



**County of Bruce**

**Multi-Year Accessibility**

**Status Update**

**2015**

## **Objective**

This is the third status update on the County of Bruce's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. In 2014 Bruce County released its second multi-year accessibility plan (2015-2018), in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The plan outlines the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, including how we will meet phased-in requirements under the AODA.

This status update includes the accessibility initiatives that were done in 2015 to implement the strategy outlined in our multi-year accessibility plan.

## **Background**

The AODA is the first law of its kind in Canada. Under the AODA, the Province of Ontario is developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. The goal of the Act and the Standards is to make the Province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025.

Since 2005, two regulations outlining accessibility standards have been made under the AODA. The first regulation was the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07). The second was the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). Between them, they establish standards for accessible customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public space in the built environment and for overall training, planning and reporting of accessibility initiatives.

## **Our Commitment to Accessibility**

The County of Bruce tries to make sure its programs, services and facilities are barrier-free and continues to support the goal of an accessible Province by 2025 by implementing the AODA.

The County will meet or exceed the regulations made under the AODA by making sure equal opportunity is given to people with disabilities and that goods and services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

## **2015 Accessibility Status Update**

The 2015 Accessibility Status Update includes the County of Bruce's commitment to removing barriers to our programs and services and the progress we have made on the actions to meet the AODA.

**a) Accessible Customer Service**

In 2008, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service was the first standard to become law. The County is committed to making sure all members of the public receive a fair customer service experience that meets their needs.

**What we have done:**

- Continued to review customer feedback and take appropriate action
- Continued to comply with the requirements of the Customer Service Standard, including implementing the Accessibility policy and training staff on an ongoing basis.

**b) General Requirements**

In 2011, the Province combined the Information and Communications Standard, Employment Standard and Transportation Standard into one regulation, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). The General Requirements are regulatory requirements that apply across all standards in this regulation. The County is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining policies governing how we achieve or will achieve accessibility through meeting our requirements under the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation.

**What we have done:**

- Reviewed the County's 2015-2018 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan in consultation with our Accessibility Advisory Committee and posted a status update of the plan on the County's website in accordance with AODA requirements.
- Continued to incorporate accessibility features into our procurement or acquisition of goods, services and facilities wherever practicable
- Continued to train all staff and volunteers on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) and the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) as it pertains to people with disabilities.

### **c) Information and Communications**

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

#### **What we have done:**

- Continued to make sure that content on websites, intranet sites and print communications are created in a way that considers accessibility.
- In 2014 a statement was added to the County's website informing users that documents are available in an accessible format
- In May, 2014 additional staff received training on creating accessible documents.
- Continued to provide accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.
- Continued to make sure processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible

### **d) Employment**

The County is committed to inclusive employment practices that ensure the processes of recruiting, hiring, communicating with, and retaining employees with disabilities fulfills the intent of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

#### **What we have done:**

- Continued to inform applicants and employees of accessible hiring practices and policies.
- Continued to provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who require one because of a disability.
- Continued to support employees who were absent from work because of a disability, through our return to work process.
- Continued to include a statement on all job postings that we accommodate the needs of qualified applicants under the Human Rights Code in all parts of the hiring process.
- Advise candidates when scheduling interviews/testing that we have an Accommodation in the Workplace Policy for persons with disabilities and ask them if they require an accommodation for their interview and or test.
- Inform all new employees in their offer letter about the County's Accommodation in the Workplace Policy.
- Inform all new employees, in their offer letter or existing employees through the Employee Relations and Wellness Coordinator, of the County's policy for supporting employees with disabilities.

## **e) Design of Public Spaces Standard**

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment was the last standard to become law and is also part of the IASR. The County is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers in public buildings and spaces by making sure that major changes to existing features do not create any new barriers.

### **What we have done**

- Continued to make sure that major changes to existing features meet or exceed the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standard.
- Continued to train staff on the Design of Public Spaces Standard which is included with the IASR training

## **f) Bruce County Accessible Washrooms Project**

In September, 2014 Bruce County Municipalities participated in a web based mapping project that would see public washrooms (including accessible features) being identified in all municipalities in the County.

The accessible washroom project went “live” on the web on April 30, 2015. Please visit the [Explore the Bruce Website](#) to see the completed site. Residents and Visitors to Bruce County will find this a very useful tool.

### **Next Steps**

We will continue to identify, prevent and remove barriers where we find them. We will also consult with people with disabilities as we engage in the ongoing process of reviewing and refining our policies and practices to better serve our community.

We will train staff on creating accessible documents to ensure that all documents are accessible and that content on our website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.

### **Reviewing and Monitoring the Accessibility Plan**

The County of Bruce's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.

### **Contact Information**

For more information please contact the Deputy Clerk by calling 519.881.1291, ext. 310 or by email at [dvanwyck@brucecounty.on.ca](mailto:dvanwyck@brucecounty.on.ca)

Accessible formats available upon request.