



**UNITED COUNTIES OF STORMONT, DUNDAS AND
GLENGARRY**

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2021-2026

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Mission Statement

“The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is committed to providing services in a manner that provides equal opportunity to all residents and visitors accessing and using municipal services within the responsibility of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. The County Accessibility Plan is intended to identify, remove and prevent all barriers that may impede such equal opportunity.”

Commitment to Accessibility Planning

Improving accessibility is important for all residents of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. It is not only important, but it is the right thing to do given that 1.85 million Ontarians or over 15% of Ontario's population has a disability, including more than 40% of people over the age of 65. This number will only increase as the population ages.

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to facilities and services for people with disabilities.
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plans.
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

Definition of Persons with Disabilities

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* defines persons with disabilities in the following manner, which is the same definition used in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

A "disability" is:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, includes, but is not limited to:
 - diabetes mellitus;
 - epilepsy;
 - a brain injury;
 - any degree of paralysis;
 - amputation;
 - lack of physical co-ordination;
 - blindness or visual impediment;
 - deafness or hearing impediment;
 - muteness or speech impediment; or
 - physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or

- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

Accessibility Legislation

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

In 2005, the Government of Ontario passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). Its goal is to make Ontario accessible for people with disabilities by 2025 by creating, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people living with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. The AODA will be discussed in greater detail throughout this plan.

The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code

The AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) work together to promote equality and accessibility. The Code states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and that their needs must be accommodated.

Under the Code, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry has a legal obligation to accommodate any person with a disability regardless of whether they are an employee, volunteer, resident or visitor. The duty to accommodate means that wherever unequal treatment or discrimination exists, it must be remedied unless the remedy would cause undue hardship. The Code has primacy over the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act legislation.

Federal Accessibility Legislation – Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81)

On June 20, 2018 the Federal Government introduced Bill C-81 the Accessible Canada Act: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada. The Act’s stated purpose is to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction. Under this legislation, organizations under federal jurisdiction will be required to follow accessibility regulations, develop accessibility plans and will be required to establish processes for receiving and dealing with feedback about their accessibility plan and barriers that a person may have encountered in dealing with the organization.

Although this legislation does not directly impact municipal operations, it does highlight the Government's commitment to improve accessibility for all Canadians in all levels of government.

Jurisdiction of the Plan

The Plan referred to in this document is under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Corporation of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, facilitated by the Corporate Services Department. The Municipal contact is the Director of Corporate Services/Clerk with contact information provided below:

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Executive Summary

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* outlines the requirement for municipalities to establish, maintain and document a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to outline the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities by providing for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the Province.

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to being an inclusive and accessible service provider and workplace.

This Multi-Year Plan is based upon requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. Under AODA, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare Multi-Year Accessibility Plans. The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. The standards are contained in one regulation called the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, also known as the IASR. Currently, the IASR contains standards in the following five (5) areas:

1. Customer Service;
2. Information and Communications;
3. Employment;
4. Transportation; and
5. Design of Public Spaces.

This Multi-Year Plan will only examine customer service; information and communications and employment. Transportation will be excluded as the County does not provide transportation services and the only public space is the County Administration Building which is covered in Appendix B.

In accordance with the AODA, all County facilities will be compliant with the relevant requirements by 2025.

The Accessibility Standards produced by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility is as follows:

Integrated Accessibility Standards (Regulation 191/11)

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11, entitled, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" (Regulation), came into force on July 1, 2011. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Design of Public Spaces and Transportation. As noted earlier, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces is not applicable to the County and is not included in this plan.

Some of the requirements are: developing policies to ensure that our communication is accessible to people with disabilities; ensuring we are able to provide information in a format that considers an individual's disability; ensuring that our website is compliant with applicable standards; and developing policies on ensuring potential employees with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations during the recruitment phase.

Customer Service

The requirements set out under the Customer Service Standard applies to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties that has at least one employee in Ontario. These standards address business practices and training needed to provide better customer service to people with disabilities.

