Joint Accessibility Plan

2023 - 2027

Municipal Jurisdictions Participating in the Perth County Joint Accessibility Plan

The Corporation of the County of Perth

1 Huron Street
Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Lower Tier Municipalities

The Municipality of North Perth
330 Wallace Ave N
Listowel, ON N4W 1L3

The Township of Perth South
3191 Road 122
St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0

The Township of Perth East
P.O. Box 455
25 Mill Street E
Milverton, ON N0K 1M0

The Municipality of West Perth
160 Wellington Street
P.O. Box 609
Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

Key Contact Information

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Corporation of the County of Perth

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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

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County of Perth Joint Accessibility Plan 2023-2027

Executive Summary

This multi-year Accessibility Plan succeeds the 2018-2022 Accessibility Plan and the legislated Annual Status Updates to that Plan. The new plan outlines the continued commitment that the County of Perth has made to create an accessible organization by identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities.

This plan was established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and with the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC). The intent of this document is to create a countywide accessibility plan with the County of Perth, the Municipality of North Perth, the Township of Perth East, the Township of Perth South and the Municipality of West Perth. It incorporates the intentions of the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities to meet its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

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

The County of Perth's Joint Accessibility Plan (2023-2027) reflects the proposed intentions of the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities over the next five years for meeting the regulations under the AODA and for identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities in communities across the County and the Lower Tier Municipalities.

Highlights of the Joint Accessibility Plan (2023-2027):

- **Communication:** A focus on streamlined communications from the County of Perth around its accessibility program, initiatives and projects.

- **Education**: Continued internal and external education from the County of Perth to better support community members, businesses, and staff members with the implementation of accessibility initiatives.

- **Diversity and Inclusion**: Prioritizing diversity, inclusion and the County's commitment to impactful initiatives for all members of the community in this plan.

- **Age-Friendly Focus**: Demonstrating focus on age-friendly resources, discussions, and education to continue to better support the aging population of the Perth County area.

- **Community Leadership**: A commitment to remain a leader in accessibility and to maintain up-to-date on provincial and federal regulations and requirements.

Our Commitment to Accessibility

Perth County and the Lower Tier Municipalities (North Perth, Perth East, Perth South, and West Perth) commit to prioritizing accessibility in County services, programs, goods and facilities. Progress on all accessibility initiatives remain a collaborative effort between the Upper and Lower Tier Municipalities in the Perth County community. Continued knowledge-sharing, documentation, and resource creation will remain a priority for all parties to illustrate the commitment that Perth County has to the AODA.

Moving forward, there is continued work to be done on accessibility throughout Perth County. The municipality will continue to identify and remove barriers to create accessible spaces and services for all in the Perth County community.

Please contact us through one of the following methods:

County of Perth Website:

Phone: 519-271-0531

Mail: Accessibility Program
County of Perth
1 Huron Street
Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Email: clerk@perthcounty.ca

Obligations

Legislation

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

The Province of Ontario's Bill 125 was first read in the Legislature on November 5, 2001 and was fully titled as, "An Act to Improve the Identification, Removal, and Prevention of Barriers Faced by Persons with Disabilities and to Make Related Amendments to Other Acts". Given a short title of the "Ontarians with Disabilities Act" (ODA), this legislation received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. It came into force for all Ontarians on February 7, 2002.

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act helps the government improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The ODA is designed to assist Ontarians with disabilities by providing for their involvement in the identification and by removing and preventing barriers to full participation in the life of the province.

Under the ODA, all municipalities must:

- prepare an accessibility plan each year and make it available to the public
- include people with disabilities in their planning processes, such as the members of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
- remove barriers over time (the Act gives municipalities the flexibility to set their own priorities and timelines)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Bill 118, also known as the "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act", 2001 (AODA) was given Royal Assent on June 13, 2005. Created with the knowledge that discrimination towards individuals with disabilities exists, it was put in place to benefit all Ontarians and grant equal opportunities. The AODA encompasses all statements passed with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and is expanded to include public and private sectors, as well as providing more specific guidelines for making Ontario more accessible.

Who is the AODA designed for?

According to the Government of Ontario, approximately 2.6 million people have a disability. Roughly one in four Ontarians live with a disability and face various types accessibility challenges and barriers in their everyday life. It is important to address the barriers that exist and prevent those barriers in the future to ensure the independence of individuals with disabilities. This removal of barriers also protects the right of all people to participate fully in the community.

Due to accessibility barriers, some Ontarians find it hard to access local services, enter public buildings or use public transit. While all levels of government are working to improve accessibility, municipal governments have a special role to play. Municipalities serve communities and manage important programs and services that touch community members' daily lives, such as libraries, social housing and emergency services, and parks and roads.

The AODA standards apply to all organizations (public, private, and not-for-profit) with one or more employees in Ontario. In order to ensure that barriers are removed, the AODA states there shall be mandatory development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards regarding goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, building, structures and premises.

It is outlined within the AODA that all legislated requirements are to be in place prior to January 1, 2025. The AODA further states participation of individuals with disabilities, the Government of Ontario and representatives of industries and various sectors of the economy are required in the development of the standards to ensure optimal accessibility outcomes.

The Five AODA Standards

The AODA sets out a road map for an accessible Ontario by 2025 with mandatory and enforceable standards. These five standards are meant to provide a consistent means of measuring appropriate levels of accessibility. They also are to be reviewed by the government every 2 years.

The five standards include:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

Customer Service Standard

The Customer Service Standard requires organizations and businesses to provide accessible customer service. Training must be provided to staff members and volunteers regarding accessible customer service and how to interact with people with disabilities. Compliance in the following areas should be met; service animals, methods of notification of service disruption, collection of feedback, development of training for staff, use and treatment of support persons, service animals, and assistive devices. The Customer Service Standard ensures that all members of the community can expect the same level of customer service at all times.

Information and Communications Standard

The Information and Communications Standard mandates all information and communications produced by an organization must be made available in alternative formats upon requests. This standard also includes requirements to make websites accessible. Accessible formats (alternative formats) are ways of presenting information in a way that is accessible for people who have difficulty accessing standard print or electronic formats. For example, accessible formats include; braille, large print, accessible digital files (HTML, Microsoft Word documents), audio records, and text transcripts of visual or audio information. The Information and Communications Standard ensures that all people have an equal chance to learn, participate, create, and receive information and communications within their community.

Employment Standard

The Employment Standard requires organizations make accessibility part of their procedure for hiring, recruiting, and supporting employees with disabilities. The duty to accommodate should be included, as needed, in corporate policies and other functions for employees with disabilities. The Employment Standard ensures that every potential, current, or future employee of an organization is able to work without discrimination or barriers within the workplace.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard requires conventional transportation service providers within a community to make the features, equipment, and vehicles accessible to passengers with disabilities. Conventional transportation types include; buses, streetcars, subways, trains, ferries. Conventional transportation service providers also must deploy lifts or ramps upon request, ensure that passengers have time to board, store mobility aids, and transport passengers with medical aids.

