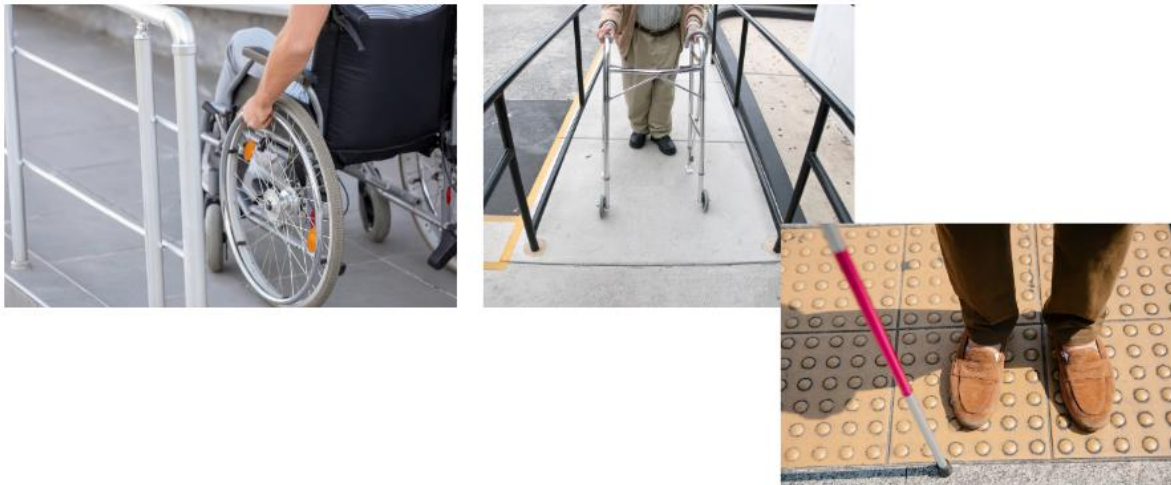




Accessibility Plan

2022-2026



This Document is available in alternate forms, upon request.

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Message from Mayor and Council

The County of Prince Edward is committed to fostering an inclusive community where people of all abilities can participate in every aspect of public life. All members of our community have the right to access municipal services, supports, spaces and programs in ways that promote independence and dignity.

It is Council's role to ensure a strong commitment to the responsibilities we have under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

The Accessibility Plan for 2022-2026 details the strategy and actions that The County will take to remove barriers to participation over the next five years. The plan renews and revisits a commitment made in 2017 when the County authored its previous Accessibility Plan.

Specifically, the plan describes how we will achieve the accessibility requirements of the *AODA* with respect to customer service, communications, employment and training, procurement, transportation, design of public space and more.



Council is grateful for the work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee is made up of volunteer members living with a disability, and the committee has provided advice and recommendations on this accessibility plan and specific initiatives that The County can undertake with respect to the *AODA*.

We firmly believe that a focus on accessibility will improve our services for everyone. We hope that other organizations, businesses and community members join the municipality in thoughtful planning for accessible services and spaces, making Prince Edward County a more inclusive place to live, work and visit.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor Steve Ferguson

Message from the Prince Edward County's Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee believes everyone regardless of age, ability, or background should have an equal opportunity to take part in the County's social and economic life. Making the County accessible for residents and visitors means a better quality of life for our entire community.

The Committee provides feedback to Council and staff on municipal accessibility policies, on site plans and renovations of municipal facilities, and on compliance with provincial accessibility standards and legislation. Committee members worked collaboratively with staff to provide input to the 2022-2026 accessibility plan and are committed to ensuring the successful implementation of these priorities in support of making the County a barrier free community.

We remain committed to our core responsibility: advocacy, knowledge of accessibility standards and providing education to the municipality and key stakeholders about accessibility, equity, and inclusion from a broad lens.

The committee will continue to work with Council and staff to remove barriers, change attitudes, and create greater awareness about the importance of making the County accessible to everyone.

