



Appendix A – 2024 Status Update
Essex County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2023 – 2027)

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. The status of the items indicated will be defined as 'Planned' for items that are not yet started, 'In-Progress' for items that are started, but not yet accomplished or, 'Ongoing' for items that are continual.

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

Customer Service Actions	Timeframe	Status
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
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
Ensuring Access to meeting spaces on the main floor of the Civic Centre, where ramp access and egress is possible.	2023-2027	Ongoing

Information and Communications

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

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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
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 (CountyConnect)	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 (January 1, 2021 – Complete) and future levels of compliance, as required for websites as well as mobile technology.	2023-2027	Ongoing

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Information and Communications Actions	Timeframe	Status
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
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.	2023-2027	Planned
Include access to County of Essex committee members, to mental health, accessibility or equity diversity and inclusion, training resources through FSEAP, or other means.	2023-2027	Planned

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	Ongoing
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
Utilize the 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
Utilize the developed practices and procedures for notifying successful applicants of the County’s policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment.	2023-2027	Ongoing

Employment Actions	Timeframe	Status
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 and IASR training for employees and volunteers. This includes a declaration of compliance for vendors to be provided before any work is performed or payment of invoices.	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 is also obtainable by 3 rd parties at their own expense.	2023-2027	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
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' for all procurement activity, as it 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 and/or declarations of compliance with AODA 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
That the County's Procurement Policy and Purchasing By-law include language that provide strategies for accessibility considerations when procuring goods and/or services for the County of Essex.	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 facility guests and visitors upon arrival, comply with accessibility requirements.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Ensure an alternative method of obtaining the service provided at the kiosks is available	2023-2027	In-Progress

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
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
Provide fundamental training on the concepts and best practices of creating accessible documents for all employees of the County of Essex, at the time of onboarding for new employees, and as soon as practical for existing employees;	2023-2027	Ongoing
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.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Provide training and tools for the ease of remediation of documents, and periodically seek out whether new or more advanced programs and tools become available for this purpose.	2023-2027	Ongoing
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
Produce records of such training, from all service areas, for all employees as needed, and any new employees at the end of each year.	2023-2027	Ongoing

Training Actions	Timeframe	Status
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 members of Council and committees, 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, guest speakers and educators who focus on ways to make workplaces and communities barrier free from both physical and attitudinal barriers.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Provide training to Council, committee members and employees regarding their obligations and requirements under 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

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Design of Public Spaces Actions	Timeframe	Status
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	Planned
Renovation of the exterior doors of the Essex County Civic Centre, to improve accessibility, reduce touch surfaces and improve security;	2023-2027	Completed
Improve signage for accessible entry to the building and parking area at the Essex County Civic Centre;	2023	Completed
The construction of a universal washroom on the main floor of the Civic Centre, complete with automatic doors;	2023	Completed
General improvements to Essex County Civic Centre, public eating areas, outdoor eating areas and accessible public access to outdoor common space;	2023-2027	In-Progress
Addition of an accessible second public entrance, with a ramp or lift;	2023-2027	In-Progress
Exterior egress ramp, from common sitting area under pavilion where shade rock garden/fountain are located at the Civic Centre	2023-2027	Planned
Accessible furnishings for common areas, meeting rooms, cafeteria etc.	2023-2027	In-Progress
Improved navigation to the facilities, using tactile, audio, or alternative wayfinding tools;	2023-2027	Planned
Continuing renovations to the Sun Parlor Home to improve the accessibility of that entire facility for the residents and visitors	2023-2027	Ongoing
Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services Base/Stations - Construction and Renovations, ensure new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Accessibility Standard and Ontario Building Code and that any improvements or development of	2023-2027	In-Progress

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Design of Public Spaces Actions	Timeframe	Status
offices/stations will be done in accordance with Built Environment Accessibility Standard and the Building Code, and brought forward to the ECAAC for comments prior to final approval.		
Road, bridge, intersection, signalling, crosswalk or other transportation asset construction and remediation – review of draft plans by the ECAAC.	2023-2027	Planned
CWATS developments – Review of plans by ECAAC for expansion or improvements of the network.	2023-2027	Ongoing
New initiatives related to the development of on and off road pedestrian and cycling facilities under the County’s jurisdiction will be accessible;	2023-2027	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
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
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 at least once per term, to make recommendations for improved accessibility.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Infrastructure Services – ensuring all new and renovated facilities meet Built Environment Standard and Ontario Building Code.	2023-2027	Ongoing

Design of Public Spaces Actions	Timeframe	Status
Any improvements or development of County Roads depots will be done in accordance with Built Environment Standard and the Building Code.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Ensure all consultants (architects, designers, engineers, project managers) 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, in accordance with the contract document specifications related to Accessibility compliance.	2023-2027	Ongoing
Ensuring all plans for design for any facility or assets, are brought forward to the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comment prior to final approval.	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	Planned

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Other Actions	Timeframe	Status
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
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
<p>Maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces:</p> <p>Develop policies and procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements of public spaces. (maintenance may be mechanical, environmental or other)</p> <p>Develop procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are not in working order and develop procedures for addressing environmental barriers that arise resulting from planned or inadvertent events or incidents. (examples: debris or obstacles on paths of travel, power failure/disruption, weather-related issues etc.)</p>	2023-2027	Ongoing
Regional accessibility flag-raising annually, to commemorate National AccessAbility Week. (Inaugural flag raising was May 30, 2022 and Council passed a resolution to permit the flying of the Accessibility Flag for a week each year to mark National AccessAbility Week.)	2023-2027	Ongoing
That the Strategic Asset Management Plan incorporate accessibility considerations into any future planned investment in corporate assets.	2023-2027	Planned