Transportation companies must also provide information in accessible formats upon request. The Transportation Standard also requires transportation service providers to offer alternative ways to accommodate passengers should equipment not be functional. The Transportation Standard ensures that every person can live a rich and fulfilled life by moving freely throughout the community.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standard clearly states the need for newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces designed to be accessible for all people. This inclusivity extends to people with disabilities, aging demographics, and more.

There are requirements that extend for accessibility to:

- recreational trails and beach access routes
- outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- outdoor play spaces (playgrounds and provincial parks)

- accessible parking (on and off street)
- outdoor paths of travel like sidewalks

Interior elements related to accessibility are covered by the Ontario Building Code and may be also included in a "Design Standards Manual" that many municipal Planning or Building departments have. A Design Standards Manual is specific to each municipality and may include additional accessibility recommendations that are not covered in the Ontario Building Code. The Design of Public Spaces Standard ensures that accessibility is considered and included during the design and development process of public spaces, businesses, and housing.

Consultation

There are requirements under the AODA for consultation with either individuals or with persons with disabilities and municipal Joint Accessibility Advisory Committees. The County and the Lower Tier Municipalities are committed to ensuring that the consultation requirements in the legislation are met.

Consultations for the Perth County Joint Accessibility Plan were completed with County Staff, Lower Tier Municipalities, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, persons with disabilities in the greater community, and community members. All stakeholders were given opportunity to actively engage in the development of the plan.

Public Engagement

As part of its public engagement strategy for the Joint Accessibility Plan, Perth County launched an accessibility-focused survey. This survey ran for approximately one month (January 2023) and was promoted in collaboration with the Lower Tier Municipalities and the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The survey received 22 responses with 19 respondents living directly within Perth County, 1 respondent working in Perth County, and 1 respondent interested in relocating to Perth County or the surrounding area. Based on the data collected, approximately 45% of survey participants identified themselves as having a disability. 55% of respondents identified as not having a disability or "prefer not to answer".

With regard to specific Perth County municipal services in relation to accessibility (Transportation, Customer Service, Facilities, Public Spaces), the data did not appear to have any major trends. For the most part, respondents selected "agree" or "neither agree/disagree" regarding being able to utilize accessible municipal services within Perth County.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the total accessibility of Perth County, the survey participants were somewhat or mostly satisfied with Perth County as being an "inclusive place for people with disabilities".

See the chart below for responses to the question:

"Do you feel that Perth County (businesses, public facilities, public spaces/infrastructure, etc.) is an inclusive place for those who are living with disabilities?"

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.64%	3
Somewhat	68.18%	15
No	4.55%	1
Have never considered	9.09%	2
Unsure	4.55%	1
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		22

In a subsequent question, survey participants were asked to note why they feel Perth County is (or is not) an inclusive place for people with disabilities. Most respondents discussed accessibility of businesses, sidewalks and traffic lights, and municipal offices that are located in older retrofitted buildings.

See below for some specific answers to the question:

"Why do you feel Perth County IS or IS NOT an inclusive place for those who are living with disabilities?"

- The traffic lights should have beepers, for those of us whom are visually impaired so we know when it is safe to cross.

- There are some restaurants and other establishments that have stairs - especially to get to washrooms.

- Not all facilities are easily accessible including municipal and or business. Some have adapted the best they could given the constraints within older buildings.

Finally, respondents were asked about the "one thing" that they believe Perth County could do to make the municipality more accessible. Answers were varied across transportation, aging populations, parking, and barrier-free access. One respondent stated that, "even if just one person needs it, it is still needed and important".

Structure and Governance

The responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Joint Accessibility Plan is shared across various stakeholders in the County. Legislative Services at Perth County managed the draft process of the Joint Accessibility Plan in collaboration with all parties listed below.

All departments and Lower Tiers are responsible at a corporate level to ensure compliance to the AODA. The County of Perth and each of its Lower Tier Municipalities are separately responsible for ensuring that all departments with their Municipalities are compliant with the Standards contained within the AODA and are meeting the proposed goals of the Joint Accessibility Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Management Team(s) – Management at Perth County and the Lower Tiers support the mission of the Accessibility program at all operational levels. Management is predominantly responsible for driving the creation of accessible goods, services, and facilities to ensure all community members, visitors, and staff feel included.

County & Lower Tier Councils: Councillors at the Upper and Lower Tier levels support Staff's efforts to ensure that policies, practices, procedures, and programs consider accessibility for all and reflect the principles of diversity and inclusion.

Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC): The JAAC is a key resource and contributor to long-term accessibility planning and programs, as well as providing input on accessibility issues that are brought forward by community members, visitors or staff.

All County and Lower Tier Staff: Accessibility is the responsibility of all municipal employees. Specific focus should be placed on accessible customer service, the creation of accessible materials, and a basic understanding of the five AODA Standards as it relates to our work at Perth County.

Looking toward 2023 and Beyond

Listening to the feedback from community members, the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee members, County Staff, and the Lower Tier Municipalities is a crucial element to maintain the Joint Accessibility Plan over time. Status Updates (annual) and Compliance Reports (biannual) will be submitted and circulated as required.

For policy and procedure reviews, working groups will be established on an ad hoc basis. This plan is subject to approval by the County of Perth's Council and all Lower Tier Municipalities' Councils.

Connection to Perth County's Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter

The Joint Accessibility Plan has a direct connection to Perth County's initiatives regarding diversity, equity, anti-racism, and inclusivity. Becoming a welcoming and inclusive community requires all members of the County to actively combat racism, discriminatory behaviours, and non-inclusive practices (conscious and unconscious).

Perth County believes that celebrating community means recognizing all of the people who call Perth County home regardless of age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, social status, educational background or any other differences they may have. It is part of our mission to enhance Perth County in becoming a more inclusive and welcoming community for all who seek to live, work, and play within our communities.

The [Perth County Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter](#) outlines the values, principles, roles and responsibilities in our organization that represent this commitment. It is directly related to the work of the Accessibility program at Perth County.

In the public engagement survey for the Accessibility Plan, approximately 86% of respondents selected "strongly agree" or "agree" with regard to the importance of the connection between accessibility projects and Perth County's Charter for Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism. One respondent noted that, "accessibility and inclusion… should always be part of our guiding processes and acceptable best practices. Only then can we truly say we're accessible, equitable and inclusive."

Implementation

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities support the spirit and goals of the AODA to make the Province of Ontario more accessible.

A commitment has been made to identify and eliminate (when possible) all forms of barriers faced by people with disabilities, including:

1) **Attitudinal Barriers:** Behaviours, perceptions and assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Attitudinal barriers often are developed from a lack of understanding which can lead to judgement or misconceptions about a person with a disability.