Thank you,

Ken Dewar, Chair

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Legislative Background

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) was enacted to develop and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, premises and transportation throughout Ontario by the year 2025. The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* of the AODA sets out the minimum accessibility requirements that an organization must meet in order to prevent and remove barriers.

Our Commitment

The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward (the "County") is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Prince Edward County Accessibility Advisory Committee (hereafter the "Committee") advises Council and County Staff on ways to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities in County services, programs, and facilities. Members of the Committee are appointed by Council; who seek the advice of the Committee in matters of accessibility.

The duties and functions of the Committee are to:

- Identify changing needs, bring forward, and recommend appropriate ways to deal with issues relating to accessibility
- Work with County Staff to develop, review, and recommend to Council ways to create a barrier-free environment
- Advise Council on accessibility matters for person with disabilities to buildings, structures or premises
- Review site-plans as provided and provide input and suggestions on potential accessibility issues
- Liaise with stakeholder groups on accessibility issues
- Conduct research on accessibility issues

Introduction

The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward strives to meet the needs of its employees, residents, visitors and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The County is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. This Accessibility Plan outlines the steps the County is taking to meet those requirements, and the role that the County will play in making Ontario an accessible place for all.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR) established mandatory accessibility standards in four main areas: Information and Communication, Employment, Procurement, Transportation and Design of Public Spaces.



Corporate Accomplishments

During the 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan period, several aspects of the County's commitment to accessibility underwent improvements to remove barriers identified in the Barrier Removal section. Some of these accomplishments include:

- A new municipal website to comply with the IASR
- Internal review process put in place for all site-plan applications to ensure accessibility is considered
- Training for applicable staff on accessible document creation and report writing
- Conducted an accessibility survey among County staff and residents

- Worked on creating the 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Barrier Identification

The intent of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to remove barriers and obstacles that stand in the way of a persons with disabilities from being able to access services, facilities, and information. A barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society.

Environmental Barriers: Buildings or spaces that impede physical Access

Communication Barriers: Obstacles with processing or interpreting information

Attitudinal Barriers: Assumptions that either directly or indirectly discriminate

Technological Barriers: Occurs when technology cannot support various assistive device and/or software

Systemic Barriers: Exist within an organization's policies, practice and procedures

Customer Service

The County will continue to ensure that its processes for receiving and responding to feedback are made available to persons with disabilities, whether members of the public, clients, customers or employees, in an appropriate, accessible format or communication support, upon request, and that members of the public are notified of the availability of such an option.

The County will also continue to:

- Provide notice of temporary disruptions to goods, services or facilities; and
- Provide a copy of any document in an accessible format as requires under the Customer Service Standards.



Information and Communications

The County will continue to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization

and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports.

The County will ensure that website(s) and content form with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level AA and increasing to Level AAA per the timelines outlined in the IASR.

Employment

The County will continue to notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodation can be made during recruitment and hiring. Employees will be notified that supports are available for those with disabilities, and that individual accommodation plans can be developed.

The County's performance management, career development and redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of all employees. The County will continue to:

- Upon request, provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees; and
- Practice a return to work process and the provision of individual accommodation plans.

Training

The County is committed to training staff and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* that relate to persons with disabilities. Staff continue to receive customer service training, and on-going training will be provided to employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Procurement

The County will continue to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-serve kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, an explanation can be provided upon request.

Transportation

Accessible transportation systems improve mobility for those individuals who need it in the community. The County will ensure that transportation services, such as taxis, will



adhere to the requirements under the Transportation standard. County Transit is a public service that provides quick, easy, safe and affordable transportation for the residents of Prince Edward County. There is both a fixed route and an on-demand route. There is also a Specialized transit service available for individuals requiring accessible public transit in Prince Edward County. This service, contracted through Quinte Transit, provides door to door transit services to locations within Prince Edward County and beyond, four days per week (Tuesday through Friday). County Transit continues to grow and expand to meet the demand. Since the buses began rolling in August 2020, County Transit has provided approximately 1,500 trips as well as 5,300 trips on the specialized service. The goal of ensuring the barriers that contributes to social isolation and impacts to access to employment, food and other essential services that are vital to the community are removed. This specialized service utilized by seniors and people with disabilities is vital, and its inclusion in the 2022-2026 Multi-Year accessibility plan reaffirms the municipality's commitment.

