



The Corporation of County of Peterborough

2021-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.
Please contact the Clerk's Department at 705-743-0380 or email
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Executive Summary

The County of Peterborough (the “County”) is dedicated to promoting barrier-free services and environment for employees, citizens, and everyone else who lives, works, visits, or invests in the County. With the County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021-2026, the County outlines the initiatives in regard to accessibility the County intends to achieve to ensure its compliance with the Province’s accessibility legislation. Additionally, the plan establishes projects for the next five (5) years.

The Province has enacted a number of accessibility standards which set out specific rules and deadlines for government, businesses, non-profits and public sector organizations to follow. There are staggered compliance dates to aid organizations in implementing the numerous changes to day-to-day operations, services, and facilities. This Plan will outline the County’s compliance to date with respect to the accessibility legislation. Further, it will assist the County in achieving, and where possible, exceeding the requirements of the accessibility legislation.

Corporate Vision Statement

The County’s Corporate Vision Statement as contained in the Corporate Strategic Plan states:

“Peterborough County is a very special place for people, where planning and stewardship protect a diverse landscape, lifestyle and sense of community.

To achieve this vision, the County will:

- Respect and protect its traditions of rural lifestyle
- Maintain and enhance its quality of life through managed orderly growth and development
- Protect the integrity of the environment
- Preserve and promote the County's heritage and culture
- Provide an efficient, helpful, cost-effective form of County Government”

Accessibility Statement

The County's Accessibility Statement states:

"To promote, encourage, and provide an accessible community which ensures equality and inclusion for all in the County."

About the County

The County of Peterborough is a rural upper-tier municipality of approximately 59,583 residents distributed over an area of 4,000 square kilometres and is comprised of eight (8) lower-tier Townships. The County is located in east-central Ontario approximately one and a half hours driving time north-east of Toronto and north-west of Kingston. The County is bounded by the Counties of Haliburton and Northumberland on the north and south, by the City of Kawartha Lakes on the west and, the County of Hastings on the east.

The County has many parks, lakes, rivers and the Trent-Severn Waterway making it a popular destination for tourists all year round. Whether living in the County or visiting the County, the region offers many outdoor activities, festivals and events.

The County is the proud owner and operator of Lang Pioneer Village Museum where people can experience living in history.

The two First Nations communities located within the County, Curve Lake and Hiawatha, have annual Pow Wows which on average have 10,000 people in attendance. These celebrations uphold culture, traditions and build relationships, while having positive economic impacts.

Geography & Land Use Planning

While the County's geography offers an appealing lifestyle to many, it can also pose considerable barriers to residents and visitors with disabilities. The mobility for the County's residents, especially persons with disabilities, is affected due to the distance between urban areas combined with a lack of public transportation.

Through the County's Official Plan, Council has set the framework for encouraging responsible development that will improve accessibility for the County's residents. There are many sections contained within the Official Plan that encourage accessibility while achieving development and re-development. County staff and Council continue to implement the Official Plan with the intention of creating a built environment that promotes greater accessibility.

Demographics

The median age of the 59,853 residents in the County of Peterborough is 44.1 years old. As the County's population continues to age, the prevalence of disabilities increases due to deteriorating health and other factors. Proactively identifying and removing barriers will help the County prepare for the future.

As of 2021, there were approximately 30,160 people in the labour force. 11.8% in the retail trade, 12% in construction, 12.8% in health care and social assistance, 6.3% in public administration, 5.6% in accommodation and food services and 7.5% in educational services. Within the County of Peterborough, in 2021, the estimated median household income was \$63,621.

Legislative Background

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (O.D.A.)

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (O.D.A.), was enacted in 2001 to improve opportunities and access for persons with disabilities. This Act applies to all provincial and municipal governments, school boards, colleges and universities, and hospitals.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, S.O. 2005, C.11 (A.O.D.A.)

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) was enacted in 2005 and is a law intended to set out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. The overall goal of the A.O.D.A. is to provide for the development of minimum standards to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by January 1, 2025.

Accessibility Standards

In order to achieve this vision, the Government has issued a set of five (5) accessibility standards under the A.O.D.A. that will help organizations identify and remove barriers to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. The accessibility standards are: customer service, communication and information, employment, transportation, and design of public spaces.

Accessible Customer Service Standard

Council adopted an Accessible Customer Service Standards Policy in 2009, amending it in 2012, and trains its employees, members of Council, volunteers and students who interact with the public on behalf of Peterborough County. County training guides train users on their rights and responsibilities under the AODA.

Integrated Accessibility Standard

The standards, which also includes a General Requirement component, have been combined into the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (I.A.S.R.) which came into effect in 2011.

General Requirements

The General Requirement component of the I.A.S.R. focuses on the establishment of accessibility policies, plans, the procurement of goods and services, self-service kiosks, and training requirements.

Communication and Information Standard

The Communication and Information Standard was developed to assist organizations in making their information accessible to persons with disabilities. It addresses accessible formats, communication supports, and websites.

