

DECEMBER 14, 2023

COUNCIL REPORT

REPORT NO. CC-030-2023

ACCESSIBILITY STATUS REPORT 2023

**ANDREA BOLTON
DEPUTY CLERK/ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR**

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Counties Council receive the Accessibility Status Report 2023 as attached to Report No. CC-030-2023; and

THAT the Report be posted on the Counties' website.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Activities identified in the Accessibility Status Report 2023 can be found in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027, which is reflected in the Counties' overall budget.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Where possible reports are provided in a digital format to reduce the Counties' carbon footprint.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report can be made available in alternate accessible formats on request. Meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee are livestreamed with closed captioning.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The Accessibility Status Report, upon receipt by Counties Council, will be posted to the Counties' website, as required in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

BACKGROUND

The AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation requires designated public sector organizations to prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and O. Reg. 191/11. The report must be posted on the designated public sector organization's website and provided in accessible formats upon request.

DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2027 sets out accessible goals for the Counties to achieve. The Accessibility Status Report identifies which of these goals were addressed in 2023, and suggests the immediate next steps for further accomplishments.

Accomplishments highlighted in the Accessibility Status Report 2023 touch on each of the Accessibility Standards which affect the Counties, including General accomplishments, the Information and Communication Standard, Customer Service Standard, Employment Standard, and Design of Public Spaces Standard.

ATTACHMENT

Accessibility Status Report 2023

ANDREA BOLTON
DEPUTY CLERK/ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR

DECEMBER 4, 2023
DATE

RAYMOND CALLERY
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

DECEMBER 7, 2023
DATE

Accessibility Status Report 2023

The Accessibility Status Report is the annual update on the progress of measures taken to improve accessibility and implement the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

This status report includes accessibility initiatives that were undertaken in 2023 to implement the strategies outlined in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and reflects on the activities of the Leeds and Grenville Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Statement of Commitment

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is a designated public sector organization under the AODA and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities by providing goods, services, programs, and facilities in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all people. The Counties is committed to provide persons with disabilities the same opportunities to access its goods, services, programs, and facilities in the same manner as other persons, wherever possible.

Highlights and Accomplishments 2023

General

- **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC):** The AAC held four meetings in 2023. The meetings were a hybrid mix of Zoom and in-person. The meetings were livestreamed on the Counties' website with closed captioning.
- **Advocacy:** The Accessibility Advisory Committee played a role in advocacy in several ways.
 - **National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) 2023:** NAAW was commemorated by a series of Tweets from the Counties' Twitter account celebrating the national theme of "from possibilities to practice", and was also promoted on the Accessibility Advisory Committee's Facebook page with daily postings and a message from the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
 - **County Road 43 Proposed Changes:** The Accessibility Advisory Committee received a delegation at its May meeting from the Public Works Department outlining the accessibility features of the County Road

43 Expansion. The Committee provided the Manager of Engineering and Operations with feedback on the proposed features.

- **Tour of Court House Apartments:** In February 2022, the Accessibility Advisory Committee received a presentation on the Court House Apartments, a partnership with the Municipality of North Grenville, whereby the Counties rents the former court house in Kemptville for a 40 year term and converts the building into 10 affordable housing units, two of which are accessible. In October 2023, the Committee had the opportunity to tour the Court House Apartments and provided feedback to the Counties' Housing Manager on the two accessible units. The Committee's feedback will be incorporated into future designs.

