



**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan  
2023-2027**

Adopted By the Council of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville on \_\_\_\_\_.

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# **The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's Commitment to Accessibility**

At the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, providing excellent service to both the public and employees means delivering programs and services that are efficient, effective, responsive and accessible. Accessible service meets people's needs while protecting the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. When services are accessible, people can easily navigate into and around buildings and offices, receive information, communication and services in a format that meets their needs. Accessible services are important to inclusiveness, and benefit everyone.

By removing barriers to services and programs across the Counties and in the workforce, we will recognize the strength that comes with embracing new ideas and perspectives.

This commitment to inclusion will be realized through processes that engage and support employees and create a satisfying customer experience to those we serve. Providing a satisfying service experience at the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville improves the quality of life for those we serve and helps to secure their trust and confidence in the work we do.

Accessible service refers to providing flexible services to meet diverse needs whenever possible, and ensuring a satisfying service experience our primary focus. By identifying, removing and preventing barriers to our services, the Counties is continuing our commitments to diversity, inclusion and service excellence. The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is committed to creating inclusive programs and services that meet the needs of our ever-changing community.

The Counties continuously makes improvements in the accessibility of programs, services and facilities. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines our approach to achieving accessible and inclusive services in the years to come.

## **Legislative Background**

There are several pieces of legislation that impact accessibility in Ontario and at the federal level.

### **Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), was enacted in 2001. The Act requires municipalities to develop an annual accessibility plan aimed at identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed in 2005 with the vision of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The AODA gave the Province the mandate to create standards in accessibility, which will apply to both public and private sector organizations. The Province has since committed to developing and implementing standards in:

- Customer Service;
- Information and Communication;
- Employment;
- Transportation;
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment).

### **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg 191/11)**

On July 1, 2016, the Province combined the Customer Service Regulation into the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), Ontario Regulation 191/11. Requirements of the Standards were to be phased in from 2011 to 2021. The standards are listed above under the AODA heading.

### **The Ontario Human Rights Code**

The Ontario Human Rights Code states that people living with disabilities must be free from discrimination where they work, live and receive services, and their needs must be accommodated to the point of undue hardship. The Code has primacy over the AODA. The Ontario Human Rights Code is complaints-based legislation.

### **The Ontario Building Code**

The Ontario Building Code includes requirements with respect to accessibility. The Ontario Building Code was recently updated to improve barrier-free design and to ensure indoor spaces or buildings are accessible.

### **Accessible Canada Act**

The Accessible Canada Act: An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada was passed June 21, 2019. The legislation's purpose is to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. These areas include employment, the built environment, information and communication technologies, communication other than information and communication technologies. The procurement of goods, services and facilities, the design and delivery of programs and services, and transportation (including airlines, rail, road and marine transportation providers that cross provincial or international borders).

## **Leeds and Grenville Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The council of every municipality with a population of 10,000 or more must establish an accessibility advisory committee. The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville has established an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) with a majority of members whom are persons with disabilities. The Committee shall advise Council about the requirements and implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, and other matters for which Council may seek advice.

The Leeds and Grenville Accessibility Advisory Committee is made up of not less than five and not more than ten residents of the Counties, with an additional two members of Counties Council appointed to the Committee annually. The Warden is an ex-officio member of the Committee. The Committee's mandate is to:

- Advise Council on requirements and implementation of accessibility standards, plans, and policies;
- Provide advice to Council on accessibility matters relating to buildings/premise when the Counties is purchasing, construction or significantly renovating, including new leases or capital facilities;
- Prepare an annual report to be presented to Council; anything else as directed by Council; and
- Provide advice to Council and management on five to ten year plans for Counties-owned buildings where the public has access.

## **Message from the Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's Accessibility Advisory Committee is made up of passionate people from different parts of our community, with diverse areas of expertise and a lot of different perspectives. Together with the Counties Council and Staff, we are committed to achieve barrier free accessibility for persons with disabilities living, visiting, and working in our beautiful Counties. Our vision is that services, programs, infrastructure and buildings across the Counties be accessible equally to all. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will serve as a tool to assist the Counties in achieving its accessibility goals.

## **Consultation Process**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was updated with the participation of the Counties' Accessibility Advisory Committee, and persons with disabilities.

## 2023-2027 Priorities

The following represents the accessibility priorities of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville for the period 2023 to 2027. The priorities reflect those set out in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O. Reg. 191/11. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan lists activities to be taken over the next five years to lead the Counties to achieve its accessibility goals and to further its compliance with the AODA.

