is received for any contractors and vendors doing business with, or on behalf of the County of Essex, as it relates to the AODA requirements for Accessible Customer Service training for employees and volunteers. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Use of 'Site Improve' software program, to monitor and ensure internal and external websites are meeting accessibility compliance requirements according to the WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard (or better as required.) | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensuring that all departments of the County are utilizing best practices for accessibility when planning events, and consulting the Ontario Planning Accessible Events Guide to ensure events are barrier-free and inclusive for all. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure that patient and resident care is provided based on the individual needs of each person, and that accommodations are made when needed. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Customer Service Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Ensure that signs and instructions at all facilities meet the guidelines for accessible signage, considering: clear type/font, size in relation to distance, letter and line spacing, location and placement, colour contrast, tactile lettering and surface type. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Use of the NextTalk software for those who require the use of TTY services for customer service via telephone phone communication. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Support and promote ECAAC activities and initiatives in the community. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Support and promote National AccessAbility Week and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| ECAAC continue to leverage a partnership with the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) to provide consultation of matters related to accessibility of their facilities and spaces. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Information and Communications

The County of Essex is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

| Information and Communications Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Review, consult on and update 5 year Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Current plan is for the five-year period of 2023 to 2027, with ongoing annual reviews to Schedule A. Review and consultations for the 2028-2032 will commence in 2031. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Information and Communications Standard including the use of accessible formats or communication supports. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Maintain and update the ECAAC Facebook profile, sharing relevant and current information regarding accessibility initiatives, and social awareness | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Information and Communications Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Maintain and update the ECAAC Twitter profile, sharing relevant and current information regarding accessibility initiatives, and social awareness | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Maintain and update the Accessibility page of the County of Essex public website | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Maintain and update the Accessibility page of the internal County website | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Review, update and promote the use of accessible document templates, presentations, correspondence, and reports for use by all staff. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure that live-streamed or video recorded public meetings offer closed captions | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Foster communication among local Accessibility Advisory Committees, support and promote their municipal activities where possible | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Re-development of a new corporate website, ensuring WCAG AA and AAA compliance as well as mobile technology compliance. | WCAG 2.0 AA – January 1, 2021 | Complete |
| 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. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure all items posted to the employee intranet system are in accessible formats and available in additional accessible formats as per the IASR. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure any marketing and communications that comprise photographs and graphics, include people with disabilities. Utilize disability inclusive stock photography (such as DisabilityIn) on marketing collateral such as flyers, brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos, are accessible. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| When posting images online, ensure that alternative text options are updated on social media sites in addition to County website. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Information and Communications Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| When planning events, ensuring that accessibility is considered and using the Ontario Planning Accessible Events Guide . | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Include people with disabilities as part of any future County of Essex, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives or committees. | Future | Not Started |
| Include access to County of Essex committee members, to mental health, accessibility or equity diversity and inclusion, training resources through FSEAP, or other means. | Future | Not Started |

Employment

The County of Essex is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

| Employment Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Complete the 6 requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hiring • workplace information • talent and performance management • communicate accessibility policies • accommodation plans • return to work process | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Notify employees and the public that the County of Essex will accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in the hiring process, by posting this information on the County website and including this language in job postings. | 2023-2027 | In Progress |
| Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Accessible Employment Standard. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Adhere to policies regarding employee return to work and accommodation policies for County of Essex employees; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Employment Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Developed 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. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Developed practices and procedures for notifying successful applicants of the County's policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Conduct employee workshops and sensitivity training aimed at removing attitudinal barriers surrounding friends and coworkers that may be experience intermittent, temporary or permanent mental health, cognitive or physical disabilities. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Procurement

The County of Essex is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

| Procurement Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Ensure proof of compliance is received for any contractors and vendors doing business with, or on behalf of the County of Essex, as it relates to the AODA requirements for Accessible Customer Service training for employees and volunteers. | 2023-2027 | In-Progress |
| Make available the information for the Vendor of Record for Accessible Document Remediation services, used by the County of Essex, and available to 3 rd parties at their own expense. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure that all procurement documents have been vetted to ensure solicited products and/or services will meet the criteria required by the Municipality under AODA and O. Reg. 191 | 2023-2027 | |
| Ensure that all procurement documents include a clause that outlines the responsibility of the contractor to provide documents, plans, goods and services that meet accessibility standards. | 2023-2027 | In-Progress |

| Procurement Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Continued and expanded use of 'Bids & Tenders', that allows for fair and accessible procurement process and documents available in accessible formats through an online platform, as well as facilitating contractor compliance by providing a means of uploading proof of accessibility training certificates, etc. as required. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Sun Parlor Home purchase and installation of new resident room furnishings that consider and improve accessibility (ease of opening drawers, space, etc.) | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Continue to ensure the electronic procurement system for the County of Essex remains accessible and is compliant with the latest accessibility requirements. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Self-Serve Kiosks

The County of Essex is committed to incorporating accessibility features/ considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

| Self-Serve Kiosks Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Ensure that kiosks used to screen for COVID-19 at the entrance of facilities, comply with accessibility requirements. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Ensure an alternative method of obtaining the service provided at the kiosks is available | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Training