   Examples of Attitudinal barriers include:

   - Assuming that a person with a disability is "less than" or "less able".
   - Assuming that someone with a speech impairment cannot understand you.
   - Making a person feel as though you are going out of your way to provide their accommodations in a customer service interaction.
   - Forming ideas about a person as a result of stereotypes.

2) **Organizational or Systemic Barriers:** Organizational or systemic barriers are policies, procedures, or practices that unfairly discriminate and can prevent individuals from participating fully in a situation. These barriers are often put into place unintentionally by people who do not understand accessibility.

   Examples of Organizational or Systemic barriers include:

- People with disabilities being unable to attend events because they were not considered at the event planning stage.
- No leadership to address issues related to people with disabilities.
- Requiring a driver's license as a core qualification for an office position job that may prohibit persons with vision impairments from applying.

3) **Architectural or Physical:** Architectural or physical barriers are elements of buildings (public or private) or outdoor spaces that create barriers to persons with disabilities. These relate to elements such as stairs, doorways, room layouts, width of paths of travel, and alternate accessible routes to recreational areas.

Examples of Architectural or Physical barriers include:

- Sidewalks, doorways, and paths that are too narrow for a walker.
- Counter height that is not accessible to someone using a mobility device like a wheelchair or scooter.
- Poor lighting in parking lots that make it difficult (or dangerous) for a person with vision impairments to get to their vehicle.
- A lack of power doors with accessibility buttons.
- No accessible washroom stalls for people with disabilities who need room for a turning radius with a mobility device.

4) **Information or Communications:** Information and/or communications barriers occur with regard to sending or receiving information. These barriers occur when sensory disabilities that impact hearing, sight, or learning have not been considered. In today's digital world, this often pertains to website design or other online communications materials.

Examples of Information or Communications barriers include:

- Electronic documents that are not properly formatted and cannot be read by a screen reader.
- Meetings that are poorly organized or miscommunicated.
- Language that is not clear or direct.
- Print that is too small or in a font that's difficult to read.
- Videos that have no captions and no transcriptions available.

5) **Technology:** Technology barriers occur when a device or tech platform is not accessible to its intended audience and cannot be used with an assistive device. Technology has the possibility of enhancing user experience but can also create unintentional barriers for some users. Technology barriers are related to information and communications barriers.

Examples of Technological barriers include:

- Electronic documents without accessibility features (like Alt Text on an image).

- Handouts or materials that are only available as hard copies.
- Requiring students or employees to use a website that does not meet accessibility standards for a necessary service (ex. submitting time cards).
- Municipal websites that cannot be accessed using screen-reading software.

Our Progress on the AODA Regulations

The following outlines our commitments over the next five years in meeting the accessibility standards in five key areas:

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

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

General Requirements

Procurement

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

Reporting

An Annual Update will be coordinated and produced by the Legislative Services department to report on the progress and implementation of the multi-year Accessibility Plan. This Annual Update will include information from individual departments, Lower Tier Municipalities, and any other relevant stakeholders. Once passed by the Lower Tier Councils and County Council, this information will be posted on each municipality's website for public access. The Annual Update will also be made available in alternate formats, upon request.

Per the provincial legislation, a Compliance Report will be filed bi-annually with the Province of Ontario. Support will be provided to the Lower Tier Municipalities ahead the filing deadline.

Training

All employees, volunteers and persons developing policies for the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities are trained on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and on the

Human Rights Code. Persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the County must also be trained.

All members of the County and Lower Tier Municipalities are trained on accessible customer service and how to interact with people with disabilities. The Corporate Accessibility Policy is updated to reflect changes to any of the standards, and training is provided in order to ensure an understanding of any changes.

Quarterly information sessions have been integrated into the accessibility program as of December 2020. These are supplemental to the mandatory training described above and focus on different aspects of the IASR. These sessions are available to all County and Lower Tier staff with the goal of providing practical tools and knowledge, while reinforcing key concepts.

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

Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC)

According to the Province of Ontario, the role of a municipal accessibility advisory committee is to provide advice to municipalities to help make public services and facilities accessible to everyone.

The main activities of an accessibility advisory committee are to:

Advise municipal council about:

- the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards
- the preparation of accessibility reports
- other matters for which the council may seek its advice
- review site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the Planning Act that the committee selects
- perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations

The Perth County JAAC currently has eight (8) voting positions, which provide representation for each Municipality within Perth County, consistent with the expectations of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001. The majority of the members are persons with disabilities.

The JAAC meets approximately nine times a year on the fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding July, August and December) virtually, unless otherwise noted. Committee agendas and minutes are posted on the Perth County website. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings by requesting the link in advance. Alternate formats of the agenda packages are available, upon request.

Feedback

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities welcome input from the public in order to help identify ways in which we can improve accessibility across the Perth County community.

Members of the public are always encouraged to share their comments or suggestions by contacting the Legislative Services division at the County of Perth via phone or email. You can also visit the [Contact Us](#) section on the County of Perth website.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

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

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Ontario (IASR)

(Ontario Regulation 191/11)

Accessible Customer Service Standard

Legislated Mandate

The Customer Service Standard mandates compliance of the public sector and private sector industries in the following areas: use and treatment of support persons, service animals, assistive devices, alternative formats of materials, methods of notification of service disruption and collection of feedback, as well as development and deployment of training for staff, volunteers and third parties acting on behalf of the organization.

Commitment

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

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth and Lower Tier Municipalities

The County of Perth and the Lower Tier Municipalities are meeting the requirements of the Customer Service Standards, including the development, implementation and maintenance of Accessible Customer Service Policies which include the following principles:

- The goods, services or facilities must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

- The provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities must be integrated with the provision of goods, services or facilities to others, unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services or facilities.

- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods, services or facilities.

- When communicating with a person with a disability, the provider shall do so in a manner that considers the person's disability.

The County and Lower Tier Municipalities all have procedures in place regarding:

- Use of service animals and support persons
- Ongoing training
- Feedback processes
- Notice of temporary disruptions
- Format of documents

Accomplishments

The County of Perth and Lower Tier Municipalities have placed a large focus on ensuring that facilities, parks, and public spaces are more accessible. Together with the Planning and Building Departments at both the Upper and Lower Tier municipalities, Staff are working collaboratively to make improvements to processes that impact accessible customer service.

- The development of a new Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Charter was completed in 2021 and supports the goals of accessibility by encouraging it to be considered in all aspects of County operations.

- A new Community Engagement Framework was created which supports project planning and public engagement while ensuring activities are accessible to all.

- Creation of a centralized Central Reception area as first customer service touchpoint for visitors at the Courthouse.

- A singular operator phone line now managed by Central Reception staff for best possible internal and external customer service interactions.

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, POA Court Services was able to offer new remote options for fine payments, filing documents, and telephone meetings with the prosecutor. This increased accessible options for all POA clients.

- The Provincial Offences Office continues to provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Court interpreters upon request.