Employment Standard

The Employment Standard was designed to ensure businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of all aspects of an employment cycle, from recruiting, to hiring, to supporting employees.

Transportation Standard

The Transportation Standard was developed to make it easier for everyone in the Province to travel.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

The Design of Public Spaces Standard came into force in 2013. The standard was designed to help organizations make new and redeveloped public spaces and buildings accessible to persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The regulations require the County to have an Accessibility Advisory Committee to advise Council on the preparation of accessibility plans and the achievement of actions outlined within the plan. The majority of members must be persons with a disability. In 2003, the County partnered with the Township of Selwyn to form a Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The members of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) sit for a term concurrent with that of the elected Council. The main activities of the Committee include:

- Advise both Councils about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation of accessibility reports and such other matters for which the Councils may seek its advice; and
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

During the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2013-2021, the AAC has:

- Reviewed the existing Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in detail and recommended items;
- Developed an Accessibility logo for the joint committee;
- Recommended additional accessible parking spaces and bench locations;
- Provided comments and guidance to the Lakefield Arena, Ennismore Community Centre and Curling Rink for accessible improvements;
- Provided comments and guidance for accessible improvements to Lang Pioneer Village Museum, the County Courthouse and County Recycling Depots;
- Participation in the Access Awareness Week;
- Partnerships with community events to incorporate accessibility efforts;
- Organized and coordinated a Retail and Accessibility Outreach Program;
- Partnerships with Kawartha Chamber, MNR and the Business Advisory Committee on creating AODA accessibility promotion for local businesses;
- Launched an AAC brochure and provide to local businesses and events;
- Creation of “a Time in my shoes” program at local schools;
- Participated in the creation of the Township Community Improvement Plan;
- Nominate recipients for Accessibility Awards for the County of Peterborough Recognition Awards and Gordon and Arbie Holnbeck Award;

A.O.D.A. Progress to Date

Customer Service Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Establishment of Customer Service Policies & Procedures	The County's Accessibility and Customer Service Policy outlines how the County will provide accessible customer service with respect to goods, services and facilities. It outlines the customer service requirements of the legislation.
Use of Service Animals and Support Persons	The County's Accessibility and Customer Service Policy provides guidelines with respect to the use of service animals and support persons for persons with disabilities when accessing County goods, services or facilities.
Notice of Temporary Disruptions	The County's Accessibility and Customer Service Policy outlines how the County will provide notice of temporary disruptions if there is a temporary disruption in facilities or with respect to services.
Customer Service Training	A Customer Service Training Program was developed and provided to all staff and volunteers. The Customer Service Training has now been incorporated into the I.A.S.R. & Ontario Human Rights Code Training.

General Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Establishment of Policies & Procedures	<p>The County's Accessibility and Customer Services Policy outlines how the County will meet its accessibility requirements under the I.A.S.R. The policy was initially approved by Council in 2013 and replaced in 2021. The policy is available on the County's website.</p> <p>Please note: Additional County procedures to address specific requirements under the I.A.S.R. have been developed.</p>

Appendix A

Accessibility Plans	<p>The County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2012-2021 was developed and approved by Council following consultation with the AAC and persons with disabilities. Annual Status Reports have been completed and are available on the County's website.</p> <p>Please note: A new plan will be developed every five (5) years.</p>
Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services, or Facilities	<p>The County's Procurement Policy was amended in 2019 to incorporate that accessibility design, criteria, and features be considered when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities.</p>
Training	<p>A training program on the requirements of the accessibility standards included in the I.A.S.R. and Ontario Human Rights Code was developed and presented to all full time and part time staff, volunteer paramedics, members of Council, and volunteers appointed to all County boards of management and committees. The content of training was appropriate to the duties of the employee/volunteer.</p> <p>Please note: All new staff and volunteers will receive the training.</p>

Information and Communication Standards Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Feedback	<p>A request for feedback form was developed for receiving and responding to feedback to ensure the process is accessible to persons with disabilities. The form is available on the County website and in the Clerk's Department. All feedback request forms will be responded to within 30 days by the Clerk should a response be requested.</p>
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports	<p>The County will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner.</p> <p>A statement is on the County's Accessibility webpage, "The County is committed to providing accessible formats and communications supports for people with disabilities</p>

Appendix A

	upon request. To request an accessible format or communication support please contact Customer Service at 705-743-0380 or via email .”
Emergency Procedure, Plans and Public Safety Information	The County includes notification of the availability of accessible formats/supports to the public with respect to emergency procedures, plan, and public safety information by including the Alternate Formats Clause.
Accessible Website	The new County website confirms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA

Employment Standards Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process	County job postings include a notice about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities. When arrangements for an interview are being made, staff advise potential applicants about the availability of accommodations.
Notice to successful applicants	Successful applicants are notified in the offer letter of the policies for accommodation during the job offer process.
Inform Employees of Supports	Employees are notified of supports available via the accessibility training and applicants are notified via the job posting. Job posting templates have been updated to include that “accommodations are available upon request.”
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees	The County’s Accessibility and Customer Service Policy and the Return to Work/Accommodation Request Policy address the availability of accessible formats and communication supports for employees.
Workplace Emergency Response Information	The County’s Return to Work/Request for Accommodation Policy outlines a process for providing individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability if one is deemed necessary.
Individualized Accommodation Plans	The County’s Return to Work/Request for Accommodation Policy outlines the process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities and includes all the requirements of the legislation.

