



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: February 16, 2021
Submitted by: Sam McFarlane, Accessibility Coordinator
SUBJECT: 2020 ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT

BACKGROUND:

The County of Middlesex is required to prepare an annual accessibility status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategies outlined in the multi-year accessibility plan.

ANALYSIS:

The County's second multi-year accessibility plan was adopted by Middlesex County Council in 2016 and will expire at the end of 2021. Over this 5-year period, on an annual basis, County staff are required to provide an update to County Council on the progress made towards obtaining the goals outlined in the Multi-year Accessibility Plan. This report will outline the measures taken to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) as well as Ontario Regulation 191/11 - Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Highlights of the status report include:

- Enabling Accessibility Fund (Federal grant opportunity for funding up to \$100,000) application support provided to multiple local municipal partners
 - Successful in securing funding working with the Municipality of North Middlesex to make significant accessibility upgrades to the Ailsa Craig Community Centre
- Significant accessibility upgrades installed at the Municipality of North Middlesex's Council chambers including audio (voice amplification and improved acoustics) and video components to build a more accessible Council experience for members of the public and members of Council

- Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee consultation and review of the following projects:
 - Strathroy Public Library Renovation
 - Douglas B. Weldon Park lighting & asphalt project
 - Caverhill Park swing bays
 - Denfield Park play structure replacement
 - Kilworth Heights West Park
 - Poplar Hill Park project
 - Ilderton Library addition
- New sidewalk system constructed in the Napperton Drive and Pike Road area in the Municipality of Adelaide-Metcalfe, meeting exterior paths of travel requirements under the IASR
- Significant built environment upgrades across the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc including
 - Installation of a mobility-device friendly trail system & 2 inclusive, barrier free swings in Yorkview Community Park
 - Fully accessible universal washroom upgrades & non-contact barrier free door operators installed at the Gemini Sportsplex
 - Accessible playground installed at Sensory Park utilizing a spectrum of different sensory play options, providing unique and diverse play opportunities for those of all abilities
- Community Services and Facilities upgrades at the Municipality of Thames Centre including:
 - Public pool renovations including barrier-free access with a new in-pool ramp & building entrance accessibility upgrades (barrier-free ramp into the building, increased doorway width, new accessible partitions and barrier-free reception counter)
 - Accessible walking trail installed at Thorndale Park & Slo-Pitch City
 - Barrier-free stops in Dorchester and Thorndale as part of the County Transit initiative

As outlined in the attached status report, the County will continue to remove barriers to people with disabilities. These efforts will be communicated to County Council through the development of a multi-year accessibility plan, and annual status reports.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
Cultivating Community Vitality	Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and support community wellness• Innovate social and community services• Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities
Connecting Through Infrastructure	Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commit to a sound asset management strategy to maintain and fund critical infrastructure
Strengthening Our Economy	Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract visitors to Middlesex County• Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County
Promoting Service Excellence	Innovate and transform municipal service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations• Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities• Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Annual Accessibility Status Report be approved as presented and posted on the Middlesex County website.

Attachment



Annual Accessibility Status Report

A SUMMARY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION IN 2020

Objectives and Purpose

This is the fifth 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.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2020 to implement the strategy outlined in our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Compliance Reporting

Middlesex County filed its fifth Accessibility Compliance Report in 2019 with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

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 will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan will outline the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

Continuous Achievements in Accessibility

- The County focuses 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.
- Middlesex County Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives while representing all local municipal partners across the County.
- The County continues 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.)
- Notifying the public of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action.

Highlights of 2020

- Enabling Accessibility Fund (Federal grant opportunity for funding up to \$100,000) application support provided to multiple local municipal partners
 - Successful in securing funding working with the Municipality of North Middlesex to make significant accessibility upgrades to the Ailsa Craig Community Centre
- Ontario Trillium Foundation: Resilient Communities Fund application support provided to local municipal partners – applications pending review
- Ministry for Seniors & Accessibility Compliance Audit support provided to multiple local municipal partners - compliant responses outstanding
- Significant accessibility upgrades to the Municipality of North Middlesex's Council chambers including audio (voice amplification and improved acoustics) and video components to build a more accessible Council experience for members of the public and members of Council
- Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee consultation and review on the following projects:
 - Strathroy Public Library Renovation
 - Douglas B. Weldon Park lighting & asphalt project
 - Caverhill Park swing bays
 - Denfield Park play structure replacement
 - Kilworth Heights West park
 - Poplar Hill Park project
 - Ilderton Library Addition
- Web services RFP issued to support County and participating local municipal partners. RFP includes Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA requirements being met for new website projects
- New sidewalk system constructed in the Napperton Drive and Pike Road area in the Municipality of Adelaide-Metcalfe, meeting exterior paths of travel requirements under the IASR
- Significant built environment upgrades across the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc including
 - Installation of a mobility-device friendly trail system & 2 inclusive, barrier free swings in Yorkview Community Park

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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](#) or <http://www.middlesex.ca/living-here/accessibility>

Contact Information

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Accessible formats and communication supports available upon request.