- Installed a new intercom system at all three levels of the County Courthouse in Stratford to allow for better service for those requiring an operator for the lift.

- Staffing changes at the Courthouse allowed for Planning and Economic Development to move to Level 2 at 1 Ontario St. (Scotiabank building), which is accessible to the public via an elevator.

- Beginning in April 2020, County Council started live streaming all Council meetings due to restrictions placed on gathering across Ontario and Canada. In the future, virtual streaming for Council may be an alternative access point for members of the public who would like to view/join the meetings.

- o Economic Development and Tourism departments developed a concierge business support line as an alternate method of contacting staff for assistance.

- o Grant awarded through the New Horizons for Seniors Fund. The grant money was utilized for training that was focused on age friendly initiatives throughout the County collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society and accessibility consultant Julie Sawchuk.

- o Stratford-Perth Archives continues to provide copies of documents from the collections in alternative formats at no extra cost, upon request.

- o Paramedic Services established an agreement with Mobility Services for transporting the wheelchairs of patients who rely on wheelchairs for their mobility. This will eliminate separation from patients' chairs while in hospital and mobility upon release from hospital. Without wheelchairs, patients are transported home in an ambulance at their own cost.

- o A high/low desk was moved into ES McNally Room to accommodate persons with disabilities, and as an alternative to using the podium.

- o Paramedic Services investigated the addition of auto load systems in ambulance units to accommodate patients of different sizes for safe ambulance transport.

- o The Planning division designed and reviewed its updated website with accessibility as a top priority.

Goals

- o Completion of an AODA compliant elevator in the Perth County Courthouse facility. The elevator will provide better overall building-wide access and improve customer service.

- o Installation of a fully accessible washroom in the Perth County Courthouse facility.

- o 5 Huron renovation and connecting link installed that meets AODA standards. Roll out campus renovations with accessibility as a focus of the overall plan.

- o Public Works and Facilities will oversee the development and installation of an accessible pathway and bench at the Archives facility.

- o Continue to provide quarterly accessibility training sessions for County and Lower Tier staff.

- o Ensure the use of inclusive and plain language whenever possible in the development of new County policies and communications.

- o Continue to provide accessible options for meetings with applicants and stakeholders.

- o Continue to offer alternative delivery formats for programming and documents.

- Support divisions' plans to comply with and meet AODA requirements, while acknowledging impact on each division's current work plans.
- Assist with the development of recruitment materials, recruitment process, and communications surrounding the new Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (2022-2026). This Committee will be established, trained, and onboarded after County Council has been elected and onboarded.

The Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

- Mental Health First Aid training being provided to child care employees.
- Partnered with Gateway Centre of Excellence for Rural Health to offer "Lonely No More" training for Seniors and Rural individuals. Related information and resources are on the website available in an accessible format.
- Speaker system installed at front counter when barrier installed.
- Utilized our accessible facilities available for COVID-19 vaccine clinics.
- The North Perth Fire Department continued to provide all new recruits with IASR and Accessible Customer Service training.
- New microphones at the reception area have a new feature that will allow those with hearing devices to better hear and communicate.
- At the accessible reception area work station, there is an extra feature for hearing for those with hearing devices as well as we have purchased a wireless scanner which will allow us to scan invoices. To make tax payments easier for seniors or residents with mobility issues, staff have been going directly to their vehicles to assist with their transaction.
- Council meetings are livestreamed on YouTube.
- New accessibility pieces in the Library policy reflecting outcomes from the Accessibility report.
- Accessibility planning for 2022 municipal election.

Goals

- Ongoing Mental Health Facilitator training to child care workers.
- Continue offering LNM based on need.
- Continue to ensure new staff receive the appropriate AODA training.
- Continue to provide all North Perth Fire Department recruits with IASR and Accessible Customer Service training.
- Continue to update templates for accessibility.

- o Provide Mental Health First Aid Training to North Perth Fire Department Wellness Committee members.

- o The North Perth Public Library will investigate other payment strategies for fines/fees.

- o The North Perth Public Library will continue to bring in cost prohibitive collection pieces to reduce barriers to community participation.

- o Promote and enhance accessible customer service options to the public (e.g. online services).

The Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- o Implementation of hybrid Council meetings to allow community members to view/ participate virtually or in person.

- o Council meetings continue to be live streamed and our available for viewing on YouTube for those unable to attend Council meetings in-person. Closed-captioning has been available for the videos since January 2023.

- o Corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements.

- o Many corporate document templates have been updated to standards.

- o Implemented the use of www.cloudpermit.com to make the building permit application process more accessible.

- o Employees participated in training from Perth County regarding Accessible Customer Service and Terminology, Creating Accessible documents and the Dynamic Symbol of Access.

- o Accessibility plan reviewed and revised for the 2022 Municipal Election.

- o Continued to use and incorporate practices and procedures for communication and information sharing using multiple formats.

- o Continued to communicate that alternative formats are available.

- o Received grants to purchase large print and decodable books. Decodable books are books that contain only phonetic code (great for all reading levels, especially beginners).

- o Purchase several Launchpads and Wonderbooks for the library's physical collection.

- o Created 'how-to' videos for the e-library.

Goals

- o Continue to use the updates and tools provided by www.cloudpermit.com to further enhance customer service.

- o Ongoing review to ensure corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements as required.

- o Continue to encourage staff to assess for ways to improve customer service and streamline processes.

- o Continue to process of updating forms used by the Township to meet accessibility requirements.

The Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- o Promoted "Report It and Get Involved Perth South" platforms for resident engagement.

- o Posted municipal news and activities regularly to Facebook to communicate with entire community.

- o Council meetings are livestreamed and the addition of an OWL device in early 2023 has enhanced the audio and visual quality of the meetings to ensure greater accessibility.

Goals

- o Continue to provide accessible options for meetings with applicants and stakeholders.

- o Continue to participate in quarterly accessibility training sessions provided by the County.

- o Continue to update templates for accessibility.

- o Ongoing review to ensure corporate policies and procedures requirements meet standards and implementation of enhancements as required.

- o Digitize older documents, and work to make them more accessible.

- o Look to implement more options with cloud permit for clients (e.g. payment through the website).

The Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o Audio FM system installed in the Council Chambers.

- o Live streaming of Council meetings with closed captioning.

- o Distributed accessible fire safety material that met AODA standards.

- o Implemented Visiting Library Service for residents who cannot access West Perth Public Library.

- o Purchased a fully accessible fire safety house to allow all members of our community the opportunity to learn about fire safety.

- o Implemented Home Delivery Service for residents who cannot access West Perth Public Library.

- o Updated Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) disc collection at the Library for patrons with low vision.

Goals

- o Continue to provide internal staff training on the requirements of the accessibility standards in the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.

- o Continue to review services and remove barriers to access at the West Perth municipal office and facilities.

- o Continue with the distribution of accessible fire safety material and the use of the fully accessible fire safety house.

- o Expand the Library's large print, audio, and e-resource collections.