The County will continue to:

- Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs and monitor the demand of specialized Quinte Transit services required in Prince Edward County and identify the process and steps made towards meeting that need.
- Ensure that the owners and operators of taxicabs make available vehicle registration and identification in an accessible format.
- Ensure that Quinte Transit specialized transit service make available to the public current information on accessibility equipment and features of their vehicles, routes and services.
- Assist specialized transportation service providers with accessibility training, as required.
- Receive an update of the specialized transit system (Quinte Transit) and accessible taxis, as required and assist with any program evaluation processes, as needed.

Design of Public Space

The County will ensure when constructing new or redeveloping existing public spaces, it adheres to requirements under the Design of Public Spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes



- Outdoor public use eating areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Exterior paths of travel
- Accessible parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to identify the specific requirements applicable to Prince Edward County, as mandated by the Province of Ontario through the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the measures that have been taken or will be undertaken from 2022-2026 to ensure compliance with the various regulations.



Corporate Work Plan

The Corporate Work Plan outlines the key objectives of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee will choose which of the five initiatives will be their priority for the year, and repeat this process until all five goals have been successfully completed.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee identified the following goals and initiatives as part of its 2022-2026 Committee Work Plan:

1. Assess and identify the need for accessibility provisions to County services with the goal of increasing participation and opportunities for persons with disabilities.
2. Within the community, research opportunities for grants and incentive programs for local businesses to help increase and promote accessibility.
3. Provide educational resources to businesses, local organizations and groups about ways to make their goods and services more accessible in various formats.
4. Show commitment to community engagement by ensuring all businesses and organizations providing goods and services are implementing accessible practices and create a strong sense of civic pride in doing so.
5. Ensure all municipal services strive to meet standards on or before the AODA compliance deadlines.

What can you do?

Whether you are a resident, visitor or an employee of a local business, we all can play a part in making The County more accessible and inclusive.

Recognize that social change begins with individual change; you can, as a resident or visitor of The County initiate change;

Evaluate your own actions and preconceived biases and ideas about accessibility and inclusion;

Educate yourself, volunteer your time and participate in activities which will broaden your experience with accessibility and inclusion;

Recognize that disabilities are not always visible – many disabilities are often not always physical in nature; encourage and support the development of programs and projects that promote holistic accessibility and inclusion;

Advocate for both the elimination of barriers and discrimination and the celebration of accessibility and diversity within your own workplace and community;

Challenge barriers and discrimination when you experience them or become aware of their existence.

Contact Information

Prince Edward County's administration office is located at 332 Main Street, Picton. The mailing address is:

332 Picton Main Street
Picton, Ontario
K0K 2T0

For more information regarding the Accessibility Plan, please contact the Clerk's Office at 613.476.2148 ext. 1021 or clerks@pecounty.on.ca

Communication of Plan

Feedback is an integral part of the evaluation process. The County will continue to review and expand consultation strategies to engage key groups in providing accessibility related feedback, including people with disabilities.

Members of the public are encouraged to make comments on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general. There are a number of ways you can contact The County to express your accessibility related comments.

Prince Edward County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be available on [The County website](#). Copies of the plan will also be available from our office.

A Public Service Announcement will be released on a yearly basis to coincide with the release of the annual progress reports.

Conclusion

In line with the 2022 to 2026 Multi Year Accessibility Plan, Council and staff together with the Accessibility Advisory Committee make the following commitment:

1. To continue implementing the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation;
2. To review all unresolved issues carried forward from previous plans; and
3. To report to Council on an annual basis on the progress of the Plan, as well as updating the Plan, as necessary.

