



## **Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report**

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**A Summary of Middlesex County and Local Municipal Partners Accomplishments  
towards Accessibility in 2022**

## **Objectives and Purpose**

This is the sixth Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report update of Middlesex County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2016, Middlesex County released its second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The plan outlined our strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which included how we will meet phased-in requirements under the AODA. The third Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be released in early 2022, detailing the progress made in the last 5 years, goals set for the next 5 years, and timelines for completion.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2022 to implement the strategy outlined in our Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2027.

## **Compliance Reporting**

Middlesex County and its Local Municipal Partners filed Accessibility Compliance Reports in 2021 with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. The next compliance reporting period is in 2023.

## **Middlesex County's Commitment Statement**

Middlesex County's statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the County to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The County's statement of commitment is publicly available on the County website.

Middlesex County is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the County will:

- Ensure policies, practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County.
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods, services, programs and facilities.
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

The County will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, the County has established, implemented and will maintain a Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan outlines our strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers to people with

disabilities. The new plan will act as a roadmap for the next 5 years with regards to accessibility, and details the goals and timelines for implementing the initiatives.

## **Continuous Achievements in Accessibility**

The County and LMPs focus on removing barriers which may exist in our buildings and facilities, while ensuring that new buildings, leases, and renovations do not create any new barriers

- Middlesex County's Accessibility Policy was updated in 2016, outlining what the County has done to comply with the 2016 Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations and what our customers and employees can expect as we move forward
  - Local Municipal Partners also made revisions to their accessibility policies to ensure compliance with the IASR and AODA
  - The Accessibility Policy is consistently reviewed to ensure it reflects industry best practice
- Middlesex County Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives while representing all Local Municipal Partners across the County
- The County and LMPs continue to comply with the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* including continuing to train staff, volunteers and third parties who interact on behalf of the County on an ongoing basis
- All library branches continue to provide accessible materials and communication supports upon request
  - In addition, the library has several accessible materials and resources available including but not limited to: large print books, audio books, Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) Library loan access, and accessible computer workstations at the Strathroy, Lucan, Dorchester and Parkhill Library Branches. (Accessible Workstation includes: ZoomText with high-contrast, large print keyboard; Dragon Naturally Speaking and joystick mouse)
- The County and LMPs have policies in place to ensure the public is notified of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process and hiring process
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action
- The County and its Local Municipal Partners are continuously identifying opportunities to improve accessibility to municipal services and routinely identify funding opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusion

## Accessibility Highlights of 2022

- **The County of Middlesex achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Provided training on document accessibility to staff to ensure compliance (ongoing)
  - Created an Accessibility Content Style and Design Guide, and a Creating Accessible Documents Guide
  - Launched the new fully accessible Middlesex County website
  - Continued making changes to PDF documents posted online to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
  - Provided training to LMPs, as requested, on document accessibility
  - Reviewed LMP site plans for ongoing accessibility projects
  - Reviewed the HR Policy 5.01 Middlesex Accessibility Policy and made recommendations to be incorporated in the upgraded policy in 2023
  - Provided training on the AODA and OHRC to various LMP staff
- **Middlesex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Reviewed the County of Middlesex Accessibility Policy to ensure it meets industry best practice
  - Approved the drafts of the Accessibility Content Style and Design Guide and Creating Accessible Documents Guide
  - Consulted on the design of the Accessible and Inclusive playground in Dorchester Park
  - Made recommendations for accessible on-street parking projects
  - Consulted on the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Center renovation plans and addition
  - Reviewed LMPs Accessible Election Plan to ensure it meets all legislative requirements
- **The Township of Adelaide Metcalfe achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Ongoing Accessibility updates to the Municipal Website ([www.adelaidemetcalfe.on.ca](http://www.adelaidemetcalfe.on.ca)) to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
  - Construction of new accessible sidewalks along a portion of Second Street to Grogast Court to provide travel to the Gemini Arena and the Strathroy District High School/Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School located in the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
  - Accessibility improvements to Kerwood Park including additional accessible pathways to and around the playground
  - Paved the parking lot at Kerwood Park which included accessible parking spots
  - Improved accessibility in the washroom pavilion facility at Kerwood park including the installation of adult change tables and emergency buttons

- **The Township of Lucan Biddulph achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Continue to remove of non-standard Sidewalk and replacement with AODA compliant sidewalk and expand sidewalk network, creating connections to trails and other sidewalk facilities completing missing links
  - Completion of Accessibility Audit for Main Street Lucan and Granton Line, Granton.
  - AODA Compliant Notice Templates for public planning meetings
  - Provided AODA Legislation –Customer Service Training for all staff / new hires / others identified in legislations
  - Increased service delivery methods through electronic means (accepting applications through email, using DocuSign to sign 3rd party agreements, etc.) while still maintaining original processes to serve the public when needed
  - Continue to coordinate livestreamed electronic council meetings
  - On-going training is provided to staff on creating accessible documents Feedback Process
  - Successfully held 2022 municipal election via internet and telephone voting and voter help centre had accessible voting station with lowered counter
    - Developed an Accessible Municipal Election Plan for the Municipal Election which included accessible voting locations with information on entrances and parking
    - This plan outlined voting assistance, availability of election materials in alternative formats as well as customer service and staff training
  - The Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Project renovation and revitalization broke ground in March of 2022
    - Improvements included barrier free change rooms, access to the stands through a new elevator and accessible washrooms
    - Community Centre project will continue with a goal of barrier free access to the facility and its activities
    - In the Fall of 2022, the Council of Lucan Biddulph approved a renovation of the Lucan outdoor pool located at the Community Centre
      - Utilizing the new barrier free change rooms and ramp access to the pool deck residents can take advantage of the new ramp access and cushioned membrane in the shallow portion of the pool