- o Offer Library programs off-site to residents unable to visit the building.

- o Introduce adult activity kits at the Library to engage adults in cognitive decline in interactive activities with caregivers.

Information and Communications Standard

Legislated Mandate

The Information and Communication Standards mandates all information and communication produced by an organization must be made available in alternative formats upon request. This Standard also includes the legislated requirement to make websites accessible.

Commitment

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

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

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth

Accomplishments

o   Review and audit of the County website completed to ensure content is as accessible as possible. Updates to the County websites were made to ensure information is accessible and broken links were removed.

o   County Council meetings have been livestreamed since April of 2020 for best ease of access for those who would like to watch. Recordings are available at www.youtube.com/user/PerthCountydotca to watch after Council meetings have finished. This allows for an additional level of transparency and accessibility regarding our County Council communications. Additionally, YouTube provides a number of integrated accessibility features such as adjustable playback speeds, automated closed captioning and adjustable viewer size.

o   Legislative Services introduced new iCompass software in 2019 for the creation of agenda packages. The software meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.

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

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

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

o   Planning division has reviewed and redesigned Planning Notices to ensure accessible formatting.

- Planning department purchased GeoCortex Software to update the County webGIS. GeoCortex Software provides enhanced access to end-users with disabilities, including full keyboard control, screen reader friendly, and other features to make mapping technology more accessible to users, regardless of their level of ability. GeoCortex Viewer or HTML5 conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

- The Planning division designed and reviewed its updated website with accessibility as a top priority.

- Delivery of Economic Development and Tourism communications in a variety of formats including physical marketing materials mailed directly to households and businesses.

- Updated the Wayfinding signage for the County Courthouse with accessibility considerations.

- Archives Staff converted approximately 50 sets of unique printed indexes and transcriptions of historic records to electronic files. These are now available on public computers in the Reading Room at Stratford-Perth Archives allowing researchers to adjust font size and/or use screen readers to access the contents.

- Microfiche copies of local directories for 1876-1997 converted to electronic files now available on public computers in Reading Room at Stratford-Perth Archives allowing researchers to adjust font size and/or use screen readers to access the contents.

- Archives established an ongoing program to convert paper finding aids, microfilmed and original records to accessible digital format available to visitors using public computers on-site and to remote researchers via the County website.

- Provided training sessions to all Lower Tier municipalities on the "Information and Communications Standard" with respect to WCAG 2.0 legislated standards for municipal operations and the upcoming 2021 compliance reporting deadline.

- Emergency Management: Partnered with Stratford Beacon Herald on a 24-page supplement. Over 24,000 copies distributed and worked with Accessibility Coordinator to include an article on Emergency Preparedness for Seniors and Persons with Special Needs. Ensured that the print was suitable with larger sans serif font and high contrast.

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

- Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to accessible formats
- Efforts to provide accessible/alternate formats at the Stratford-Perth Archives will be continued, upon request, considering new technologies for converting archival materials as they become available.
- Updated the Fire Evacuation plan and signage for the County Courthouse with accessibility considerations.
- Updated the Wayfinding signage for the County Courthouse with accessibility considerations.

Goals

- Work to ensure that documentation uploaded to the new County Internet Website and Intranet Website, is in an accessible format.
- With POA courts running remotely, this removes all physical barriers to persons attending court. Many courts have found the remote method extremely efficient and are hoping the Province will continue allowing this option in the future, either by way of full remote or hybrid courts.
- Continue to update templates for accessibility.
- Continue to work with County Staff and Lower Tier Municipalities to reinforce the creation of accessible documents and communications.
- The Planning Department will be working on a conversion of webGIS from OnPoint to GeoCortex, which is more accessible to more users.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

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

Goals

- Ongoing conversion of departmental templates to more accessible formats.

- Continue to develop and enhance the North Perth municipal website and other online platforms (e.g. social media channels, Your Say North Perth), including posted content, in order to meet and adhere to current accessibility standards.

- Monitor community needs and requests and update information on website as needed.

- The North Perth Fire Department (NPFD) will work towards ensuring all public fire and life safety material distributed are accessible.

- The NPFD will work towards completing a Community Risk Assessment in compliance with Ontario Regulation 378/18, which considers the fire safety needs of the all community members.

- Review accessibility and compatibility with screen readers for PDFs uploaded to website (policies and procedures).

- The North Public Library will use alt text for published library marketing and communication pieces.

- The North Perth Public Library will continue to pursue best methods for accessibility in provided.

- The North Perth Public Library will continue to seek and prioritize learning on reducing online barriers.

The Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- Ongoing website updates, reviewing website content.
- Council Report and other document templates updated to accessibility standards.
- Corporate information shared broadly using accessible social media platforms.
- Implementation of virtual council meetings to allow broad access.
- Installed a new telephone system providing advanced features for customer/staff accessibility.
- Microphones/sound system upgrades completed in the Council chambers.
- Purchased a fully accessible Fire Safety House to allow all members of our community the opportunity to learn about fire safety.
- Distributed accessible fire safety material that meets AODA standards.
- Purchase of a program to digitize older documents which will assist in providing greater accessibility to information and the ability to provide documents in alternate formats.

Goals

- o Continue to update website and document templates.

- o Continue to provide accessible fire safety material and use the accessible Fire Safety House in public education.

- o Provide training for staff on use of program to digitize older documents and implement process for updating the documents.

The Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o Closed captioning was introduced to Council and Committee meeting live streams.

- o By-law template was updated to an accessible format.

- o Burn permit application process moved to allow for online applications.

- o Establishment of online marriage license applications.

- o Accessible documents training for staff with focus on accessible documents on the website.

- o Accessible documents training for staff provided by County of Perth.

- o Implemented mobile printing at the Library as a remote print option off-site or from a mobile device.

- o Introduced the Library's new screen-responsive website, with adjustable font, high-contrast colours, and screen reader compatibility.

Goals

- o Continue review and update of website material and documents to ensure compliance with Information and Communications standards.

- o Promote "Alternate format made available upon request" on external documents.

- o Update Library public and staff computers with wide screens.

The Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- o Printed newsletters in January and August to be included with tax bill mail-outs to keep residents informed.

- o The Clerk's Department introduced new iCompass software in 2020 for the creation of agenda packages. The software meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.

Goals

  o Continue to enhance council meetings for improved accessibility for all members of the community. Working on having Council meetings livestreamed through YouTube for best ease of access for those who would like to watch. Meetings currently livestreamed on the Township Facebook page.

  o Ongoing review of Township website to ensure content that is being published is as accessible to all audiences as possible.

  o Continue to update form templates for best possible accessibility.

Employment Standard

Legislated Mandate

The Employment Standard speaks to organizations accommodating individuals throughout the employment cycle, beginning with the recruitment process.

