



County of Lambton
Accessibility Plan
2026-2031

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PREFACE

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“**AODA**”), certain organizations in Ontario are required to develop a multi-year accessibility plan to help achieve accessibility for people with disabilities by 2025. The plan is designed to outline the organization’s commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities and ensure compliance with various accessibility standards.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The objectives of this Plan are to:

1. Identify the County of Lambton’s commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
2. Describe the County of Lambton’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA.
3. Describe the process that the County of Lambton engaged in over the past five years in an effort to identify, remove and prevent barriers for all in accessing County facilities and services.
4. Identify the facilities and services that the County of Lambton will review in the coming years to identify barriers to people with disabilities.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENT

The County of Lambton (“**County**”) values the contributions and participation of all residents. To facilitate this involvement, the County is committed to providing goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The AODA outlines requirements organizations must follow to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. These requirements encompass various areas, including customer service, information and communications, employment, design of public spaces and transportation.¹ By adhering to these standards, the County aims to foster an environment that promotes equal access and participation for all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

¹ For purposes of the AODA, achieving the standards for transportation is the responsibility of the lower-tier municipalities geographically located within Lambton County.

i. Customer Service

The AODA Customer Service Standard outlines the requirements for organizations to make their goods, services and facilities accessible for customers with disabilities, and to that end, the County is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services in compliance with the AODA. All County departments strive to provide equal access to programs and services by removing barriers and offering support such as accessible formats, assistive devices, and communication aids. The County welcomes service animals and support persons, and strives to serve all individuals with dignity, respect, and fairness.

The County will continue to include its Customer Service Standards in the County's **AODA Customer Service Policy L11.04.001**, training brochures, and mandatory accessibility training. To this end, there are resources available to staff through the County's intranet and website.

ii. Information and Communications

The Information and Communications Standard under the AODA establishes rules to ensure that organizations create, provide, and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. These standards aim to remove and prevent barriers in how organizations create, share, and receive information and communication—ensuring accessibility for everyone.

The County is committed to fostering inclusive and accessible communication. We continue to support accessible information and communication for residents, visitors, and employees by:

(a) Creating Accessible Forms and Documents

- Ensuring that all documents produced by the County (printed or published on the website) are developed using accessibility best practices and built-in accessibility functions
- Providing internal staff with guidance, training, and tools for creating accessible documents.
- Making information available in alternative formats upon request, including large print, audio, or electronic text formats, to ensure that all users have equitable access to content.

(b) Maintaining Accessible Websites and Digital Content

- Ensuring ongoing compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to provide barrier-free access to County websites and digital services.

- Incorporating accessibility features such as:
 - Text alternatives for non-text elements, including images, charts, and multimedia.
 - Captions and transcripts for videos and audio content to support users who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Keyboard accessibility, allowing users to navigate content without relying on a mouse.

(c) Staff Training and Awareness on Accessible Communication

- Staff are provided with resources such as accessibility checklists, guides for inclusive language, and instructions for using accessibility tools in Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat.

iii. Employment

The AODA Employment Standard is designed to remove barriers and prevent discrimination throughout the employment process — from recruitment and hiring to training, promotion, and accommodations. Its purpose is to foster inclusive, accessible workplaces where individuals with disabilities have equal employment opportunities and can fully apply their skills and abilities.

The County is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to recruiting and maintaining a highly competent, qualified and diversified workforce. Through its corporate policies and new employee orientation, the County strives to enhance staff awareness across its divisions regarding available accommodation types and the process to discuss a request for accommodation.

The County's various commitments to the Employment Standard are outlined in the following corporate policies: **L11.02 Accommodation OHRC**, **L11.03 AODA IASR Employment Standard**, and **H04.32 Early and Safe Return to Work** and the County is committed to reviewing all corporate policies on a regular basis to ensure policies remain current and effective.

iv. Training

The AODA Training Standard ensures that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards and the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to people with disabilities. The County provides training on the requirements of the AODA standards and the *Human Rights Code* as part of its volunteer and new employee orientation.

v. Design of Public Spaces

The AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards set out the minimum requirements for accessible, inclusive design in newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces. Adhering to these standards ensures public spaces are usable by all individuals, including those with disabilities.

The County is committed to:

- Ensuring full compliance with the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards;
- Engaging the County of Lambton Accessibility Advisory Committee on applicable projects and incorporating their feedback into the design of public spaces; and
- Conducting regular operational reviews of County-owned and operated public spaces and providing recommendations to enhance accessibility in alignment with these standards.

vi. Procurement

The AODA requires organizations to include accessibility criteria in procuring goods, services and facilities. The County is committed to integrating accessibility considerations into the procurement process to ensure all procured products and services meet or exceed accessibility standards.

FACILITY REVIEWS

The County's Accessibility Advisory Committee has completed seven facility reviews in the last five years.² These reviews include the following locations:

- Lambton Shared Services
- Wyoming Administration Building
- Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery
- Lambton Public Health (Point Edward)
- Clearwater Library
- Lambton Meadowview Villa
- Petrolia Library

As part of the review process, the Accessibility Advisory Committee meets with facility staff at each location. During the review, the Committee completes a "Facilities Services Checklist" which identifies various accessibility standards. Once the review is completed, the checklist is provided to the respective manager of the facility to review and develop a plan for implementing any necessary accessibility standards.

² The Committee's ability to conduct facility reviews were significantly impacted due to the restrictions stemming from COVID-19.

In the next five-year period, the Committee's goal is to complete 20 facility reviews.

LOOKING AHEAD

Staff will continue to review and monitor the County's programs and services to ensure compliance with the applicable AODA standards and continue to explore opportunities for improvement.

CONCLUSION

The County is committed to providing goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all and will continue to review its services and engage the Accessibility Advisory Committee to enhance accessibility in alignment with the AODA standards.