



REPORT

Corporate and Legislative Services

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Catalina Blumenberg, Municipal Clerk
DATE: July 23, 2024
REPORT: CLS-18-2024

SUBJECT: 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan - 2023 Progress Report

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive report CLS-18-2024;
2. **THAT** Council approve amending Schedule "J" Accessible Parking Spaces as follows:

Picton

King St Parking Lot (3 new) - 3 Type A accessible parking spaces;

Mary St Lot (3 new) - 3 Type A accessible parking spaces;

Picton Main St (5 new) - On the north side installing one accessible parking space out front of 289 Picton Main St. On the south side, installing accessible parking spaces at 206 Picton Main St. Then installing 3 new accessible parking spaces at 130, 182, 338 Picton Main St;

Bloomfield

Bloomfield Main St (3 new) - On the north side of Bloomfield Main St, no change to the accessible parking space out front of 296 Bloomfield Main St and installing one accessible parking space at 264 Bloomfield Main St. and on the south side of Bloomfield Main St, installing two accessible parking spaces, one at 291 and the other at 271 Bloomfield Main St;

Bloomfield Town Hall (1 new) - Installing 1 Type A accessible parking space including painting and signing at the back of the lot;

Wellington

Wellington Rotary Beach (2 new) - Paving, painting, and signing 2 Type A accessible parking spaces and improving the existing two spaces to meet the standard to 2 Type A accessible parking spaces, with 1 Type A accessible parking spaces to be installed nearest the existing two accessible spaces and the other Type A accessible parking space installed down near the channel close to the beach front;

Wellington Main St (4 new) - North side of Wellington Main, no change to any existing accessible parking space and installing one new accessible parking spaces at 280 Wellington Main St. South side of Wellington Main, and installing three accessible parking spaces at 249, 283 and 305 Wellington Main St; and

3. **THAT** the amending By-Law to By-Law 75-2021, being a By-Law to Regulate and Control Parking on Highways, in Parking Lots, on Municipal Property Under The Jurisdiction of The County Of Prince Edward, and on Private Property as listed on this agenda be approved; and
4. **THAT** staff be directed to report back in Q2 2025 with the 2024 Progress Report on the 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan is an assessment of the barriers to accessibility and inclusiveness within PEC. It serves as a strategic action plan to engage Council, staff, and residents in removing these barriers, ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, can fully participate in the community. The plan was developed utilizing the findings of the 2020 accessibility community survey and outlines legislative requirements, strategic commitments, and planned capital projects.

This report provides an overview of the progress made in 2023 in implementing the Accessibility Plan, including key achievements by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the County. Additionally, it highlights specific initiatives such as the installation of accessible picnic tables and the creation of the "Access the County" grant. The report also discusses the ongoing need for accessible parking enhancements, driven by demographic changes and regulatory requirements. The County remains committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive community, with plans for continued progress in 2024.

BACKGROUND

Everyone should have the opportunity to participate fully in society. In Ontario, approximately [2.6 million people](#) have a disability. This means roughly one in four Ontarians live with a disability and face various types of accessibility challenges in their everyday life, and at some point, most of us will likely face some type of temporary,

situational or permanent disability. People with disabilities can face multiple barriers to accessing goods, services, facilities and obtaining gainful employment and the need for accessible services will continue to rise as the population ages. Planning for accessibility helps create a more vibrant municipality that all residents and visitors can enjoy.

The goal of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is to identify, prevent and remove barriers to make Ontario accessible by 2025. To meet this goal, the Act outlines accessibility requirements so people of all abilities can participate in all areas of daily life. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards mandates that all public-sector organizations must establish, implement, and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The multi-year accessibility plan must identify barriers to accessibility within the organization – and in The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward's (The County) case, within the community, and outline steps to remove those barriers. Depending on the severity of the violation, failure to comply with the AODA can result in fines up to \$50,000 per day for individuals, and up to \$100,000 per day for corporations.

The 2022-2026 Multi-Year accessibility plan was approved on January 11, 2022. This is the second progress report to Council on the municipality's accomplishments to identify and remove barriers and enhance our commitment to accessibility and inclusiveness in 2023.

[The 2022-2026 Accessibility Plan \(Plan\)](#) is a critical assessment of the barriers to accessibility and inclusiveness that exist within The County, and a strategic action plan to engage Council, staff, and residents in removing these barriers so that everyone, of every ability, can participate in the community. The Plan was created in part, utilizing the findings of the 2020 accessibility community survey, led by the former Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The 2022-2026 Plan outlines the following:

- AODA legislation and associated regulations and standards
- A statement of commitment from the Mayor, and Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Highlights some of the accessibility challenges faced by The County
- Specific commitments from the Accessibility Advisory Committee to improve accessibility in various areas such as employment, procurement, digital services, infrastructure planning, and engage local business
- Direction for residents to assist in identifying and removing barriers to accessibility
- The review and monitoring process for the Plan
- The communication strategies for the Plan
- Specific legislative requirements of AODA and The County's compliance with those requirements
- Planned capital projects meant to remove physical barriers to accessibility within The County

The Plan includes a mandatory yearly report back to Council to identify progress of the Plan's implementation, accomplishments, and achievements. This annual progress report highlights key areas of progress made in 2023 and is not meant to be an inventory of accomplishments.

