



Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report

**A Summary of Middlesex County and Local Municipal Partners Accomplishments
towards Accessibility in 2024**

Objectives and Purpose

This is the eighth Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report update of Middlesex County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2022, Middlesex County released its third 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 outlines the Middlesex County strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which includes how Middlesex County will meet phased-in requirements under the AODA.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2024 to support the strategy outlined in the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022-2027.

Compliance Reporting

Middlesex County and its Local Municipal Partners (Local Municipalities) filed Accessibility Compliance Reports in 2023 with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. The next compliance reporting period is in 2025.

Middlesex County's Commitment Statement

Middlesex County's statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the County to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The County's statement of commitment is publicly available on the County website.

Middlesex County is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the County will:

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

The County will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, the County has established, implemented, and will maintain a Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan outlines the strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers to people with

disabilities. The plan will act as a roadmap for the next 4 years with regards to accessibility and details the goals and timelines for implementing the initiatives.

Continuous Achievements in Accessibility

The County and Local Municipalities focus on removing barriers which may exist in municipal buildings and facilities, while ensuring that new buildings, leases, and renovations do not create any new barriers.

- Middlesex County Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives while representing all Local Municipalities across the County
- The County and Local Municipalities 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 County on an ongoing basis.
- All library branches continue to provide accessible materials and communication supports upon request.
 - In addition, the library has several accessible materials and resources available including but not limited to large print books, audio books, Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) Library loan access, and accessible computer workstations at the Strathroy, Lucan, Dorchester, Ailsa Craig, Glencoe, and Parkhill Library Branches. (Accessible Workstation includes: ZoomText with high-contrast, large print keyboard; Dragon Naturally Speaking and joystick mouse)
- The County and Local Municipalities have policies in place to ensure the public is notified of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process and hiring process.
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action.
- The County and its Local Municipalities are continuously identifying opportunities to improve accessibility to municipal services and routinely identify funding opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusion.

Accessibility Highlights of 2024

- **The County of Middlesex achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Provided training on document accessibility to staff to ensure compliance (ongoing)
 - Continued making changes to PDF documents posted online to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.
 - Middlesex London Paramedic Services (MLPS):
 - Provided AODA training for all new hires at onboarding stage.
 - Provided in-service training provided to all staff on respect, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Completed workplace risk assessments at stations which included a review of accessibility barriers.
 - Middlesex County Library:
 - Accessible computer workstations were replaced at the Strathroy, Parkhill and Lucan branches (new computer and hardware)
 - Cognitive Care Kits are now available to borrow - Cognitive Care Kits are a support tool for the caregivers of people living with dementia. The kits are designed to help families connect through simple sorting, trivia, picture recognition and reading activities. Several themes are available based on personal interests (food, activities, animals, household items).
 - Anyone with a Middlesex County Library card in good standing can borrow a Cognitive Care Kit. Kits can be requested by emailing outreachservices@middlesex.ca or by asking library staff at your [local branch](#) for assistance.
 - Dementia Friendly books available to borrow - These books are designed specifically for adults with dementia and are formatted for easy reading. They feature brightly coloured photos and use simplified language without being juvenile. The stories and pictures prompt conversation and sharing between the individual and their family, friends, and caregivers.
 - These books can be found at the Dorchester, Glencoe, Komoka, Lucan, Parkhill and Strathroy Libraries, or by searching "dementia friendly" in the [online catalogue](#). Place a hold on any title to have it sent to the library branch of your choice.
 - Middlesex County Connect:
 - Ongoing compliance with recommended accessible design criteria for bus stops/shelters established by the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - All buses are AODA compliant, featuring high-floor ramp access, two wheelchair spaces, and an accessible lift on the passenger side for passengers with limited mobility.
 - Riders may board or exit the bus at the nearest accessible and safe location when stops are temporarily inaccessible.
 - Support persons can travel free of charge with individuals

- who have identified medical requirements for assistance.
 - Service animals are welcome on our Middlesex County Connect, recognizing their vital role for individuals with disabilities.
 - Accessibility information is readily available on the Middlesex County Connect website and promoted through social media platforms and e-blasts.
- **The Township of Adelaide Metcalfe achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Enhanced Lighting at Kerwood Park
 - The Township has completed an extensive and comprehensive lighting installation project at Kerwood Park, significantly enhancing the overall accessibility and usability of the space. This project includes upgraded field lighting that ensures sports and recreational activities can continue safely into the evening, as well as improved illumination of the pavilion areas for gatherings and community events. Additionally, new lighting has been installed throughout the parking lot, promoting safer navigation and greater visibility for visitors arriving or departing after dark. These improvements reflect the Township's commitment to creating inclusive, welcoming, and accessible public spaces that prioritize safety, convenience, and enjoyment for all residents and park-goers. By investing in these upgrades, the Township aims to make Kerwood Park more accessible and user-friendly for community members, fostering a sense of security and belonging.
 - Accessibility Improvements for the Municipal Office and Council Chambers
 - The Township has taken proactive steps to enhance the accessibility of its Municipal Office and Council Chambers, prioritizing inclusivity for all community members. Partnering with a consultant, the Township developed a comprehensive budget and detailed layout plan aimed at addressing accessibility needs within this facility. This plan laid the groundwork for grant applications to secure funding through Accessibility grants. Although the 2024 submissions did not receive approval, the Township is leveraging this information to inform the upcoming budget for 2024. By allocating resources and planning for these crucial improvements, the Township demonstrates its commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where individuals of all abilities can participate in municipal activities without barriers.
 - Expanding CloudPermit for Greater Accessibility
 - The Township has taken a significant step forward in its commitment to improving accessibility and efficiency for residents and stakeholders by expanding the use of CloudPermit. Initially used exclusively for online building permits, the CloudPermit system has now been extended to include planning applications. This expansion ensures that residents, developers, and other stakeholders can access, submit, and track their planning applications online with greater convenience and ease. By integrating more services into this user-