The County of Essex is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

| Training Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Provide fundamental training on the concepts and best practices of creating accessible documents for all employees of the County of Essex; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Training Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Provide advanced and ongoing training for key employees of the County of Essex who produce documents for circulation and for the public; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Foster a working group of employees who act as departmental experts in the area of document accessibility. Provide training and tools for the ease of remediation of documents. | 2023-2027 | In-Progress |
| Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Training of employees on the Essex County Integrated Accessibility Standard Policy #12-001, on requirements of the Information and Communications Standard including the use of accessible formats or communication supports. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| 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; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Make available events and workshops organized by the ECAAC to the public, and to members of staff, ensuring greater reach of the accessibility message and ideals; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Organize and promote attendance at Accessibility Workshop, forums, inspirational speakers and educators who focus on ways in which to make communities barrier free from both physical and attitudinal barriers; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Provide training to employees on the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Design of Public Spaces

The County of Essex will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. 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.

| Design of Public Spaces Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Renovation of the Essex County Civic Centre main floor office space, creation of universal washroom and common areas for modernization, increased security and increased accessibility; | 2023-2027 | In-Progress |
| Renovation of the Essex County Civic Centre upper floor meeting spaces, creation of universal washroom and common areas for modernization, increased security and increased accessibility; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Renovation of the exterior doors of the Essex County Civic Centre, to improve accessibility, reduce touch surfaces and improve security; | 2023-2027 | In-Progress |
| Improve signage for accessible entry to the building and parking area at the Essex County Civic Centre; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| The construction of a universal washroom on the main floor of the Civic Centre, complete with automatic doors; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| General improvements to Essex County Civic Centre, public eating areas, outdoor eating areas and accessible public access to outdoor common space; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Addition of an accessible second public entrance, with a ramp; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Exterior access to common sitting area with shade rock garden/fountain at the Civic Centre | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Accessible furnishings for common areas, meeting rooms, cafeteria etc. | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Improved navigation to the facilities, using tactile, audio, or alternative wayfinding tools; | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Continuing renovations to the Sun Parlor Home to improve the accessibility of that entire facility for the residents and visitors | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Design of Public Spaces Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| EMS Stations – review of plans by ECAAC Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Base Construction and Renovations, ensure new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Standard and Ontario Building Code and Any improvements or development of offices/stations will be done in accordance with Built Environment Standard and the Building Code. | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Road construction – review of plans by ECAAC | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| CWATS development – review of plans by ECAAC Active Transportation - New initiatives related to the development of on and off road pedestrian and cycling facilities under the County's jurisdiction will be accessible; The County Wide Active Transportation Strategy (CWATS) is phased over a 20 year period. An Inter-municipal Active Transportation Committee is guiding 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) is incorporated into the implementation plans. | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Redevelop existing exterior off-street parking and pathways at the Essex Civic Centre that meet the technical and general requirements of 80(21) – 80(23) and 80(32) – 80(37) of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Consultations with the Infrastructure Services department on the redevelopment of roads and intersections, crosswalks and other infrastructure projects to ensure accessibility compliance; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Removing barriers and enhancing the accessibility of the facilities of the County of Essex. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee visits the Sun Parlor Home to make recommendations for improved accessibility; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Design of Public Spaces Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| <p>Infrastructure Services – ensuring new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Standard and Ontario Building Code;</p> <p>Any improvements or development of depots will be done in accordance with Built Environment Standard and the Building Code.</p> <p>Ensure all consultants follow the AODA, IASR and other accessibility regulations and guidelines for Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment and Built Environments when working on a project on behalf of the County of Essex.</p> <p>Ensuring all plans for design are brought forward to the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to final approval.</p> | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

Transportation

The County does not currently operate or contract public transit services or license taxicabs.

Other

| Other Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| 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. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Work with the County Emergency Management division, to develop an awareness campaign specifically targeting emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. | 2023-2027 | Pending |
| Essex County employees advised that workplace emergency response plans and information will be developed to accommodate any employees with disabilities specific accessibility requirements; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |

| Other Actions | Timeframe | Status |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Development and review 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; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Development and review of policies in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standard; | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces: Develop policies and procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements of public spaces. Develop procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order. | 2023-2027 | Ongoing |
| Regional accessibility flag-raising annually, to commemorate National AccessAbility Week. | 2023-2027 | Pending |

Conclusion

Accessibility Strategies and Actions Identified in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The attached "Appendix 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 the timelines and updated status of initiatives established earlier in this document, and will be updated on an ongoing basis, and reported to Essex County Council annually.

Review and Monitoring of the Progress

The Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be updated at least once every five years. The County of Essex will review the progress of the initiatives undertaken in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an on-going basis. Progress reports 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.

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. The Plan will also be posted on the County of Essex website 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 by:

Phone: 519-776-6441, ext. 1353

TTY: 1-877-624-4832

Email: accessibility@countyofessex.ca

Mail: 360 Fairview Ave. W., Essex, Ontario, N8M 1Y6