Information and Communication Standard

- **Guide to Accessible Word Documents:** Staff continued to promote the Guide to Accessible Word Documents to generate more user-friendly accessible documents.
- **Notice of Website Non-Compliance:** In 2023, the Counties received a Notice of Non-Compliance for its website. The Counties has since entered into an Agreement with the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility to remediate the site. The deadline contained in the Plan is December 31, 2024.
- **Website Automated Scanning:** Ongoing website reviews using the Siteimprove software are providing staff with information on areas of the Counties' website that require improvement with respect to accessibility.
- **Committee Website Audit:** In order to gain a better understanding of the level of accessibility of the Counties' website, and in conjunction with the Counties' Compliance Work Plan, as agreed upon by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, the Accessibility Advisory Committee undertook a manual user audit of a portion of the Counties' website. Evaluation of the site led to the Committee recommending Council budget for further remediation of the site in 2024, a recommendation that was adopted by Council.
- **Consultant Website Audit:** Following the preliminary website audit conducted by the Committee, a consultant was engaged to conduct a more extensive audit of the Counties' websites, leedsgrenville.com, discover.leedsgrenville.com and invest.leedsgrenville.com. The audit employs a mixture of automated and manual checks that will provide the Counties with a roadmap for future remediation.
- **Equidox Software/.pdf Remediation/Adobe Pro:** For the majority of 2023, the Counties accessed Equidox to remediate .pdfs being added to the website. This

tool assists staff in remediating inaccessible .pdf documents which can then be posted on the Counties' website. Following the end of the Equidox contract, the Counties moved to the Adobe Pro software for document remediation.

- **Subtitles/Closed Captioning:** Meetings that are livestreamed and recorded for the public are subtitled and available with closed captioning through the meeting software, eSCRIBE.

Customer Service Standard

- **Training:** Training for staff continued to ensure staff are aware of the Human Rights Code as it relates to disability, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), General Requirements and the Customer Service Standard. This training is part of the onboarding process for all new staff.
- **Council and Committee Training:** Training for Councillors, members of the Joint Services Committee, Planning Advisory Committee, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, with respect to Customer Service and Human Rights Code, was held in 2023 as part of the start of the new term of office and the new terms for the Committees.

Employment Standard

- **Accommodations:** Accommodations continue to be available throughout the recruitment process and employment life cycle.
- **Accommodation for Candidates for Employment:** Potential candidates for employment are informed of the availability of accommodation.
- **Updated Offers of Employment:** Offers of employment were updated to specify accommodations are available to staff before and after their start date, and describe how a new employee accesses an accommodation.
- **Individual Emergency Plans:** During the onboarding process, employees are made aware of the availability of individual emergency plans designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. This is also advertised monthly in the staff newsletter.
- **New Employees Onboarding:** New employees participate in the Counties' Onboarding Program, a part of which focuses on accessibility training. This training is done through the Counties' Learning Management System and administered by Human Resources.

Design of Public Spaces Standard

- **Court House Apartments, Kemptville:** Please refer to the Advocacy portion of the report.
- **Sand Bay County Park Accessible Washroom:** In 2023, the new accessible washroom at Sand Bay County Park project was completed. The washroom was an initiative of the Public Works Department and overseen by the Forest Manager with in-house labour. The new structure replaces a washroom and change room that was not accessible and had reached the end of its useful life.

Goals and Next Steps for Accessibility

- The Committee will be working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee of the Township of Rideau Lakes on a project in 2024.
- Staff will continue to improve the quality of documents on the Counties' website in order to ensure accessibility.
- Training on accessible .pdfs and accessible Word documents will be offered to staff in 2024 to streamline document remediation.
- Staff and the Accessibility Advisory Committee will continue to implement the Website Compliance Work Plan as set out by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, and with the consultant's audit results, will seek to obtain remediation services as necessary, pending Council approval as part of the 2024 Budget.
- The Counties will work toward implementation of the goals set out in the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Where appropriate, further collaboration on the construction of the G. Tackaberry and Family Home will occur in 2024.

Availability of Report and Plan

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be accessed through the Counties website www.leedsgrenville.com.

Contact Information

Accessibility Coordinator
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
25 Central Avenue West, Brockville ON K6V 4N6

Telephone 1-800-770-2170 613-342-3840 ext. 2307
Fax 613-342-2101
Email access@uclg.on.ca

Feedback

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville welcomes public input on how services and programs are delivered to persons with disabilities. Feedback is forwarded to the County Clerk and is collected by phone, email, website comments, in person, or by mail. Feedback in person is accepted at any of the Counties' public facilities and is accepted in accessible formats and with other communications supports as required.

Accessible Formats Available

Accessible format and communication supports are available upon request.