### General Requirements

Under the General section of the IASR, public sector organizations must establish accessibility policies, plans, and incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. Accessibility features must also be incorporated in the design, procurement or acquisition of self-service kiosks. Finally, public sector organizations must ensure training is provided on the IASR and the Human Rights Code for employees, volunteers, persons developing the organization's policies, and persons providing goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

### Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Policies

- **Annual Reports** – Council to continue to receive Annual Status Reports regarding progress in accessibility at the Counties, as well as progress related to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- **Compliance Reports** – Continue to file Accessibility Compliance Reports with the Province every other year, as required.
- **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan Update** – Continue to review and update the Multi-Year Plan every five years.
- **Accessibility Policy Refresh** – Review and refresh the Counties' overarching Accessibility Policy, adopted via By-law No. 17-08.

### Procurement

- **Proponent Reports, Plans in Accessible Formats** – Increase communication with proponents to ensure documents, reports, and plans submitted to the Counties are provided in an accessible format.
- **Promoting Accessible Procurement at Directors/Senior Management Level** – Increase communication with Directors and Senior Management with respect to the obligations the Counties has with respect to accessibility in the procurement acquisition of goods, services or facilities.

- **Expand on Accessible Procurement in the Counties Procurement Policy** – Expand the information and instruction included in the Procurement Policy’s Form of Agreement with respect to accessibility and the obligations of those providing goods, services, and facilities to or on behalf of the Counties.

### **Self-Service Kiosks**

- **Review the Defendant Virtual Access Devices at Provincial Offences Act Locations** – Review the type of virtual access devices being used in association with the Provincial Offences Act courts under the Counties’ control. This includes satellite court operations.

### **Training**

- **Update Onboarding Training** – Update and refresh the training modules used to train new employees.
- **Training of Volunteers** – Update and refresh training for volunteers with the Friends of Limerick Forest and at Maple View Lodge.

### **Customer Service**

The requirements set out under the Customer Service Standard apply to all organizations in Ontario that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties that have at least one employee in Ontario. The Customer Service Standard addresses service animals, training for staff, a feedback process, and the format of documents.

### **Service Animals**

- **Service Animal Policy** – Develop a detailed service animal policy for the Counties that elaborates on the commitments made under in the Accessibility Policy.

### **Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions**

- **Increase Communication Regarding Temporary Disruption Practices** – Increase communication to staff regarding temporary disruptions to accessible elements, services or programs used by persons with disabilities, and what steps must be taken to provide notice of the temporary disruption.
- **Create Standard Form** – Create a standard form to provide notice of disruption and when services are anticipated to be restored.

## **Training for Staff**

- **Proof of Training for Vendors/Proponents** – Incorporate into the procurement process a means by which vendors/proponents provide proof their employees providing a good, service or facility on behalf of the Counties have received the requisite training under the AODA.

## **Feedback Process**

- **Feedback Process More Prominently Displayed** – Increase the promotion of the Counties' Feedback Process at its public facilities through the posting of signs setting out how to provide feedback with respect to accessibility.

## **Information and Communication**

The Information and Communication Standard contained in the IASR sets out the manner in which information is to be provided to persons with disabilities. This extends to accessible formats and communication supports, emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, and accessible websites and web content. The Counties is committed to meeting the communication needs of persons with disabilities in accordance with the IASR.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

- **Accessible Formats Available Upon Request** – Increase the prevalence of the statement “accessible formats available upon request” in documentation created by the Counties.
- **Accessible Document Design** – Update existing templates and provide additional accessible document design instruction to all employees of the Counties with responsibilities that include creating documents, posting to social media, and posting to the Counties' websites. This may include instruction in colour contrast, plain language, use of fonts, when to use tables, and the proper use of headings in a document, etc.
- **Document Remediation** – Provide training to appropriate staff in the use of document remediation software to bring existing inaccessible documents up to an accessible standard.

## **Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information**

- **United Counties Emergency Plan** – Continue to provide the Counties Emergency Plan, as created under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, in an accessible format and with appropriate communications supports, where necessary.

## **Accessible Websites and Web Content**

- **Remediation of United Counties Websites** – The Clerk’s Department and the Information Technology Department will continue working to ensure all Counties’ websites conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level AA and transition the United Counties websites to WCAG 2.0 level AAA when possible.
- **Remediation of Legacy Documents** – The Clerk’s Department will continue working to remediate or remove legacy documents on the Counties’ websites that do not meet accessibility standards.
- **Formulate an Employee Website Accessibility Committee** – Formulate an Employee Website Accessibility Committee with representatives from each department who post to the websites, with the goal of ensuring only accessible material is posted to the websites going forward, and to address legacy documents.
- **Accessible Social Media Training** – Investigate and implement accessible social media training for applicable staff.