friendly digital platform, the Township is removing physical and procedural barriers that can impede participation and access to essential services. This development is part of a broader initiative to enhance transparency, streamline processes, and create an inclusive experience that caters to individuals of varying abilities and needs. Through this commitment to modern, accessible technology, the Township aims to foster a more connected community where all residents have equal opportunities to engage with municipal services efficiently and effectively.

- Sidewalk Upgrades
 - The Township continues to improve existing sidewalks to comply with AODA requirements. Sidewalk Upgrades: The Township is committed to enhancing the safety and accessibility of its public walkways. Efforts are ongoing to upgrade and improve the current sidewalks to ensure they meet the standards outlined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These improvements are part of the Township's broader initiative to create a more inclusive and user-friendly environment for all residents, including those with mobility challenges. By investing in these updates, the Township aims to provide safer, more accessible routes for pedestrians, ensuring that public spaces are welcoming and navigable for everyone.
- HR Software Implementation
 - The launch of the new Human Resources Information System (UKG) represents a significant advancement in enhancing accessibility and efficiency within the Township's HR framework. This system empowers municipal employees by providing improved, user-friendly access to essential documents and employment-related information. With UKG, staff can conveniently and securely retrieve personal data, benefits details, and other vital HR resources, promoting a more inclusive and connected work environment. This initiative not only streamlines HR processes but also prioritizes accessibility, ensuring that all employees can easily access the information they need to support their professional well-being and engagement.
- **The Township of Lucan Biddulph achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Identified the need for an accessible walkway to a previously installed playground. Staff undertook the project in the summer of 2024 to create a paved walkway.
 - Sidewalk upgrades including widening, curb ramps in sections of Lucan Biddulph when work was being undertaken within replacement schedule.
 - Hosted an Accessibility for Small Businesses Workshop.
 - Circulated Guidelines and Policy documents to local small businesses on the AODA.
 - Distributed window sticker signs for local businesses that provided a contact phone number if a customer requires assistance for accessibility challenges.
 - Provided accessible outdoor washrooms at community events where an

- accessible washroom was not existing/or close by.
 - Provided a new paved walkway and curb ramp along Main Street, Lucan to a new commercial plaza for those with accessibility challenges to be able to access these new businesses safely.
 - Installed large directional signage within the Lucan Biddulph Community Memorial Centre facility.
 - Provided solutions/ideas to residents on how to create a more accessible Halloween experience.
 - Identified the need and importance of continuing to provide an Accessibility Funding Program under the Community Improvement Plan for 2024.
- **The Municipality of Middlesex Centre achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Continued updates to municipal website to ensure compliance with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements
 - Updated AODA compliant website resources for Legislative Services
 - Komoka Park Playground Upgrades
 - New playground with accessible play components
 - Zero entry curbing
 - 2 new full AODA parking spaces signed and tactile strips
 - New 1.8-meter-wide asphalt trail around entire playground
 - New bench pads that extend 1-meter past end of bench to allow wheelchair to rest beside the bench
 - Komoka Park Upgrades
 - Addition of 850 meters of 1.8-meter-wide asphalt walking trails in park that connect to existing asphalt trails
 - Komoka Park Basketball Court
 - In partnership with Middlesex Paving, construction of new basketball court that supports wheelchair basketball
 - New 2-meter-wide path from Parking lot to new basketball court
 - Meadow Creek Playground:
 - New playground with accessible play components
 - Zero entry curbing
 - 2 new full AODA parking spaces signed and tactile strips
 - New 1.8-meter-wide asphalt trail around entire playground
 - New bench pads that extend 1-meter past end of bench to allow wheelchair to rest beside the bench
 - New asphalt pathway leading from parking lot to playground area
 - Komoka Wellness Centre
 - Improved design of facility entrance door openers
 - Push bar instead of small push button
 - Staged vestibule door opening instead of 2 buttons. 1 button opens both doors
 - Installation of drop-down grab bars on Transfer side of toilets in 2 universal washrooms
 - Installation of drop-down grab bars on Transfer side of toilets in 4 accessible washroom stalls
 - Addition of auto door opener and call button in the main floor universal

