



County of Bruce

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2013-2014

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

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1. Background

Ontario currently has two active accessibility acts – The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

In 2008, the Customer Service Standard was the first accessibility standard to become law. Designated public sector organizations were required to comply by January 1, 2010.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards which regulate information and communications, employment and transportation came into effect on July 1, 2011 and is now law. Requirements under this standard will be phased in over time (2011-2021).

The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in Ontario by identifying, preventing and removing physical and other barriers that may limit opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in society.

Under the AODA, private, public and non-profit organizations are required to identify, remove and prevent barriers in order to make the Province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025. Through the AODA, the Provincial Government has identified key areas for the development of “common” accessibility standards intended to set requirements across all organizations and sectors:

1. Customer Service

Addresses how organizations provide their goods and services in an accessible manner – influencing attitudes and behaviour.

2. Information and Communications

Makes the ways organizations send and receive information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities.

3. Employment

Requires organizations to have a process on how to accommodate persons in activities such as interviews, workplace duties, etc.

4. Transportation

Addresses ways to prevent and remove barriers to transportation so that everyone can more easily travel in Ontario.

5. Built Environment

Addresses access to and within buildings and outdoor spaces (currently under development).

2. Description of the County of Bruce

The County of Bruce is an upper tier municipality with a population of approximately 65,000. The County includes the lower tier municipalities of Arran-Elderslie, Brockton, Huron-Kinloss, Kincardine, Northern Bruce Peninsula, Saugeen Shores, South Bruce and South Bruce Peninsula.

The County of Bruce has a vision which:

“Protects the quality of life of Bruce County while ensuring the growth of sustainable communities based upon diverse economic opportunities which respect the natural environment.”

3. Commitment to Accessibility Planning

Improving accessibility is important for all residents of Bruce County. It is not only important, but it is the right thing to do given that so many of our residents are living with some form of disability. Approximately 15.5% or 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability – that’s one in seven. That number is expected to grow significantly in the next 20 years as the population ages.

Accessibility is a powerful tool – it improves our communication, it brings more people together and it increases our competitive advantage. In an accessible organization, a broader range of people will be able to work for the County and more people will have access to our services.

Our goal is to ensure accessibility for our employees and the public we serve in our services, products and facilities. Employees need to be able to function effectively and customers need to receive timely, high quality services in a way that works for them.

We want to provide excellent public service for all Ontarians. We want to reflect the public we serve in everything we do and we want to attract the talented people we need to fill jobs. Building a dynamic and accessible organization will help us reach these goals.

The County of Bruce is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to County facilities and services for people with disabilities
- The participation of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plan
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community with disabilities.

4. Accessibility Plan

Since 2004 all municipalities in the Province have had a legal obligation under the ODA to prepare annual accessibility plans. Under the AODA, accessibility planning requirements shift from annual to multi-year plans which must outline an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet the requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR). The first multi-year plan must be in place by January 1, 2013.

This Plan describes:

- The measures that the County has taken over previous years to remove barriers to people with disabilities
- The process by which the County of Bruce is identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities
- The continuing and new actions the County will take during the coming year to remove barriers to people with disabilities
- The communication of this accessibility plan

5. Accessibility Advisory Committee

Municipal Governments play a crucial role in the planning and development of our communities. Municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish or continue an Accessibility Advisory Committee. The majority of its members must include people with disabilities. The Committee advises Council about the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of an

accessibility plan which is intended to address existing barriers to people with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being established.

Establishment of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Bruce County Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is a legislatively mandated Committee that was first appointed by County Council in September, 2002.

The AAC advises Council on any by-laws, programs, policies, practices and services that affect persons with a disability. The Committee's review may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Site plans and building plans of existing municipal buildings
- Existing municipal by-laws
- Significant renovations
- Leased facilities or any other facility used as a municipal building
- Municipal capital facilities under the Municipal Act
- Goods and services provided by the municipality or agents providing services under contract with the municipality
- Employment practices and accommodations
- Communications and publications
- External service providers
- Planning practices
- Current capital plan
- Operational policies
- Accessibility of meetings

The County of Bruce Real Property Register contains a listing of all properties owned and leased by the County and is available for inspection by the Accessibility Advisory Committee upon request.