Commitment

A commitment has been made by the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities to employment practices that ensure the process of finding, hiring and retaining employees who have disabilities is inclusive. The County and the Lower Tier Municipalities are all in compliance with the requirements of this standard. All of the requirements in the Employment Standard continue to be maintained by the County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities, including those pertaining to the following:

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

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

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth

Accomplishments:

  o Complete Cognitive Demands Analysis for Paramedic role, and include a Cognitive Functional Abilities Form with the Physical Functional Abilities Form.

These will help us better accommodate employees returning to work with cognitive restrictions, rather than solely physical.

- o Have accommodated many staff throughout the year, with both permanent and temporary disabilities, in order to return to or stay at work. In each case, an individualized plan is developed.

- o Created a new formalized process for accommodating injured workers and rehabilitating so they may return to work.

- o Have accommodated many staff throughout the year, with both permanent and temporary disabilities, in order to return to or stay at work. This is true during COVID-19 as well with more remote work options available for those who may not feel comfortable working in-office. In each case, an individualized plan is developed.

- o New staff at the County completed AODA training through the County's Moodle platform to ensure an understanding of all Accessibility Standards.

- o Human Resources has added an accessibility and inclusion statement to job postings.

- o Provide hiring managers with the opportunity to acknowledge personal biases that they may not be aware of by using the Harvard Implicit Association Test.

Goals

- o Complete Cognitive Demands Analysis for Paramedic role, and include a Cognitive Functional Abilities Form with the Physical Functional Abilities Form. These will help us better accommodate employees returning to work with cognitive restrictions, rather than solely physical.

- o Ensure all online recruitment is in an accessible format, and provide the option for alternate formats upon request.

The Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

- o Use of online recruitment available in an accessible format.
- o Evaluation of language in library recruitment.
- o All staff undergo accessibility training.
- o Offered interviews in a virtual format.

Goals

- o Continue to ensure recruitment for vacant positions is available in an accessible format.

- o Continue to provide new staff with accessibility training.

- o Continue to ensure compliance with all accessibility requirements of the employment standard.

- o AODA training rolled out to Council-appointed board and committee members.

The Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- o Ensure Ontario's Accessible Employment Standards are met regarding employment practices and accessibility in order to meet the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities.

- o All new and existing employees are provided training, on a regular basis, regarding legislation, legislative amendments and ongoing information campaigns to ensure.

- o Accessibility remains an active focus for employees in their work.

- o Purchased a cart for library staff to use when providing homebound services.

Goals

- o Ensure Ontario's Accessible Employment Standards are met regarding employment practices and accessibility in order to meet the needs of employees and job applicants with disabilities.

- o In addition to continuous, computer-based training and learning on the subject of Accessibility, the Township endeavors to engage employees in gaining a better understanding of Accessibility in the practical realm (i.e. hands-on-learning, lectures, workshops) to better understand less-visible Accessibility matters including but not limited to: Mental Health, Information Technology and Cultural and Language Barriers.

The Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o AODA Training completed with Council and Staff.

- o Standardized paragraph to offer accommodations for training and recruitment.

- o Introduced a scheduling app for Library staff, with adjustable font, colour-coded shifts, and screen reader compatibility.

- o Purchased adjustable office furniture for Library staff for ergonomic safety.

Goals

- o Health and Safety Audit to review process and procedures related to all aspects of worker activities and tasks, including accessibility.
- o Update staff workstations for ergonomic safety.

The Township of Perth South

Goals

- o Continue to work with Perth County Accessibility program to endeavour to have inclusive and accessible employment practices.
- o Continue to focus on ensuring compliance with all accessibility requirements of the employment standard.

Transportation Standard

Legislated Mandate

The Transportation Standard speaks to the physical requirements of both conventional and specialized transit vehicles as well as operational elements of the services. Some of the elements outlined are fare parity, eligibility for specialized transit and hours of operation.

Commitment

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

The County of Perth and its Lower Tier Municipalities currently offer the PC Connect public transportation service across the municipality. PC Connect is a public transit service that provides transportation throughout Perth County, Stratford, St. Marys, Kitchener/Waterloo and London. PC Connect provides affordable and accessible service on weekdays and Saturdays, and provides connections to other services such as GO Transit.

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth

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

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

[Southwest Healthline](#) [1]

This link is provided on the County of Perth website.

Perth County Community Transportation Network:

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

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

The joint project will involve the creation of an inter-regional transit service connecting London, St. Mary's, Stratford and Kitchener. Service between Listowel and Kitchener is also planned. A separate but related commitment will create a transit system to link the communities of Stratford, St. Marys, Mitchell, Sebringville, Monkton, Atwood, Milverton, Listowel and Millbank. Coordination with other transit systems (e.g. GO Transit, VIA) is a priority consideration.

Accomplishments

- o Offered service on fully accessible buses with high floor ramp access and capacity for 2 wheelchairs.

- o Operated fleet that are equipped with lifting devices, steps, grab bars and handrails, the appropriate signage required, as well as priority seating.

- o Provided free service to all support persons riding PC Connect, and welcomed support animals on board.

- o Provided route and schedule information through a variety of accessible channels such as the County's fully compliant corporate website.

- o Developed and distributed a fully accessible PC Connect route brochure in both print & PDF format.

- o Co-hosted an internal Accessibility Information Session on the Transportation Standard and PC Connect Accessibility Features.

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

Goals

- o Continue to offer fully accessible transportation options.

Duties of Lower Tier Municipalities – Specialized Transportation Services

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

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

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

- **Parallel Transit** – Located in the City of Stratford, but will travel to locations in Perth County
- **Easy Ride** – Located in the City of Stratford, but will travel to locations in Perth County
- **St. Marys & Area Mobility Services** – Located in St. Marys, but will travel to locations in Perth County.

Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

- o Partnerships to support PC Connect and VON EasyRide.

- o Bench installed for North Perth library stop for the PC Connect to provide accessible seating for riders.

Goals

- o Continue to consult with stakeholders regarding the provision of on-demand accessible transportation services.

- o Continue to promote accessible transportation options available in the community (e.g. PC Connect).

- o The North Perth Public Library will support PC Connect services by providing maps and support.

- o Continue to work with licensed taxicab companies to ensure all AODA requirements are being met.

The Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- o Ensure new buildings and additions/renovations meet the accessibility requirements regulated by the Ontario Building Code; specifically, the parking requirements listed in 3.8.

- o Continued Township support for the Community Outreach Services transportation program with provides transportation for citizen who are elderly or have a disability.

Goals

- o Ensure new buildings and additions/renovations meet the accessibility requirements regulated by the Ontario Building Code; specifically, the parking requirements listed in 3.8.

- o Ongoing maintenance of Township transportation assets to ensure accessible and safe areas.

- o Continued support of PC Connect Bus Service with provision of bus stop locations within Perth East.

The Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- o By-law 38-2018 was passed requiring any taxi company that is licensed can operate in the Municipality of West Perth, including accessible taxis. This creates a larger pool of accessible taxis for people with disabilities.