The County will continue to focus on providing policy, training support and continue to improve services and programs to meet these regulations.

Information and Communications

Information and communications are a large part of the County's daily business. It is because of this that it is so important to ensure that information and communications are created and presented in a way that considers accessibility.

The County will follow universal design principles and best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites and print communications materials as well as face-to-face interactions. The County is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities. The County will make reasonable efforts based upon the needs of the community and upon request within budgetary and time constraints. For the purposes of this policy reasonable efforts by the County shall be based on the frequency of indications for needs of service, the availability of the service requested, the relative cost compared to the overall Municipal budget, best practices recognized by similar rural municipalities and Provincial regulation.

Employment

The requirements set out under the Employment Standard apply to paid employees. Through this Standard, employers are mandated to provide for accessibility throughout the entire employment cycle. Incorporating accessibility into all facets of the employment process benefits everyone by broadening the talent pool and assisting employers in supporting and maintaining a skilled workforce.

Identifying, Removing and Preventing Barriers

A “barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

People with disabilities may face unnecessary barriers almost everywhere: at home, at work, at school, in parks, in recreational facilities, in the streets, in theatres, in stores and restaurants and in municipalities.

The following are examples of types of barriers that may exist in the County:

Barrier Type

Examples

Architectural

A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter or lack of ramps or ramps with improper grade for access.

Attitudinal

A program which can inadvertently discriminate and/or discourages persons with disabilities from participating.

Communication	An employee who talks loudly when addressing a person with a hearing disability or lack of sensitivity training for front counter Staff to identify persons with disabilities.
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by persons with low vision.
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by any person with limited upper mobility.
Policy / Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that persons with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly. Lack of Human Resources policy with respect to hiring persons with disabilities.
Technological	Information on a municipal website, which cannot be accessed by a person who is blind who has reading software for a computer.

Monitoring Process

In order to ensure that the targets established to address the removal of barriers are completed, annual reviews will be conducted by Municipal staff.

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry shall be for a 5-year period. It is anticipated that the Plan will be updated annually. Any outstanding and new issues will be brought forward prior to the annual Budget review.

Appendix 'A' includes the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Plan with respect to requirements under the Ontarians with Disability Act, Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and the Human Rights Code and will be updated as needed.

Appendix 'B' summarizes the results of the review of the municipal facilities undertaken by municipal staff. Appendix 'B' will be reviewed and amended when reviews of additional facilities are completed, work is undertaken or additional information regarding the implementation of the Built Environment regulations is obtained.

Appendix "A" Multi-Year Plan

Customer Service

PROGRESS		TIME FRAME
1.	Accessible Customer Service Policy	Completed
2.	Established policies, practices and procedures that govern accessibility, including policies in Personnel Policy, Fire Evacuation Manual, Purchasing Policy, and Accessible Customer Service Policy.	Completed/ Ongoing
3.	Communicating with a person in a way that respects their disability	Ongoing
4.	Allowing people with disabilities to bring their support person or service animal with them	Completed/ Ongoing
5.	Develop and update accessibility plans annually to ensure good accessible planning	Ongoing
FUTURE ACTIVITIES		
1.	Review of Fees and Charges By-law; no charge for support person, pursuant to Customer Service Policy	Completed Annually
2.	Update training program accessible training for staff, Council and volunteers on how to serve people with disabilities. Include staff training on the IASR and the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.	Ongoing
3.	Review policies to ensure up to date and for compliance.	Ongoing
4.	Review Accessible Customer Service Policy	Will be reviewing in 2025