6. Process to Identify Barriers

The ODA gives organizations the flexibility to determine which barriers it will work to remove or prevent each year. This can include accessibility problems in:

- Physical facilities
- Site planning
- Service and program delivery to staff and the public

- Procurement policies and practices
- Interviewing, hiring, promotion and other human resource policies and practices
- Technologies
- Information and communication infrastructures
- Customer service for people with disabilities

Approaches to barrier identification:

In preparation of an Accessibility Plan, it is recommended that the County identify as many barriers (and potential barriers) as possible. Many barriers are simple to remove or prevent. Recognizing them, however, may require effort if employees are not accustomed to thinking in terms of barriers.

The approaches described below may be used to help generate a list of barriers. From this list, the Accessibility Advisory Committee will choose the ones the organization will address in the coming year.

- Note previously identified barriers
- Brainstorm a list of known and suspected barriers
- Solicit staff contributions
- Consult the wider community
- Conduct accessibility assessments using guides and checklists
- Hire professionals to conduct assessments, where appropriate

Examples:

- a) Architectural barriers (building design, areas adjacent to the building, shape of rooms, size of doorways, etc.)
- b) Physical barriers (objects added to the environment, doors, windows, elevators, furniture, workstations, recreational facilities, playgrounds, bathroom hardware, planters, etc.)
- c) Communication barriers (difficulties receiving information in person or by telephone, difficulties interacting with receptionists, security staff or other staff, difficulties receiving training)
- d) Information barriers, (inadequate or incomprehensible signage, difficulties, reading brochures, forms, manuals, web sites, fax transmissions, equipment labels, computer screens, etc.)
- e) Policy barriers (rules, regulations and protocols that prevent you from doing your job as well as possible or from serving the public, or that restrict public participation)

- f) Attitudinal barriers (staff who do not know how to communicate with people with disabilities, staff who refuse to provide service, discriminatory behaviours)
- g) Technological barriers (computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones and switches, inadequate or inappropriate assistive technologies, technologies that degrade rather than enhance access for people with disabilities)

To assist with the identification process also refer to Schedule "A" "Where to Look for Barriers to People with Disabilities".

7. Our Progress on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Regulations

The County continues to develop and implement accessibility initiatives under the ODA and meet compliance dates for accessibility requirements within the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA which became law on July 1, 2011.

The following outlines our commitments and our progress in meeting accessibility standards in five key areas:

- Customer Service
- General
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Procurement

(A) Customer Service

The County of Bruce is committed to ensuring that all staff and customers, whatever their ability, work in an accommodating environment and receive accessible goods and services in a timely manner.

The County will achieve this by:

- Reviewing and updating policies regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service
- Embedding accessibility requirements into staff training and orientation materials

- Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action

Our accomplishments:

- Accessible Customer Service Policy 2009 meets all the requirements of the customer service regulation
- Accessible Customer Service Training to all staff and volunteers

(B) General

The County of Bruce will be required to meet the following general requirements:

- Establish policies on how we will meet our obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (by 2013)
- Develop a multi-year accessibility plan outlining strategies to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and review the plan once every five years (by 2013)
- Train employees, volunteers, all those who participate in developing the County's policies, and all others who provide goods or services on behalf of the County, about the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, as well as the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities (by 2014)

(C) Information and Communications

Information and communications are a large part of County of Bruce daily business. It is because of this that it is so important to ensure that information and communications are created in a way that considers accessibility.

The County will follow best practices when developing, implementing and maintaining information and communications strategies and products. This includes websites, intranet sites, print communications materials as well as face-to-face interactions.