## **Employment**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is committed to fair, equitable and accessible employment practices that ensure the processes of recruiting, hiring, communicating and retaining employees with disabilities fulfills the intent of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Though the Employment Standard applies in respect to employees only, the Counties will extend this, wherever practicable, to elected officials and volunteers.

## **Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process**

- **Accommodation Availability** – Continue to include information about the availability of accommodation both in the internal and external job postings.

## **Notice to Successful Applicants**

- **Offers of Employment** – Incorporate clear wording regarding workplace accommodation for persons with disabilities into written offers of employment.

## **Informing Employees of Supports**

- **Onboarding Practices** – Continue the distribution of information regarding the availability of accommodation, and the existence of accommodation policies, as part of the onboarding process.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

- **Strengthen Distribution** - Improve communication to employees regarding the availability of communication supports and accessible formats for information provided to employees.

## **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

- **Communicate Availability of Emergency Response Supports** – Elaborate upon the communication regarding the availability of supports related to emergency response information, including the availability of such information, including individual emergency accommodation plans. Incorporate these communications into the onboarding process as well as continuing to promote it in the staff newsletter.

## **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

- **Update Workplace Accommodation Policy** – Review and update where necessary, the Workplace Accommodation Policy E-11.

## **Return to Work Process**

- **Update Workplace Accommodation Policy** – Review and update where necessary, the Workplace Accommodation Policy E-11.

## **Transportation**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville does not provide public transportation, nor does it regulate taxis.

## **Design of Public Spaces**

The Counties is committed to designing public spaces that are free from barriers and accessible to all persons. The Design of Public Spaces Standard applies to public spaces that are newly constructed or redeveloped.

### **Trails, Including Consultation**

- **Limerick Forest Trails Rest Areas** – Work to increase the number of rest opportunities along trails in Limerick Forest, with the installation of items such as benches.
- **Limerick Forest Trails and Accessible Design** – Work with the Forestry Department to ensure when new trails are developed, or existing trails redeveloped, they will include the technical requirements as set out in the AODA.
- **Limerick Forest Additional Accessible Trails Consultation** – Work with the Forestry Department when trails are to be redeveloped and made accessible, or where new trails are established, to ensure consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

### **Beach Access Routes**

- **Sand Bay County Park (Charleston Lake) Beach Access Route** – Evaluate the access from the parking area to the water at Sand Bay with respect to the technical requirements for Beach Access Routes as set out in the AODA in the event of new construction or redevelopment of the access route.
- **Sand Bay County Park Accessible Washroom** – Construction of an accessible washroom is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2022. The requirements of the Ontario Building Code will set out the requirements for the construction of the building.

### **Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas**

- **Limerick Forest Outdoor Public Eating Areas** – In the event new trails are established or new eating areas are created along existing trails, ensure accessible tables are installed in the number set out in the technical requirements of the AODA.
- **Sand Bay County Park Outdoor Public Eating Areas** – In the event new eating areas are created or redeveloped at Sand Bay County Park, ensure accessible tables are installed in the number set out in the technical requirements of the AODA.

## **Outdoor Play Spaces**

- **Social Housing Play Spaces Accessible Design** – Liaise with the Social Housing Department to ensure any newly constructed or redeveloped outdoor play spaces include accessibility in the design, including the play spaces at the Bartholomew Social Housing Units and the Glengarry Social Housing Units.
- **Social Housing Play Spaces Consultation** –Work with the Social Housing Department when new or redeveloped outdoor play spaces are undertaken to ensure consultation with persons with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

## **Exterior Paths of Travel**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville does not maintain sidewalks. Ramps constructed as part of building renovation or new construction will be constructed in compliance with the requirements under the Ontario Building Code.

## **Accessible Off-Street Parking**

- **Sand Bay County Park Parking Lot** – Review the appropriateness of establishing accessible parking at this location in accordance with the technical requirements of the AODA.
- **Review Accessible Off Street Parking** – Review accessible off street parking at all Counties public locations as set out in the technical requirements of the AODA.

## **On Street Parking**

On-Street Parking is the responsibility of the lower tier municipalities.

## **Service Counters**

- **New Counters or Replacing Existing Counters**- In the event service counters are constructed or existing counters are replaced, the technical requirements of the AODA will be taken into account.