Chair Irene Harris presented to Council the 2023 achievements at the February 13, 2024 Council [meeting](#).

Highlights of 2023 Accessibility Achievements (Accessibility Advisory Committee):

- Reviewed and commented on 8 site plans and 4 planning files (Official Plan/Zoning By-Law amendment applications)
- Revised the Accessibility Site Plan checklist
- Reviewed the Accessibility Fact Sheet for County business owners, created by our County staff
- Worked with Staff to create the 'Access the County' grant
- Outreach to Business owners wanting to improve accessibility
- Community support work - Support letter for our non-profits needing County support for grants
- Irene Harris participated in the County Foundation's Vital Signs Report "Building Bridges of Inclusion"
- Vital Signs presentation on relevant community stats and trends and County Foundation initiatives
- Resolution from Councillor Pennell and Councillor MacNaughton seeking Council support for 'a call to action' to meet the deadline of an Accessible Ontario by 2025

Municipality:

- 5 accessible picnic tables were installed as part of the Harbour Trail
- Applied to a grant to assist small businesses "Access the County" Grant and created applicable Task Team to support this work - grant was successful in February 2024 and is currently being implemented
- Created a letter of support template for grant requests
- Tracking short-term accommodations that provide accessibility features in their rentals.
- Boards and Committees Orientation on Procedures & Best Practices training by the Clerk
- Incorporated accessibility pillars from the Multi-Year Plan in the Parks Master Plan and Facilities Condition Assessment, including consultation with the Committee (on-going)
- Incorporated accessibility as a central theme in the 2024 Tourism Management Plan, including ensuring accessible washroom options which resulted in accessible washrooms (porta-potties) at Wilkinson community Park and Macaulay Village Park

- Site Plan Review training, by the Manager of Planning - Include accommodation clause in the Pre-Consultation & Complete Application Planning By-Law

The Municipality is proud to continue its commitment to accessibility. With the help and guidance of the Accessibility Advisory Community, Council, local businesses, and many community stakeholders, the Municipality has made tangible progress in increasing accessibility.

Accessible Parking Enhancements

As part of the Plan, the County committed to ensure existing public spaces adheres to requirements under the Design of Public Spaces regarding several areas, including parking.

Ontario's population is driving the need for more accessible parking. Statistics Canada and Government of Ontario data projects 4% increase in the number of accessible parking permit holders by 2025. Minimum province-wide standards that have recently been established will meet the needs of a diverse and growing population of accessible permit holders. To this effect, the Clerk's Office and By-Law Services department have recognized that there may be gap in the number of accessible parking spaces in Prince Edward County, as per the legislative requirements in the AODA legislation, particularly Reg. 413/12: [INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS](#). Regulation 413/12 prescribes minimum standards for the number of accessible parking spaces that must be provided based on the capacity of the public parking lot, minimum space dimensions for two different types of accessible parking stalls, and access aisles.

Accessible Off-Street Parking

There are two types of accessible off-street parking spaces:

Type A has a wider parking space and has signage that identifies the space as “van accessible”. These spaces are for people using larger mobility devices, such as wheelchairs or scooters, who need more space to enter or exit vehicles.

Type B has a standard parking space. These spaces are for people who do not need extra space because they do not use mobility devices or they use smaller devices, such as canes or crutches.

Moreover, organizations must provide signage indicating where all their accessible spaces are. In addition, off-street spaces must include access aisles, or space between parking spaces, so that people have enough room to enter and exit their vehicles. Access aisles on paved surfaces should have high-contrast diagonal lines painted on them to show visitors that they should not use the aisles as extra parking spaces. Organizations with unpaved parking may use extra signage to make this distinction clear.

Accessible On-Street Parking

Before creating on-street parking spaces, organizations must consult with the public and people with disabilities. They should find out how many spaces to make, where they should be, and how they should be designed. Cities creating parking spaces must also consult with their municipal accessibility advisory committees.

Section 80.39 (1), notes as follows:

When constructing or redeveloping existing on-street parking spaces, designated public sector organizations shall consult on the need, location and design of accessible on-street parking spaces and shall do so in the following manner:

1. Designated public sector organizations must consult with the public and persons with disabilities.
2. Municipalities must also consult with their municipal accessibility advisory committees, where one has been established in accordance with subsection 29 (1) or (2) of the Act. O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6.

In Q4 2023, By-Law Enforcement Officer, Garon Young met with Catalina Blumenberg to begin the parking audit work, first examining existing accessible spaces and if they met Reg. 413/12. The results of these efforts were presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on [January 17, 2024](#) to obtain public and committee feedback.