The County is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

The County will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that emergency information, procedures, plans and public safety information is available in alternate formats, when requested (2012)
- Achieving compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure that both internal and external websites are accessible to people with disabilities (2014)
- Developing guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents for common desktop applications such as MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Developing a training strategy to ensure that staff has the knowledge, tools and technical advice to create accessible materials
- Introducing staff to the use of plain language when creating new or reviewing/revising existing documents (policies, procedures, forms, brochures, etc.)
- Ensuring that a process is in place for receiving and responding to feedback and make them available to people with disabilities in accessible formats or with appropriate communications supports, on request (2014)
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level 2.0 AA Compliance (2021)

Our accomplishments:

- Website redesign in accordance with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A (2011)
- Documents are available in an alternate format, upon request
- Produced 6 (six) emergency preparedness brochures, for Mobility, Travel Considerations, Vision, Non-Vision Disabilities, Seniors with Special Needs and Service Animals and Support Persons (2011)

(D) Employment

The County of Bruce is committed to ensuring that the process of finding, getting and keeping a job is as inclusive as possible in order to build an effective workforce. The County of Bruce will be an employer of choice that enables and encourages persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of the organization.

The County will achieve this by:

- Enhancing workplace emergency responses through individualized emergency response information and assistance as required (2012)
- Understanding employer obligations to provide employment accommodations
- Reviewing on an ongoing basis, Human Resources policies, practices and procedures to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities throughout the employment process, including recruitment, retention, career development and return-to-work
- Notifying internal and external job applicants that, where needed, accommodations for disabilities will be provided, on request, to support their participation in all aspects of the recruitment process (2014)
- Notifying job applicants who have been invited to participate in recruitment, assessment or selection process that, where needed, accommodations for disabilities are available, on request, to support their participation in the process (2014)
- Notifying successful applicants of the County's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment (2014)
- Informing new and existing employees of the County's policies for supporting employees with disabilities, including providing employment related accommodations for disabilities (2014)
- Consulting with employees who have disabilities in order to provide them with the accessible formats and communications supports they require to do their jobs effectively and to be informed of information that is generally available to all employees in that workplace (2014)
- Have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities (2014)
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance management process (annual performance reviews) (2014)
- When providing career development and advancement opportunity the County will take into account the accessibility needs of their employees who have disabilities (2014)
- Redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when moving them to other positions, so

that employees can continue to have their accommodation needs met (2014)

Our accomplishments:

- Developed an Emergency Evacuation Assistance Policy for County employees who have a disability and who require assistance in evacuating the building in an emergency situation (2011)
- Have a process in place to create individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, upon request (2011)

(E) Procurement

The County of Bruce will ensure that procurement processes are inclusive so that all vendors can participate and are aware of the need to provide accessible goods and services. Accessibility features include technical features (software) and structural features (physical design, including hardware or product specifications).

The County will achieve this by:

- Embedding accessibility requirements into the procurement process including the planning and document development stages
- Through policies and practices that include accessibility considerations, buyers are able to conduct business in a way that accommodates Ontarians of all abilities

See Schedule "B" for a Chart of Progress on 2012 Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal.

8. Bruce County Department Updates

Social Services Department

The Port Elgin Resource Centre is not accessible. The Department continues to look for an alternative location to meet this need.

Outreach sites in church basements are not accessible. These locations are used for employment support for clients. The Department continues to search for better options.

Gateway Haven

The construction of the ramp on the second floor is still in progress and should be completed by the end of November, 2012.

9. 2013-2014 Accessibility Initiatives

See Schedule "C" for Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal in 2013-2014.

10. Consultation of the Plan

In the preparation of this plan the County of Bruce conducted the following consultation activities:

- Consultation with the County of Bruce Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure input is received from all members
- Consultation with the residents of the County of Bruce. Notice posted on County's website and in Library Branches to receive comments
- Consultation with County Staff. Notice posted in all County Departments

11. Communication of the Accessibility Plan

The approved Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall be posted on the County's website and be provided in an accessible format upon request. The Plan will also be circulated to all Bruce County Public Library Branches and all lower tier municipalities in the County of Bruce.