Appendix A

Return to Work Process	The County's Return to Work/Request for Accommodation Policy outlines a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation.
Performance Management	The County's Return to Work/Request for Accommodation Policy states that the County will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans when using performance management process.

Transportation Standards Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Transportation	The transportation standards requirements currently do not apply to the County. If in the future, the County of Peterborough provides a form of transportation or transit, the Transportation Standards Requirements will be followed.

Design of Public Spaces Requirements

Requirement	Action Taken
Meet the accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redevelopment elements of public spaces	Staff in appropriate departments have been trained on the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces. Staff review the requirements when undertaking new construction or redevelopment of areas for recreational trails, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths, on street parking and service related elements.

Compliance

Requirement	Action Taken
Accessibility Reports	The County has submitted their accessibility reports to the Province in the years that they were due and will continue to do so.

Accessibility Audit

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, Compliance and Enforcement Branch, periodically conducts file reviews on randomly selected organizations to confirm that they are in compliance with the A.O.D.A. and its standards. In December of 2020 the County was selected for such a review. The County was requested to provide the following documentation to demonstrate its compliance with the legislation:

- confirmation of the establishment of an accessibility advisory committee
- copy of accessibility policies and how they are made available to the public
- copy of the multi-year accessibility plan
- confirmation that the plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with the accessibility advisory committee
- copy of annual status report
- copy of annual work plan and status report and a link to where they are on the County's website
- copy of the Procurement Policy
- copy of IASR training policy
- complete training records including dates and names of the individuals trained
- copy of employment policies that include:
 - notice of accommodation for the recruitment and selection process
 - notice of accommodation to successful applicants
 - informing employees of supports
 - accessible formats and communication supports for employees
 - workplace emergency response information
 - process for documented individual accommodation plans
 - return to work process
 - performance management (if applicable)
 - career development and advancement (if applicable)
 - redeployment (if applicable)

The County was able to provide the requested documentation to the Ministry. A letter from the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility was received July 6, 2021 advising that they completed their file review and that the file review had been closed.

Accessibility Achievements 2013-2021

Since the adoption of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in 2013, a number of milestones have been achieved. The achievements are highlighted below.

- County Road 29/Concession Street Intersection constructed with textural change at curb cut as a detectable warning, line cuts in surface to point direction of travel as aid for visually impaired and installation of textured tactile inserts at pedestrian signals;
- Regular meetings with Accessibility Advisory Committee and Public Works staff to review and integrate accessibility requirements into the County's annual capital construction program;
- Public Works representation in development of Age-friendly Action Plan for County/City;
- Development of County Active Transportation Master Plan with representative from Accessibility Advisory Committee on study's technical advisory committee;
- Adoption of paved road shoulder policy for rehabilitation of County roadways for improved accessibility;
- A new fully accessible County website was developed and meets the WCAG 2.0 Level.

Action Plan

A.O.D.A Legislation

The County is committed to working toward implementing all requirements of the A.O.D.A. In 2021, the County will:

- Submit Provincial Accessibility Report; and
- Ensure all of the County's Websites and web content conforms to the WCAG 2.0.

Moving forward, the County will review the accessibility legislation and this plan when creating new public spaces, making any renovations to County property and when building new infrastructure.

Infrastructure

The County is committed to identifying and removing barriers for persons with disabilities. The following projects have been identified to be completed over the next five (5) years within the ten (10) year capital forecast. These projects will be dependent upon priorities and budget. A summary of the identified projects are listed below:

- continued review of the County's annual capital construction program with the A.A.C. and Public Works staff for identification and integration of accessibility requirements;

- for major County road reconstruction projects, coordinate with lower-tier municipalities for sidewalk ramp retrofits to install iron tactile plates and wider ramps;
- continued implementation of the Active Transportation Master Plan and paved road shoulder policy for rehabilitation of County roadways.

Review and Monitoring

Staff will monitor the progress made on the actions contained within the plan which will be shared and discussed with the A.A.C. on a regular basis.

The County will develop a new accessibility plan every five (5) years, with the understanding, as legislative requirements change, that the priorities contained within the Plan may also change. Should changes be necessary, staff will identify same through the annual status report.

Communication

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be posted on the County's website and copies will be made available at the County Court House administration office. Upon request, communication supports and alternate formats of the plan are available.

Let Us Know What You Think

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think with respect to the 2021-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan together with any accessibility concerns you have in the County. To request a copy of the plan in an alternate format or send to us your comments or questions, please contact us:

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