- o Mitchell and Area Mobility Bus – residents of West Perth, and anyone who can show proof of eligibility in any other paratransit service in Ontario, can use this service.

- o Accessible Bus Stops (PC Connect) - worked in coordination for the identification and installation of bus stop locations within West Perth to provide accessible and safe community transportation accessible bus stops.

- o Ongoing replacement and repair work to sidewalks incorporated into the Sidewalk Master Plan, including tactile plates.

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

- o Lions Park Trail system loop was completed.

Goals

- o Support rebrand of Mitchell and Area Mobility Bus.

- Continue ongoing replacement and repair work to sidewalks incorporated into the Sidewalk Master Plan, including tactile plates.

The Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- Supported the St. Marys and Area Mobility Bus service program with grant funding.
- Supported and promoted Perth County PC Connect.

Goals

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

Design of Public Spaces and Built Environment

Legislated Mandate

The Built Environment Standard was divided into two parts, one for outdoor components and one for interior spaces. The outdoor elements are now referred to as Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) in the IARS. The interior elements as they relate to accessibility are encompassed in the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

Commitment

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment focus on removing barriers in public spaces and buildings.

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

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

Ontario's Building Code has been amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, new construction and renovations were subject to updated accessibility requirements.

Maintenance of Public Spaces

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

County and the Lower Tier Municipalities to ensure the safety of citizens and to prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

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

Please refer to Appendices A through E for detailed Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces for the County and each of the Lower Tier Municipalities.

Progress

The Corporation of the County of Perth

Accomplishments

- o Beginning in April 2020, County Council started live streaming all Council meetings due to restrictions placed on gathering across Ontario and Canada. In the future (beyond the COVID-19 pandemic) virtual streaming for Council may be an alternative access point for public who would like to view/join the meetings.

- o Other County Committees followed suit, moving their meetings to a digital teleconference format. Again, this digital format may be an alternative access point for public and for Committee members who would like to attend meetings.

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

- o Staffing shifts at the Courthouse allowed for Planning and Economic Development to move to Level 2 at 1 Ontario St. (Scotiabank building), which is accessible to the public via an elevator.

- o Installed automatic door opener at Service Ontario (5 Huron) Public bathroom.

- o Completed the ramp replacement project at 5 Huron Street, which meets requirements in the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public Spaces Standards, including slope, tactile plates, and handrails.

- o Installation of Central Reception area, which has two customer service counter heights to best serve all visitors at the 1 Huron St. Courthouse location.

- o Wayfinding system placed on the floor at the Level 1 entrance along with 6-foot distance markers for COVID-19 safety. The wayfinding system has been designed both with colour and patterns to allow for maximized accessibility for visually impaired visitors.

- o Organized an educational forum for staff and committee members on "Heritage Marrying Accessibility" to facilitate communications and an understanding of

different priorities and legislated requirements for Accessibility Advisory Committees and Heritage Committees when reviewing site plans.

o Ongoing reviews by the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee of accessibility plans, recreational trails, exterior paths of travel, and site plans.

o Remodel 1 Huron level 1 bathrooms to fully accessible/gender neutral bathrooms.

o Resurface 1 Huron Street parking lot and add more accessible parking.

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

o Installation of accessible signage throughout 1 Huron Street and other facilities.

o Installation of a proper elevator at 1 Huron Street that can be independently operated to replace operator-assisted lift.

o Upgrade any accessibility needs indicated by accessibility audit conducted by access.

o Ongoing reference and updates to Maintenance Procedures for the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

o Purchase of a height adjustable table/podium for County Courthouse Council Chambers.

o Add power door operator (PDO) to McNally Room A at the Paramedic Services Building.

o Consider options for better access within the County Courthouse Council Chambers.

o Installed automatic door openers on the universal washroom on the 3rd level of the County Courthouse.

o Emergency call buttons installed in universal washrooms in County Courthouse, at Paramedic Services building on Douro Street in Stratford, and a 5 Huron Street (Service Ontario). The doors to the universal washrooms will unlock when the emergency call buttons are pressed, so that assistance can be provided.

o Intercoms were installed on the outside of the County Courthouse building both at the Level 1 entrance and at the St. Andrew entrance. These intercoms ring through to the Operator phone line who, using security cameras, can assess if the person at the entrance needs to be let in remotely. In the event that a person needs accessibility accommodations made or needs to visit Level 2 at the Courthouse, the St. Andrews entrance can be utilized and Central Reception staff can be alerted to a customer outside of the doors using the intercom and security

cameras. A remote button in Central Reception can unlock the door to allow the customer access to the building.

- o Intercom installed at Archives front door allows visitors to speak with staff from outside of building if needed.

- o Upgraded drainage to site, renovations to stone dust path have improved accessibility to Archives Reflections Garden. Will be adding a welcome sign with information about the path and a QR code link to equivalent information on-line and installing accessible seating summer 2022.

- o Provincial Offenses Administration upgraded its existing wicket, installed a second wicket, and ensured the design included varying customer service counter heights to provide exceptional service to all Courthouse visitors needing POA services.

The Municipality of North Perth

Accomplishments

- o Pedestrian crossovers installed with audible controls, tactile warning plates on Wallace Street South at Krotz Street and on Wallace Street North at Inkerman Street.

- o Accessible components included as part of new draft Transportation Master Plan, including accessible design, traffic calming, active transport design and policy recommendations.

- o Expansion of trail system between Listowel and Gowanstown.

- o With paving of WWTP, administration building is now wheelchair accessible.

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

- o The reception area at the Listowel Fire Station was upgraded to include a microphone and accessible mirrors were added to the washrooms at the Listowel and Atwood Fire Stations.

- o Continue to build trail network within active transportation areas.

Goals

- o Additional pedestrian crossings to be reviewed for Wallace North Corridor in conjunction with North East Development Plan.

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

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

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

- Barrier-free access to the universal washroom at the Listowel Fire Station.

- Accessible doors and ramps at St. Mary's child care centre between program rooms and playground.

- Have a lens of accessibility for any future child care building spaces that happen in North Perth.

The Township of Perth East

Accomplishments

- Accessible trail paved at Perth East Recreation Complex and trail from Mill Street to Line 61.

- Paving of Mill Street recreation trail to allow for greater accessibility.

- Many Perth East trails have been upgraded or designed for better accessibility.

- Installation of hands-free faucets, automatic door opening and motion lights at public facilities (Administration Building, Perth East Public Library, Perth East Recreation Complex and Shakespeare Hall).

- Accessible washrooms have been built at Newton Park.

- Accessible washroom included in the new Perth East Recreation Complex Pavilion construction.

- Accessible features have been included in the new playground at Morningdale Park and Lyle Yost Park.

- Ensure new buildings and additions/ renovations meet the accessibility requirements regulated by the Ontario Building Code.