12. Contact Information

The County of Bruce is committed to ensuring accessibility is a reality throughout all facilities and business operations. There is still so much to accomplish, and as we progress, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact us with your questions, ideas or comments.

Phone 519.881.1291

Toll Free 1.877.681.1291

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Schedule "A"

Where to Look for Barriers to People with Disabilities

The Built Environment

Exterior to a building	Cubicles
Interior of a building	Washrooms
Parking areas	Cafeterias
Drop-off zones	Elevators
Hallways	Escalators
Floors	Stairs
Carpets	Stairwells
Lobbies	Closets
Reception areas	Storage areas
Offices	Lighting

Physical

Furniture	Windows
Work stations	Planters
Chairs	Bathroom hardware
Doorways	Locks
Door knobs	Security systems

Information

Books	Forms
Printed information	Manuals
Web-based resources	Fax transmissions
Signage	Equipment labels
Bulletin boards	Computer screens
Brochures	

Policies and Practices

Procurement and purchasing	Promotion
Job postings	By-laws
Hiring	Regulations
Interviewing	Rules
Testing	Protocols
Meetings	Safety and evacuation
Planning & subdivision approvals	

Technological

Computers	Keyboards
Operating systems	Mice
Standard software	Printers
Proprietary software	Fax machines
Web sites	Telephones
TTYs	Control panels
Photocopiers	Switches
Appliances	

Recreational Facilities

Playgrounds	Tracks (indoor and outdoor)
Gymnasiums	Playing fields
Swimming pools	Climbing bars
Change rooms	Gymnasium equipment
Theatres	Toys
Auditoria – audience	Auditoria – stage
Rail trails	Recreational trails
Picnic areas	

Communication

Training	Public announcements
Receptionists	Security

Tools

Hand tools, manual	Hand tools, electrical
Machinery	Carts and dollies

Service Delivery

In person	Via the web
By telephone	By e-mail
By mail	

Transportation

Buses	Water craft (ferries)
Trains	Cars
Aircraft	Vans

Schedule "B"

Progress on 2012 Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
<p>Customer Service</p> <p>Potential barriers in delivering goods and services to customers</p>	<p>Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Clerk-Treasury</p>
<p>Information and Communications</p> <p>Potential barriers in information sharing</p>	<p>Introduce staff to the use of plain language in their writing.</p> <p>Circulated to staff July, 2012</p>	<p>All Departments</p>
	<p>Improvements to the size of labels and storyboards at Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre.</p> <p>Display boards meet Museum standards</p>	<p>Museum</p>
	<p>Ensure that emergency procedures, plans or public safety information is available in an accessible format.</p> <p>Completed in 2011</p>	<p>Emergency Services Department</p>
	<p>Ensure the County's website is accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility.</p> <p>Completed in 2011</p>	<p>Information Technology Department</p>
<p>Built Environment</p> <p>Inaccessible facilities</p>	<p>Conduct accessibility audits of County owned or rented facilities to provide advice on how barriers might be eliminated.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>

Schedule "B" (continued)

Progress on 2012 Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
<p>Built Environment</p> <p>Inaccessible facilities</p>	<p>Council Chambers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. contrasting carpeting for floor transitions 2. Install railings and/or secure end chairs to the floor <p>Railings were installed in 2012</p> <p>Contrast carpeting is not a viable option for the floor transitions.</p>	<p>Clerk-Treasury</p>
<p>Counters in the accessible washrooms have a "skirt" making it impossible for a person in a wheelchair to access the sink</p>	<p>Have "skirt" around the counter cut out to enable a person in a wheelchair to reach the sink.</p> <p>Applied for funding for this project and will proceed and plan to have work completed by the end of 2012.</p>	<p>Museum</p>
<p>The doors into the three (3) accessible washrooms are difficult to open because of the spring mount at the top of the door</p>	<p>Install automatic door openers</p> <p>Grant not approved so amount was put into 2012 budget to install an automatic opener for the bathroom on the 2nd level. To be completed by the end of 2012.</p>	<p>Museum</p>
<p>No access to the outdoor deck from the multi-purpose room on the third floor</p>	<p>Purchase portable ramps for the interior and install a permanent ramp on the exterior.</p> <p>Applied for a grant for this project. It has been determined that a ramp will need to be built. The deck is not utilized in the fall/winter. Will budget and build in 2013.</p>	<p>Museum</p>