- washroom
 - Delaware Community Centre:
 - Improved accessible ramp into the Delaware community centre archives entrance
 - Repairs to handrailing at Delaware Community Centre main entrance to better enable those with less mobility
 - Denfield Park
 - Addition of 1 full size AODA compliant picnic table under pavilion
 - Weldon Park
 - Addition of 1 full size AODA compliant picnic table under pavilion
 - Continuation of asphalt roadways leading into park connecting front parking lot and back parking lot
 - Addition of 2 full parking spaces with tactile strips connecting to park pathways
 - Heritage Park
 - Addition of 1 AODA parking space connected to concrete washroom path
 - Kilworth Sidewalk Upgrades
 - Additional AODA sidewalk approximately 300m in length along Woodland Drive & Birchcrest Drive.
 - Sidewalk also provides a new convenient and accessible connection to the local community mailbox along Woodland Drive
- **The Municipality of North Middlesex achieved the following in 2024:**
 - The Municipality of North Middlesex created a Community Guide that standardized general community information. It is accessible by paper pamphlet, the Municipal App, and on the Website.
- **The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Accessible Walking Path: A new walking path at Simpson Park to enhance mobility for all visitors.
 - New Sidewalk: Construction of a new sidewalk at the Southwest Middlesex Recreation Centre to improve accessibility.
 - Inclusive Playground: An accessible and inclusive playground has been established in Wardsville.
 - Paved Parking Area: The parking lot and surrounding areas at the Appin Community Centre have been paved for better access to the facility.
 - Wheelchair Ramp: A new wheelchair ramp has been installed at the Southwest Middlesex Recreation Centre.
 - Improved Lighting: Lighting enhancements were made in the parking lot at the Appin Community Centre to increase safety and accessibility.
 - Ongoing Sidewalk Upgrades: Continuous improvements to municipal sidewalks are being made to fully comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards.
 - Accessible Parking Zones: New accessible parking areas have been created along key roadways in Glencoe, enhancing convenience for individuals with disabilities.

- HRIS Implementation: The launch of a new Human Resources Information System (UKG) provides municipal employees with improved access to documents, including employment-related information.
- CloudPermit Software: The introduction of CloudPermit software for planning applications facilitates a more accessible application process for the public.
- **The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc achieved the following in 2024:**
 - AODA-standard upgrades to washroom at Alexandra Park & Splashpad
 - Installation of concrete pads to accommodate park benches based on AODA standards – Saulsbury Park, Strathroy & Applewood Park, Mount Brydges
 - Provision of accessible parking spaces at Mount Brydges Library
 - Widening of sidewalks from 1.2 metres to 1.5 metres at the following locations in the Municipality:
 - Bowan Street from Adelaide Road to Queen Street
 - Queen Street from Glendon Drive to 2467 Queen Street
 - Longfield Street from Adelaide Road to Forbes Street
 - Forbes Street from Longfield Street to Bowan Street
 - Public Information Centres for the following projects were held in accessible facilities:
 - Head Street North Reconstruction Project
 - Queen Street Reconstruction Project Phase II
 - Woods Edge Park, Mount Brydges
 - Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Master Plan and Pollution Prevention Control Plan
 - Provision of AODA training for staff and Councillors at onboarding stage - Ongoing
 - Provision of documents in accessible format - Ongoing
 - Monitoring of corporate website for website and document accessibility - Ongoing
 - Closed captioning provided for meeting livestreams - Ongoing
 - Ensure circulation of internal and external communications (such as planning notices and print advertising) are AODA compliant with appropriate font and contrast and offering of alternative formats - Ongoing
- **The Municipality of Thames Centre achieved the following in 2024:**
 - Renovation and expansion at FlightExec Centre – doubling the space we rent to Victoria Order of Nurses for them to run their day program and allow them to add 2 respite rooms, along with more than doubling our Active Living Centre (previously called the Senior Centre), which offers numerous programs and events for those 50 and older.
 - The walking trail at Thorndale Community Park, which is approx. 1.5km long and was previously crushed limestone, was upgraded to a paved path, with the main section also widened beyond the 6' standard we have for the balance of this path.

- Community Garden created in Dorchester (and support added to existing community garden in Thorndale), with both locations having raised vegetable gardens (roughly 3') for accessibility.
 - Developing a new Website which will launch before the end of the year, with updated accessibility including html forms, e-commerce and more
 - Refresher training for staff on AODA requirements including accessible documents and Notice of Service Disruptions.
 - Accessible Customer Service training for new hires as part of onboarding and refreshers for all staff are ongoing
 - Review of Evacuation Plans for all municipal buildings including accessibility requirements for staff and public is taking place
 - Review underway of all Human Resources policies
- **Village of Newbury achieved the following in 2024:**
 - All notices, forms, documents, minutes and agendas are produced in standardized Arial 12-point font.

Availability of the Plan and Status Report

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

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Accessible formats and/or communication supports available upon request.