Information and Communication

PROGRESS		TIME FRAME
1.	Communication and Information Policy, which includes timely manner to provide information in accessible format, at no extra cost, consult with person making request, and notify public of the availability of accessible format and communication support.	Completed
2.	Accessible Feedback process.	Completed
3.	Prepare Emergency Procedures, plans or public safety information and make available to public in accessible format.	Completed
4.	Inclusion of information regarding AODA and disability issues in orientation information prepared for Council	Completed/ Ongoing
5.	Public Library provided more collections in accessible formats.	Completed/ Ongoing
6.	Visual and audio recording of Council meetings to provide greater accessibility to meetings	Completed/ Ongoing
7.	Website redesign in accordance with WCAG 2.1 and meets accessibility standards – County and Library Websites	Completed
FUTURE ACTIVITIES		
1.	Review Communication and Information Policy	Will be reviewing in 2025
2.	Reviewing current processes to receive feedback from the public.	Will be reviewing in 2025
3.	Review current processes on how public can request an alternate format.	Will be reviewing in 2025
4.	Additional staff training for forms of social media, i.e. Facebook and Twitter when posting was also provided	Ongoing

5.	Develop a training strategy to ensure that staff has the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials	Ongoing
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Employment

PROGRESS		TIME FRAME
1.	Orientation for new staff includes Accessible Customer Service training	Ongoing
2.	Staff Education on Accessible Customer Service Policy and Communication and Information Policy	Will be reviewing in 2025
3.	Workplace Emergency Information – safety zones were created for individuals with disabilities. Regular drills on evacuation are completed annually. Personnel policy also includes process for staff to request and prepare an individual emergency response plan.	Completed/ Ongoing
4.	Adopted revised personnel policy to include accessible employment policies which includes provision for communication in an accessible format and employment related accommodation if required. (Section 1.4)	Completed
5.	Ensure job advertisements specify that accommodation is available for job applicants with disabilities, if applicable.	Completed/ Ongoing
6.	Revised Personnel Policy to include policy on accessible recruitment and selection. (Section 4.2.1c, 5.1)	Completed
7.	Offer letter includes notification of policy for accommodation if required.	Completed/ Ongoing
8.	Revised Personnel Policy includes policy on employee accommodation plans.	Completed
9.	Policy included in Health and Safety Manual (Section 8) accommodating employees return to work.	Completed
10.	Revised Personnel Policy to include policies that take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance process and deployment.	Completed

FUTURE ACTIVITIES		
1.	Keep employees abreast of changes to policies	Ongoing
2.	Review Personnel Policy to include accessible employment practices	1-3 years

Appendix "B" Municipal Facilities/Services

Targets and Actions and Review Dates

Staff undertook a review to identify barriers within their respective Departments, both physical and operational, and by applying the requirements from both the Building Code and the AODA, a number of potential accessible barriers were identified.

Targets need to be set to help establish when these barriers will be addressed or actions taken to address preventative measures.

The Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Targets are to be completed based on priorities and budget allocations and the target time frames are approximations, not exact dates.

County Administration Building (General Facility)

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Physical	Wider accessible parking space	Implement accessible parking space with accompanying vertical sign, markings on pavement and access aisle close to entrance	Complete
Physical	Replace automatic opener at 26 Pitt Street to larger button	Contact supplier to purchase and install	Complete
Physical	Replace help light in accessible washroom with bell	Explore option for install of trouble bell	Complete
Technology	Review and increase availability of online forms	Review practices and meet with IT to implement	Ongoing
Systemic	Review fire evacuation plan as it relates to secured areas and safety zones.	Review plan, complete fire drill with someone in safe zone and	Completed

	Identify staff for safe with red vest or hat.	purchase hats or vests for staff in safe zones.	
Systemic	Review process for individuals coming into building for safety purposes and exiting upon emergency	Review practices.	Ongoing
Systemic	Review process with reception to ensure proper and timely access to accessible washroom	Review practices.	Ongoing
Attitudinal	Train all staff, Councillors on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

Corporate Services

Informational	Narrate important information on the website such as emergency messaging	Communications Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator will complete	Ongoing
Technology	Website upgrade to WCAG AA Standard	Be part of meetings with IT to ensure new website is at WCAG AA Standard Provide training to staff to ensure new documents are accessible	Completed

Tourism Division of Planning & Economic Development Services – Jail, County Administration Building

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Informational	Review Tourism material and practices to ensure accessibility.	Review all practices to identify barriers.	1-5 years
Technology	Create virtual tour of jail	Provide budget and contract for video taping of tour	Complete. Photo tour has been created and is being administered in Council Chambers. Exploring Virtual Reality options for the 3D jail tour.