This resulted in draft recommendations presented to the Committee on [March 21, 2024](#), which were ratified by Council on March 26, with the direction to obtain public feedback. Part of the enhanced accessible parking spaces includes a total of **20** proposed new spaces.. The accessible parking review across municipally owned parking lots and the downtown core areas proposes to install new accessible parking spaces and improve existing spaces in Picton, Bloomfield, and Wellington at off-street parking lots and on-street parking areas. The goal is to improve accessibility and public safety. Staff have proposed these additions and changes based on research and consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee. As part of the recommendation, staff conducted public engagement of the enhanced accessible parking spaces for inclusion on this report.

A '[Have Your Say](#)' page was launched on May 17, 2024 with a public survey that closed June 10, 2024 for public feedback on the proposed changes to determine if there are any issues or concerns before they are implemented. A total of 14 survey responses were received, and 2 phone calls on the engagement. Most participants were satisfied with the proposed changes, highlights of the feedback are as follows:

- not enough accessible parking spaces;
- how persons with accessible permits can park in any space currently at no charge, and how parking lots are already at full use prior to 8:30 am each day and used by employees for local businesses and also used by people staying in short term accommodations;

- how the spaces need to be wide enough for a wheelchair ramp on the side of car to open and room for a wheelchair;
- ensuring curbs are lowered to road level at these enhanced spaces;
- adding a spot by the Picton library; and,
- ensuring these (and all the others) will be enforced by By-Law staff, as certain spots are filled by folks without accessible permits, especially in the summer.

The County recognizes that these parking enhancements will bring the municipality with alignment to the standards, however more work is needed to ensure adequate accessible parking is available at parks and open spaces, and to ensure all new development is meeting these parking standards.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Pillar: Support a community that cares

Council Priority: Community Equity

Objective: Be an active partner working with others to narrow socioeconomic gaps and reduce poverty in our community.

ANALYSIS:

Budget Considerations

The activities and initiatives undertaken in 2023 were primarily funded through the 2023 operational budget, and grant applications. This multi-source funding approach enabled the successful implementation of various accessibility projects and improvements.

2024 Budget Considerations:

The accessibility initiatives planned for 2024 will incur costs for the Municipality, including maintenance and infrastructure upgrades. These expenses have been included in the 2024 operating and capital budgets. Additionally, staff will apply for grants where feasible to supplement these funds.

In relation to the parking enhancements planned for 2024, these will be specifically funded through the Municipal Accommodation Tax(\$7,000) and the remaining from both the By-Law Services parking budget and Clerk's Office. This ensures that the necessary infrastructure improvements, including the installation of new accessible parking spaces and the enhancement of existing ones, are adequately financed. There will be prioritization on the parking areas where are not legislatively compliant.

Risk Implications of Implementing Recommendation(s)

Risk Description	Risk Type	Proposed Mitigation
Disciplinary action and possible fines or penalties from upper levels of government for not meeting AODA requirements	Financial / Legal	Non-compliance/conformity with provincial, AODA or federal legislation that applies to accessibility and statutory requirements will be mitigated by staff conducting due diligence and communicating to applicable government partners that the Plan has been developed and will be implemented. Applicable staff members will undergo training to ensure a clear understanding of accessibility standards, guidelines, and statutory requirements.
Public perception on accessibility barriers	Public / Stakeholder	Staff, in collaboration with organizations and business, will conduct public education on how to remove barriers.
Lack of accessibility focused culture of service delivery	Operational	The Clerk's Office will continue to champion accessibility at senior leadership team meetings, and at other internal meeting opportunities. Applicable staff members will undergo accessibility training, to ensure a clear understanding of accessibility standards, guidelines, statutory requirements and the Plan.

Other Options Considered

None identified, this is an update report.

NEXT STEPS:

The [webpage](#), which hosts the [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#), will be updated to include the annual progress report. The Clerk's Office will continue to champion accessibility and make it part of the corporate culture.

The 2024 Action Plan Activities will be communicated to Council via Accessibility Advisory Committee reports and, once ratified and approved by Council, shared with the general public via the Municipality's communication channels.

A few major activities, which the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted and meaningfully participate or lead in 2024, include but are not limited to:

- Continuing to prioritize accessibility in elements of infrastructure projects and public spaces;
- Accessible Parking audit for public parks/boat launches;
- Providing advice to the final Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) project
- Apply for grants, currently applying for the Enabling Accessibility Fund, for projects to improve accessibility in municipal buildings and the Accessible Canada – National AccessAbility Week Funding – 2025;
- Prioritizing accessibility for the Parkland Dedication projects;
- Implementing mobi-mat/mobi-water chairs at Wellington Rotary Beach

The County continues to encourage local businesses and organizations to meet accessibility requirements and prevent and remove barriers, however, the County has no official role in enforcing these requirements. Ensuring these requirements are met is the responsibility of the Government of Ontario.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Accessibility Action Plan - 2023
2. Draft Amending By-Law To Regulate And Control Parking On Highways, In Parking Lots, On Municipal Property Under The Jurisdiction Of The County Of Prince Edward, And On Private Property (Schedule J)

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES:

Prepared by: Catalina Blumenberg July 8, 2024
Municipal Clerk



Reviewed by: Arryn McNichol July 9, 2024
Director, Corporate & Legislative Services



Approved for submission by: Marcia Wallace July 12, 2024
Chief Administrative Officer