Goals

- Continued consideration during design and retrofitting of public spaces consistent with AODA

- Address accessible needs at Morningdale Park Pavilion

- Include any required features at Greenwood Park if park revitalization is completed

- Replace sidewalks with accessible features

- Continue to ensure new buildings and additions/ renovations meet the accessibility requirements regulated by the Ontario Building Code.

The Municipality of West Perth

Accomplishments

- New accessible municipal office space opening targeted for August 15, 2022.

- Installed Power Door button at the Dublin Hall.

- Review of signage and timing at Ontario Rd and St. George St. intersection.

- Address sidewalk approaches and installation of Tactile Walking Surface indicators at curb depressions.

- Wellington Street Bridge sidewalk access is now accessible with no drop edge.

- New accessible chair lift purchased for the Mitchell Lion's Pool

- Water wheelchair and gum drop splashpad water feature to allow for accessible play.

- Accessible bucket swing added to Optimist Park.

- Tunnel under the new Henry St. bridge includes a trail that links to the Lion's Park trail to create a loop trail.

- West Perth Fire Station constructed with accessible design consideration and consultation with the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee.

- Complete Canada's 150th Legacy Project Gazebo at the Lion's Park in Mitchell which is fully accessible.

- Received a grant to install a power door operator at the Brodhagen Community Centre.

- Supported the Optimist Club of Mitchell for the accessible, inclusive, multi-generational playground installation at Lions Park.

- New accessible Administration Office building started construction in September.

- Lions Pool power door installed and an accessible washroom was built.

- Rearranged Library shelving and furniture to ensure accessible foot traffic flow.

- Keterson Park Master Plan development with a commitment to the accessibility, safety, and comfort within the Municipality's parks system. Plan includes the installation of an accessible pathway around the ball diamonds.

Goals

- o Construct Keterson Park Pavilion with a commitment to accessible features and installation of an accessible pathway around the ball diamonds.

- o Continue to implement built environment standards with Ontario Provincial Standards, Specifications, guidelines and to consult with Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee on proposed developments.

The Township of Perth South

Accomplishments

- o Reviewed audiovisual equipment in council chambers and upgraded for better accessibility.

- o Second lift of asphalt placed on Downie Optimist Hall parking lot and parking spaces now painted and includes additional accessible parking spaces with larger dimensions.

- o Downie Optimist Hall renovations completed and include barrier free doors to kitchen. New kitchen cabinets installed and meet accessibility standards. New stage has been installed and a ramp attachment is currently being sourced to ensure accessibility.

- o Participated in Perth County webinar for Dynamic Symbol of Access.

Goals

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

- o Old Township office to be renovated in 2023 to include accessible entry ways and floor plan layout (funding approval received in 2021).

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

Appendix A: County of Perth

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the County of Perth has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible public space elements maintained by the County of Perth include:

- Recreational trails
- Exterior paths of travel, such as walkways, stairs, and ramps, where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code
- Accessible parking areas
- Obtaining services

The County of Perth procedures include the following:

- Managers of the workforce areas responsible for maintaining accessible elements in the County of Perth public spaces, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, will develop preventative maintenance schedules, as required, to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

- To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place on County of Perth premises, the County of Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- County of Perth personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on County of Perth premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the County of Perth Public Works Department, so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the

workforce area responsible for maintaining the elements and, upon review, arrangements will be made to dispatch the appropriate crew(s), personnel and/or contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

- In the event the County of Perth receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to the applicable workforce area, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

- To the extent possible, County of Perth personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on County of Perth premises, the County of Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Appendix B: Municipality of North Perth

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Municipality of North Perth has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Municipality of North Perth include:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel, such as walkways, stairs, and ramps, where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code
- Accessible parking areas
- Obtaining services

The Municipality of North Perth procedures include the following:

- Managers of the workforce areas responsible for maintaining accessible elements in the Municipality of North Perth public spaces, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, will develop preventative maintenance schedules, as required, to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

- To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place on Municipality of North Perth premises, the Municipality of North Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- Municipality of North Perth personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on Municipality of North Perth premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the Municipality of North Perth Public Works Department, so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the workforce area responsible for maintaining the elements and, upon review, arrangements will be made to dispatch the appropriate crew(s), personnel and/or contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

- In the event the Municipality of North Perth receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to the applicable workforce area, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

- To the extent possible, Municipality of North Perth personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on Municipality of North Perth premises, the Municipality of North Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Appendix C: Township of Perth East

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Township of Perth East has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Township of Perth East include:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel, such as walkways, stairs, and ramps, where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code
- Accessible parking areas
- Obtaining services

The Township of Perth East procedures include the following:

- Managers of the workforce areas responsible for maintaining accessible elements in the Township of Perth East public spaces, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, will develop preventative maintenance schedules, as required, to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

- To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place

on Township of Perth East premises, the Township of Perth East website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- Township of Perth East personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on Township of Perth East premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the Township of Perth East Public Works Department, so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the workforce area responsible for maintaining the elements and, upon review, arrangements will be made to dispatch the appropriate crew(s), personnel and/or contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

- In the event the Township of Perth East receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to the applicable workforce area, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

- To the extent possible, Township of Perth East personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on Township of Perth East premises, the Township of Perth East website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Appendix D: Township of Perth South

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Township of Perth South has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Township of Perth South include:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel, such as walkways, stairs, and ramps, where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code
- Accessible parking areas
- Obtaining services

The Township of Perth South procedures include the following:

- Managers of the workforce areas responsible for maintaining accessible elements in the Township of Perth South public spaces, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, will develop preventative maintenance schedules, as required, to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

- To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place

on Township of Perth South premises, the Township of Perth South website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- Township of Perth South personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on Township of Perth South premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the Township of Perth South Public Works Department, so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the workforce area responsible for maintaining the elements and, upon review, arrangements will be made to dispatch the appropriate crew(s), personnel and/or contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

- In the event the Township of Perth South receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to the applicable workforce area, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

- To the extent possible, Township of Perth South personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on Township of Perth South premises, the Township of Perth South website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Appendix E: Municipality of West Perth

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements in Public Spaces

Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Municipality of West Perth has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces. Accessible public space elements maintained by the Municipality of West Perth include:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel, such as walkways, stairs, and ramps, where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code
- Accessible parking areas
- Obtaining services

The Municipality of West Perth procedures include the following:

- Managers of the workforce areas responsible for maintaining accessible elements in the Municipality of West Perth public spaces, in conjunction with appropriate personnel, will develop preventative maintenance schedules, as required, to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

- To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place on Municipality of West Perth premises, the Municipality of West Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

- Municipality of West Perth personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on Municipality of West Perth premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to the Municipality of West Perth Public Works Department, so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the workforce area responsible for maintaining the elements and, upon review, arrangements will be made to dispatch the appropriate crew(s), personnel and/or contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

- In the event the Municipality of West Perth receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to the applicable workforce area, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

- In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

- To the extent possible, Municipality of West Perth personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on Municipality of West Perth premises, the Municipality of West Perth website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.