



Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022

A summary of Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners accomplishments towards inclusion and accessibility in 2022

Elgin County and Local Municipal Partners Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022

Objectives and Purpose

This is the County of Elgin and its Local Municipal Partners (LMPs) Annual Accessibility Status Report update. In 2015, Elgin 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 the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which includes how to meet requirements under the AODA.

In 2021, the County released its first Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP), which includes the County of Elgin and its seven Local Municipal Partners' accessibility progress, goals and timelines for the next five years. As a result of the MYAP becoming a joint effort, it allowed the Annual Accessibility Status Reports to become streamlined and collaborative rather than requiring each LMP to create their own.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2022 to implement the strategy outlined in the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of this Status Report is to make the public aware of Elgin County and its LMPs' progress with accessibility implementation and to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the AODA and IASR.

Compliance Reporting

Elgin County filed their sixth Accessibility Compliance Report in February 2023, due to claiming non-compliance regarding web accessibility and the WCAG 2.0 Level AA criteria in 2021. For the 2023 report, Elgin County was able to claim compliance and continues to work on maintaining web compliance and document accessibility. Any LMPs who claimed non-compliance are working with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to ensure compliance is achieved. The deadline for municipalities that reported compliance in 2021, will be on December 31, 2023.

Commitment Statement

The County of Elgin and its LMP's statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the Municipalities to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The statement of commitment is publicly available on the County website, accessibility policy and Joint MYAP.

The County of Elgin and its LMPs are committed to identifying, eliminating and preventing barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The County of Elgin and its LMPs recognize the diverse needs of all of our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

The County of Elgin and its LMPs are committed to being responsive to the needs of all of our residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the Municipalities will:

- Ensure policies address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County and LMPs
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use, or benefit from the County and LMPs goods, services, programs and facilities
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that is considerate of the person's disability

The County of Elgin and its LMPs will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. In order to ensure that timelines are met, The County and its LMPs will establish, implement and maintain a Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan will outline the County and its LMPs strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities. The plan will be updated on an ongoing basis, as needed, to ensure it remains current and aligns with the IASR.

Continuous Achievements in Accessibility

- The County of Elgin and its LMPs focus 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
- Elgin County/Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives
- The County of Elgin and its LMPs continue 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 Municipalities on an ongoing basis
- All library branches continue to provide accessible materials and communication supports upon request. In addition, the libraries have several accessible materials and resources available including but not limited to: large print books, audio books, CELA Library loan access, electronic materials with zoom features, hand-held magnifiers as well as ZoomText with large print keyboards
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action

- The County of Elgin and its LMPs are continuously looking into new accommodation options for people with disabilities
- Use of technology such as eScribe to ensure that Council agendas and minutes are completely accessible as well as maintaining website compliance achieved
- Continue to explore and monitor potential funding opportunities for the built environment relating to accessibility under the Enabling Accessibility Fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program

Highlights of 2022

- **The County of Elgin accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Working to complete renovations on accessible elevators in the County Administration Building
 - Finish making upgrades to Council chambers and front lobby on first floor
 - Created an Accessibility Content Style and Design Guide, and a Creating Accessible Documents Guide
 - Continued making changes to the County website to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
 - Completed the Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2022 regarding the progress made for the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
 - Began the creation of a Joint Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan between Elgin County and Local Municipal Partners that includes accessibility
 - Creation of training for document accessibility which will be rolled out to Elgin County staff and Local Municipal Partners upon request in 2023
- **Elgin County / Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) reviewed and provided consultation on:**
 - The County of Elgin Accessibility Policy to ensure it meets industry best practice
 - The creation of the Accessibility Content Style and Design Guide and a Creating Accessible Documents Guide
 - The establishment of on-street accessible parking spaces in downtown Rodney near Furnival Road
 - The revision of the JAAC Terms of Reference
 - The JAAC Co-Hosted the Accessibility Open House with the City of St. Thomas
- **The Municipality of Bayham accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Conducted an accessible Election including establishment of a Municipal Election Accessibility Plan and Election Official training

- Approved schematic plans for Straffordville Community Centre expansion
- Tendering and construction planned for 2023
- Applied to the Enabling Accessibility Fund for accessibility upgrades at the Marine Museum
- Approval of capital item for new website in 2023
- Ongoing sidewalk improvements through Bayham's capital program including 1.3 kms of new sidewalk in Vienna
- Implementation of technology for hybrid Council meetings
- **The Municipality of Central Elgin accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Hard surfaced accessible concrete sidewalks added to Union Street Park in Belmont
 - Construction of a barrier free and accessible washroom in Union Street Park in Belmont
 - Accessible playground equipment Union Street Park
 - Accessible fitness equipment Union Street Park
 - Construction of an accessible elevator at the Belmont Arena
 - Addition of sidewalks in Old Lynhurst including two crosswalks from Talbot Hill to Wellington Road
 - Restoration of the gravel pathway around the Little Creek Stormwater Management Facility in Port Stanley
- **The Municipality of Dutton Dunwich accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Accessible ramp and entrance at town hall railing to be installed this fall
 - Development of a new website with a citizen portal for residents to complete municipal business 24/7
 - Two fully accessible outdoor exercise equipment (accessible hand bike and upper body stretcher) to add to our existing pieces – a total of 5
 - Hand sensor door opener replaced a paddle at our medical centre and Service Ontario offices
 - Applied for the Enabling Accessibility Grant -small projects component to make our entire front reception area accessible
 - If successful it will be completed this December as we have the drawing and specs already
 - Continue to digitize our TOMRMS filing system so employees (present a future) can access any files should they need to work from home as an accommodation due to any issues
- **The Municipality of West Elgin accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Completed Accessible public/staff washroom as part of Municipal Office Renovations – monies provided through Enabling Accessibility Grant

- Open renovated Municipal Office with better accessibility for staff and public – accessible front counter, entrance way and meeting room as well as staff areas
- Completed Pre-Election Accessibility Plan and placed on website
- Provided training on accessibility to staff to ensure compliance (ongoing)
- Continued updating documents for website to ensure compliance (ongoing)
- Completion of Accessible Parking space on Moriah Street in Rodney as part of Downtown Rodney Reconstruction
- Worked with a local service group to create accessible pathways in Miller Park (1 section completed and this is an ongoing project to provide accessible pathways throughout park)
- **The Town of Aylmer accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Administered an accessible election in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act
 - No requests for accommodation were received throughout the election period; however, staff received positive feedback from visitors respecting the voting method (Internet, Telephone) with in-person assistance available onsite
 - Accessible upgrades were made to the newly renovated Council Chambers located at 25 Centre Street, Aylmer
 - Continued accessibility related improvements to www.aylmer.ca
 - Continued staff training regarding WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
- **The Township of Malahide accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Provided training on document accessibility to staff to ensure compliance (ongoing)
 - Created a Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan
 - Continued making changes to the Township website to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
 - Continued making changes to the Township Facebook page to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
- **The Township of Southwold has accomplished the following in 2022:**
 - Staff participation document accessibility training to ensure compliance (ongoing)
 - Update to Official Plan Text – now an accessible document
 - Update to many other documents to make accessible – creation of templates so they are accessible going forward
 - Continue to update and maintain Township website to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirement
 - Completion of accessible pavilion and playground in new Talbotville park

Availability of the Plan and Status Report

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be accessed through Elgin County's website on the [Accessibility Page](#):

<https://www.elgincounty.ca/accessibility/>

Contact Information

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Accessible formats and/or communication support(s) are available upon request.