- **The Municipality of Middlesex Centre achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification of the Komoka Wellness Centre, which recognizes this facility as having exceeded accessibility requirements for a public space.
  - New asphalt trails in Weldon Park. The playground, pavilion and washroom facility are now all interconnected by an accessible asphalt trail.
  - Construction of new universal washroom at Heritage Park
  - New accessible playground and hard surface trails for Deerhaven Park
  - New accessible playground and hard surface trails for Kilworth Optimist Park
  - New curbing with zero entry at Caverhill Park and new asphalt trail leading to playground. Allows easier access to playground and zero entry curbing meets accessibility requirements for playground.
  - New motion door opener for YMCA entrance and hall way entrance
  - Painting of zero entry exterior curbing and railings at Wellness Centre
  - New open single roll toilet paper dispensers in accessible washrooms
  - Continuation of hard surface trails further enhancing accessibility throughout the Komoka Park trails
  - Provided AODA Legislated Customer Service Training for newly hired staff
  - Continued updates to municipal website to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
  - Replacement of substandard sidewalk with AODA compliant sidewalk on Towerline Street In Delaware
  - Expanded the sidewalk network in Delaware and Komoka
  - Added a Pedestrian Cross over on Komoka Road at St Clair Ave
  - Facilitation of an accessible 2022 Municipal and School Board Election. Accessible voting methods and communications. Election Accessibility Procedures, Guides and accessible Voting Help Centre.
  - Municipal Office Renovation, including new accessible council chambers and washrooms
  - Ongoing live streaming of all Council meetings, with closed captioning and alternative agenda and report formats available. Electronic, telephone and in-person participation permitted at Council meetings to ensure accessible attendance options
  - Expanded service delivery of online based building applications through Cloud Permit. This program has been expanded to included planning and development applications. The technology allows members of the public to apply, manage and stay up to date on permit applications.

- **The Municipality of North Middlesex achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Had accessibility training provided by the Accessibility Coordinator to Roads staff and staff at the Municipality on the AODA, IASR, and OHRC
  - A daily accessibility checklist at the Shared Services Facility was completed for the municipal election period, no issues were identified
- **The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Conducted a site walkthrough for the Appin Playground and incorporated accessible features in the design of the playground including seating, accessible walkways, accessible parking, and playground equipment
    - Timeline for completion of the project is April 2023
  - Did a walkthrough of the Train Station and completed renovations including the addition of an accessible ramp with proper railings to provide access to the deck and front entrance
  - Upgraded the municipal sidewalks to ensure AODA compliance
  - Working on implementing an accessible lift for pool programs
  - Added an accessible ramp to provide wheelchair access to the front entrance of the Arena
  - Discussions began regarding accessible upgrades for Middlemiss park
  - Recommendations made to include accessible on-street parking on various Municipal main roads, project to be completed in 2023
- **The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Installed a number of benches (6) throughout the community to the standard approved by the Advisory Committee
  - Reconfigured Sensory Park bench cement pads to comply with AODA
  - Wood Fibre top up on playgrounds (ongoing) to ensure accessibility
  - Have designed two parks/playgrounds with AODA components, yet to have public consultation or Advisory Committee consultation
  - Regular website checks for accessibility
  - Closed captioning for council meetings
  - Drafting and adhering to an accessibility plan for the conduction of the municipal election
  - Updated planning application forms and guidelines for AODA compliance
  - Draft design of a park pavilion with sidewalks and trails in the Fairgrounds Recreation Complex. Yet to have advisory committee consultation or Council approval
- **The Municipality of Thames Centre achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Administration
    - Accessible 2022 Municipal Election

- Coordinated Document Accessibility Training for 18 employees (creating accessible documents to ensure ongoing compliance with the IASR WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements)
    - Conducted virtual and in-person Council meetings
    - Completed Joint Accessibility 5 Year Plan with the County
    - Continue to ensure municipal information on website and social media is accessible
    - Continue to provide AODA training for all new hires, committee member and council members at onboarding stage
  - Public Works
    - Installation of tactile plates on newly constructed sidewalks (ie. Oakwood Dr/Ross Ave/Patricia Ave/David St/Countryside Ln)
    - Tactile plates (also known as *Detectable Warning Plates*) are a system of textured ground surface indicators found on sidewalks, stairs, and platforms to assist people who are visually impaired effectively navigate the surrounding environment
  - Community Services and Facilities
    - Introduced wayfinding technology to some of our core recreation areas (Dorchester Park, Thorndale Park, FlightExec Centre and Thorndale Lions C.C.) which enables cell phone users to access two free smartphone apps, whereby BlindSquare and GoodMaps apps provide audio description of surroundings, directions, distance to specific amenities (washrooms, water fountains, benches, exits, etc.) and other information that will be useful for the visually impaired, based on GPS location of the phone
    - Addition of an inclusive and accessible playground at Dorchester Park, including not only accessible ramps and play features, but also tactile plates where nearby sidewalks approach road, added flashing light crosswalk, along with curbs cut for additional accessible parking spaces
    - Added 8 AODA picnic tables to our parks
  - Planning and Development Services
    - Ongoing usage of CityWide Building Permit module - supports a more accessible application process for the public
- **Village of Newbury achieved the following in 2022:**
  - Started using a standardized font for all written communications (Arial 12 point), including council minutes and by-laws
  - An accommodation clause was incorporated into the job posting during the year



- The election was traditional ballot method but consideration was given to ballots being used (white on black) with a larger font
  - All voting was held in Council Chambers in the Municipal Office which provides has accessible parking and entrance
  - Print magnifiers were available at the voting station

## **Availability of the Plan and Status Report**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be accessed through Middlesex County's website: [Middlesex County Accessibility Page](#).

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**Accessible formats and/or communication supports available upon request.**