Schedule "B" (continued)

Progress on 2012 Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
There is no access to the stage in the Theatre.	Consider using portable ramps when needed. Applied for a grant for this project. It has been determined that a ramp will need to be built. Will budget and build in 2013	Museum
Exit to Ferry Lake from the main lobby is impossible for a person in a wheelchair because of the location of the automatic button.	Consider moving the location of the button to the other side of the door Completed in 2011	Museum
To provide an emergency and community accessible ramp with railings from the second floor.	Will be applying for Enabling Accessibility Funding to assist with the cost to construct the ramp. Funding was not approved however the project proceeded and will be completed by the end of November, 2012.	Gateway Haven
Employment Potential barriers in existing Policies, Procedures and Practices	Regularly review Policies, Procedures and Practices to ensure accessibility. Ongoing	Human Resources
Potential barriers throughout the employment process	Shall provide individualized workplace emergency information to employees who have a disability. Completed in 2011	Human Resources
	Ensuring that potential employees with disabilities be provided with the appropriate accommodations during all aspects of the recruitment phase. Completed in 2011	Human Resources

Schedule "C"

Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal in 2013-2014

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
Customer Service Potential barriers in delivering goods and services to customers	Continue to deliver Accessible Customer Service training to all new employees and volunteers	Clerk-Treasury
	Review and update policies regularly to ensure high quality, accessible customer service	All Departments
	Reviewing customer feedback and taking appropriate action	All Departments
General Procurement	Incorporate accessibility criteria and features into procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities	All Departments
Policies	Establish policies on how the County will meet its obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation	Clerk-Treasury
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Develop a multi-year accessibility plan	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Training	Provide training on the requirements of the accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities	Clerk-Treasury Human Resources
Information and Communications Potential barriers relating to information sharing	Accessible Documents Training	All Departments
Feedback	Ensure that receiving and responding to feedback is made available in an accessible format upon request or with appropriate communication supports	All Departments

Schedule "C" (continued)

Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal in 2013-2014

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
Information and Communications Accessible Formats and Communications Supports	Provide information and communicate in an accessible manner about goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities, upon request	All Departments
Employment Recruitment – General	Notify internal and external job applicants that accommodations for disabilities will be provided upon request	Human Resources
Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process	Notify job applicants who have been invited to participate in the recruitment, assessment or selection process that accommodations for disabilities are available on request	Human Resources
Notice to Successful Applicants	Notify successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment	Human Resources
Informing Employees of Supports	Inform new and existing employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities, and provide employment-related accommodations for disabilities	Human Resources
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for employees	Consult with employees who have disabilities in order to provide them with accessible formats and communications	Human Resources
Documented Individual Accommodation Plans	Develop written individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities	Human Resources
Return to Work Process	Have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities	Human Resources

Schedule "C" (continued)

Initiatives for Barrier Prevention or Removal in 2013-2014

Barrier	Action	Responsibility
Performance Management	Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during the performance management process	Human Resources
Career Development and Advancement	Provide career development and advancement opportunities that take into account the accessibility needs of employees who have disabilities	Human Resources
Redeployment	If redeployment processes are used employers will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when moving them to other positions	Human Resources
Built Environment Inaccessible facilities	Resource Centre located in Port Elgin is not accessible. Searching for a more suitable location.	Social Services Department
Inaccessible facilities	Outreach sites located in church basements are not accessible. Continue to search for better options.	Social Services Department
Steps in Council Chambers are not easily identifiable	Continue to review options for floor transition	Clerk-Treasury
No support structure in elevator	Install railings in elevator at the County Administration Centre	Clerk-Treasury