## **Fixed Queuing Guides**

- **When Constructing New Queueing Guides** - In the event new queueing guides are constructed, the technical requirements of the AODA will be complied with.

## Waiting Areas

- **Waiting Areas at Public Buildings** – In the event of new construction or redevelopment, where there are waiting areas in public buildings where seating is fixed to the floor, a minimum of three per cent of the seating will be made accessible by leaving a space where an individual using a mobility aid can wait.

## Maintenance of Accessible Elements

In accordance with the AODA, Multi-Year Accessibility Plans must include procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance of the accessible elements in public spaces, and procedures for dealing with temporary disruptions when accessible elements are required.

- **Public Facilities** – The Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance of accessible elements at Counties' public facilities. Preventative maintenance schedules are developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable.

Notices of service interruptions will inform the public of any disruption in accessible elements due to a planned or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its expected duration, and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place, such as a front entrance. Where appropriate, the notice will be posted to the Counties' websites.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

- **Limerick Forest** – The Forestry Department is responsible for maintenance of accessible elements at Limerick Forest Trails and the Limerick Forest Chalet. Preventative maintenance schedules are developed, as required, to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable. Accessible elements at the Limerick Forest location on Craig Road and at the Limerick Forest Chalet/Interpretive Centre are maintained year-round.

Notices of service interruptions will inform the public of any disruption in accessible elements due to a planned or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its expected duration, and a description of alternate accessible

elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place such as at the entrance to the Chalet and/or the entrance to the trails and the element will be roped off where appropriate. Where appropriate the notice will be posted to the Counties' websites.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

- **Sand Bay County Park** – The Forestry Department is responsible for maintenance of accessible elements at Sand Bay County Park. Preventative maintenance schedules are developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable. The facilities at Sand Bay County Park are seasonal and not maintained year-round.

Notices of service interruptions will inform the public of any disruption in accessible elements due to a planned or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its expected duration and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place, such as the entrance to the beach access route, and the element will be roped off where appropriate. Where appropriate, the notice will be posted to the Counties' websites.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

- **Social Housing Locations** - The Social Housing Department is responsible for maintenance of accessible elements in Counties' social housing, including outdoor play spaces. Preventative maintenance schedules are developed as required to ensure accessible elements are in good working order and outline how they will be restored if they become unavailable.

Notices of service interruptions will inform the public of any disruption in accessible elements due to a planned maintenance or unplanned disruption. When planned, notices will be posted in advance and will provide information about the disruption, its duration and a description of alternate accessible elements that may be available. The notice must be posted in a conspicuous place such as an entrance or common room. Where appropriate the notice will be posted to the Counties' website.

If an accessible element requires emergency maintenance or repairs, it will be taken out of service. Necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed based on priority.

## **Review and Monitoring**

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Counties' strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

## **Feedback**

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville welcomes feedback on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and on the accessibility of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

## **Availability of the Plan**

The Multi-Year Plan is available online at the Counties' website, [www.leedsgrenville.com](http://www.leedsgrenville.com) or by contacting the United Counties as set out below. The Plan is available in alternate formats upon request.

## **Contact Information**

For more information or to obtain an alternate format of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan please contact:

Email: [access@uclg.on.ca](mailto:access@uclg.on.ca)

Tel. 613-342-3840 ext. 2307 or toll free 1-800-770-2170

Mail: Accessibility Coordinator  
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
25 Central Avenue West  
Suite 100  
Brockville, ON K6V 4N6

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Definitions

### Accessibility

Accessibility is a general term describing the degree of ease that something (ex. device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to deliver barrier-free experiences for persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population by making things more useable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

### Barrier

Barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. The traditional definition of a barrier has been expanded to include many types of barriers.

- **Physical Barrier:** Buildings, public spaces or features that restrict or impede physical access. Example: A doorway that is too narrow to accommodate a person in a motorized scooter.
- **Communication Barrier:** An obstacle in providing information. Example: Documents with text too small to be read.
- **Attitudinal Barrier:** Judgements or assumptions that directly or indirectly discriminate against persons with disabilities. Example: Assuming all persons with low vision can read Braille, or treating a support person as if they are the client.
- **Technological Barrier:** When technology cannot or is not modified to support various assistive devices or software. Example: A website that does not provide increased text sizes or does not support screen reading software.
- **System Barrier:** Policies, practices and procedures that do not consider accessibility. Example: Requiring a valid driver's license for a position that does not involve driving prevents a person with visual impairment from applying for the job.

### Counties

Means the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

## **Disability**

A disability is defined per Section 2 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Human Rights Code as:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.