The Accessibility Plan is intended as a working document. Comments and recommendations will be noted throughout the upcoming year and will be reflected in annual updates to this Plan. Additional evaluation and reporting efforts include:

- Annual review of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and preparation of a progress report;
- Annual progress report prepared for Council to identify progress of the Plan's implementation, accomplishments and achievements; posted online and available in alternative formats upon request;
- Compliance reports submitted annually to the Province of Ontario.

2022-2026 AODA Progress to Date

Past Achievements and Future Actions Planned

The following table features The County's accessibility initiatives to holistically enhance accessibility and inclusiveness in accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11 – *The Integrated Accessibility Standards Ontario Regulation 429/07* – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. These initiatives are in addition to the regular and ongoing accessibility improvements.

Past Achievements 2017-2021

Action	Status
Accessible Policies - continue to update policies and make available to public in an accessible format upon request	Completed & On-going
Recruitment - Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities Continue to notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment of selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to materials and processes to be used	Completed & On-going
Continue to inform employees of policies used to support employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on provision of job accommodations that consider an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability, and provide information required under this section to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin employment	Completed & On-going
Continue to inform employees of supports - Inform employees of policies used to support employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on provision of job accommodations that consider an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability, and provide information required under this section to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin employment.	Completed & On-going
Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities - continue to incorporate accessibility criteria and features into procurement practices so that goods, services and facilities are more accessible to people with disabilities unless it is not practicable to do so.	Completed By-law 222-2021
Internet Content and Websites: The new County website and most content conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level 2.0 AA criteria.	On-going
Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information - Continue to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with a disability, as soon as is practical upon request.	Completed & On-going

Action	Status
Public Feedback Process - continue to provide or arrange for provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with a disability upon request. Notify the public of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports for the feedback process.	Completed & On-going
Duties of Municipalities & Taxicabs - Vehicle registration and identification must be displayed on the rear bumper of the taxicab. Identification information must be made available in an accessible form to persons with disabilities who are passengers, and that owners and operators of taxicabs do not charge a higher fare or additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without for the same trip, or charge a fee for storage of mobility aid/assistive device.	Completed By-law 63-2020
Training - Continue training of all employees and volunteers, persons who develop policies, and those that provide goods and services on behalf of the organization on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and on the Human Rights Code	Completed & On-going
Evaluate Site Plans - The Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue to review site plans, as required to ensure they fulfill accessibility requirements, as per section 29 of the AODA.	Completed & On-going
Develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the accessibility standards. Establishment of a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Complete
Conducted a community survey to help identify and assess barriers faced by people with disabilities in Prince Edward County.	Complete
Accessible Public Transportation - County Transit Since the buses began rolling in August 2020, Country Transit has provided approximately 1,500 trips as well as 5,300 trips on the specialized service. Continue to build on the success of the program.	Completed & On-going

Future Actions Planned 2022-2023

Additional actions will be developed by staff, in collaboration with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the 2022-2026 Council.

Year 2022

Action	Status
Develop an Accessible Design Checklist for Site Plans	
Develop 2022 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan	
Participate as needed through the Shire Hall renovation project	
Assess Canadian Hearing Society Video remote interpretation for customer service	
Consider accessibility as part of any proposed extension of the patio program	
Provide expertise on Bloomfield Town Hall accessibility ramp	
Provide expertise on Ameliasburgh Heritage Village accessible pathways	
Assist with Bloomfield bus shelter / municipal parking lot improvements	
Investigate the goal of addressing accessibility criteria and exploring accessibility features associated directly with the Short-Term Accommodation Licensing program	

Year 2023

Action	Status
Develop publicly available Prince Edward County Accessibility Design Guidelines for public facilities and businesses / organizations*	
Closed captioning for all livestreamed Council and Committee meetings*	
Develop partnership with Chamber of Commerce and Community BIA's on helping businesses achieve the accessibility standards*	
Assist with a Program Evaluation of the County's specialized transit service (Quinte Transit)	

*Some of the proposed actions are subject to final budget approval by Council.