Financial/Court Services – County Administration Building

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Physical/Informational	Installation of TV in reception area for communication on court dockets, payment information, and building information	Install TV in reception area	Completed
Technology	Electronic Documents and Remote meetings for clients. Implement e-filing, end to end electronic management	Meet with IT services and design strategy for implementation	1-5 years

	of POA cases and electronic court notices		
Technology	Enhance service of conference phone and video conferences in courtroom	Meet with IT to discuss equipment upgrades	1-3 years
Technology	Increase volume of paging system	Review options for paging system	1-3 years
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

Transportation Services

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Physical	Upgrade existing workstations to serve clients requiring full accessibility (ie mobile workstation in boardroom)	Review options and provide budget	Complete
Informational	Continue to work with Communication Co-ordinator to ensure external communication is accessible	Meet with Communication Co-ordinator to ensure all communication is accessible	Ongoing
Technology	Continue to invest in technology that can accommodate accessibility needs.	Provide budget	1-5 years
Systemic	Include installation of tactile walking surface indicators in all new pedestrian crossing installation.	Include requirement in appropriate tenders.	Complete (standard requirement)

Systemic	Review accessibility opportunities within County forests	Research opportunities / options	1-3 years
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

Planning & Economic Development Services – County Administration Building

Informational	Ensure updates regarding current appeal of the Official Plan are posted on the website in an accessible form.	Meet with Communications and IT to ensure accessible information	1-2 years
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing

IT Services – County Administration Building

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Physical	Review new office configuration of desks to ensure accessible access	Review office configuration	1-2 years
Informational	Creation of new website up to WCAG AA Standards and put policy in place to ensure ongoing compliance	Budget for website and create process for ensuring ongoing compliance	Completed
Technology	Upgrade all laptops and computers to Windows 10 operating system to make available built-in accessibility features and	Budget and implement change	Completed

	assistive technology support to all staff.		
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing
Technology	Hearing impaired member of public meeting attending meetings may not be able to hear proceedings	Plan for and provide assistive technologies	Complete

Library Services – County Administration Building

Type of Barrier	Barrier	Strategy for Removal or Prevention	Target Time Frame
Physical	Discuss with municipalities for installation of automatic doors at Finch, Lancaster, Crysler, Chesterville, Library Branches	Meet with municipal representatives to review possible changes to branches.	1-3 years: Chesterville Completed in Finch, Lancaster & Crysler branches.
Physical	Discuss with municipalities for installation of accessible washrooms at Winchester, Alexandria, Williamstown and Chesterville Branches	Meet with municipal representatives to review possible changes to branches.	1-3 years: Winchester, Williamstown and Chesterville branches. Completed in Alexandria branch.
Physical	Review of layout of furniture at all branches to ensure accessible access	Identify barriers and reconfigure to improve accessible access	Ongoing
Informational	Explore alternative formats for publications	Research alternative formats, costs, etc.	Ongoing

	(PressReader provides text to speech, Libby and Flipster offer font sizing)	and budget for improvements	
Informational	Complete review of Library's website to ensure compliance	Be part of meetings with IT to ensure new website is at WCAG AA Standard	Complete
Informational	Addition of large print books and books on tape	Budget and purchase	Ongoing
Attitudinal	Train all staff, on accessible customer service, Integrated Standards Regulation and the Human Rights Code	Ensure proper documentation is in place to ensure all required persons receive training.	Ongoing