



County of Perth
Joint Accessibility Plan

Between:

County of Perth
Municipality of North Perth
Municipality of West Perth
Township of Perth East
Township of Perth South

September 2010 – August 2011

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

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Executive Summary

The County of Perth is committed to making all services accessible to people of all abilities. The ultimate goal of the County of Perth is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Every year the County of Perth works with its Accessibility Advisory Committee to create a cross-county accessibility plan with the Municipality of North Perth, the Municipality of West Perth, the Township of Perth East, and the Township of Perth South. This is the eighth joint accessibility plan between the County of Perth and its Member Municipalities, created in consultation with the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). This plan highlights their accomplishments in breaking down barriers for people with disabilities and outlines their commitment to making programs, policies facilities and services more accessible for everyone in the future.

The County of Perth recognizes that approximately 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability. That is approximately 16% of the population. It is estimated that 1 in 7 Ontarians have a disability. Over the next 20 years as the population ages, the number will rise to 1 in 5 Ontarians. Based on these statistics and according to the 2006 census, the population of the region of Perth County including the City of Stratford and Town of St. Marys was 74,344. Therefore the region of Perth County has approximately 10,620 persons with disability.

Purpose and Scope

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) was passed on December 14, 2001. The purpose of the ODA is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. Under the ODA, all municipalities have a legal obligation to prepare annual accessibility plans in consultation with people with disabilities. Municipalities of 10,000 or more residents are required to establish local accessibility advisory committees, and a majority of their members must be people with disabilities. Municipalities must consult with these committees as they prepare their plans. In preparing annual accessibility plans, municipalities must consider the following:

- The plans must address a broad range of disability issues, taking into account the full definition of disability under the ODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- The plans must examine all aspects of the municipality's operations, including its bylaws, practices, facilities, programs and services.
- Municipalities must take into consideration their roles as service providers and employers.
- The plans must identify steps to be taken over time to remove identified barriers and prevent any new ones.
- It is important that municipalities consider integrating accessibility planning into their business planning cycles to ensure a thoughtful, effective and efficient process and meaningful outcomes.
- All municipalities are accountable to their communities and, as such, must make their accessibility plans available to the public.

Municipal Jurisdictions Participating in this Plan

The Corporation of the County of Perth

1 Huron Street
Stratford, ON
N5A 5S4

Member Municipalities:

The Municipality of North Perth

330 Wallace Ave N
Listowel, ON, N4W 1L3

The Township of Perth South

3191 Road 122
St. Pauls, ON, N0K 1V0

The Township of Perth East

P.O. Box 455
25 Mill Street E
Milverton, ON, N0K 1M0

The Municipality of West Perth

P.O. Box 609
169 David Street
Mitchell, ON, N0K 1N0

Key Contact:

Shelby Wilson, Accessibility Coordinator
Corporation of the County of Perth
1 Huron Street, Stratford, ON, N5A 5S4
Tel: 519.271.0531 x141
Cell: 519.301.1979
swilson@perthcounty.ca

Staff Contacts for Member Municipalities:

Municipality of North Perth

Steve Hardie

Director of Parks & Recreation

Tel: 519.292.2055

Cell: 519.292.0991

shardie@northperth.ca

Township of Perth South

Tim Ivanyshyn

Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk

Tel: 519.271.0619 x231

tivanyshyn@perthsouth.ca

Township of Perth East

Kerri Ann O'Rourke

Municipal Clerk

Tel: 519.595.2800 x223

kaorourke@pertheast.on.ca

Municipality of West Perth

Bob McLean

Chief Building Official

Tel: 519.348.8429 x226,230

bmclean@westperth.com

Description:

Responsibilities under the County and Member Municipalities include roads, water, garbage and recycling, snow removal, planning and development, emergency services, fire, by law enforcement, provincial offences administration, parks and recreation, property taxes, and library services.

Consultation Activities

This plan has been developed in consultation with the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC acts as an advisory body for the County and its Member Municipalities, consistent with the expectations of the ODA, 2001. The committee is composed of approximately eight people, the majority of which have a disability.

Overview of Perth County

Perth County is located in the heart of South Western Ontario. Member Municipalities include the Municipality of North Perth, the Township of Perth East, the Municipality of West Perth, and the Township of Perth South. The City of Stratford and Town of St. Marys are geographically located within the County, but both have been separated from the County's jurisdiction.

The population for the County of Perth, according to the 2006 census data is 37,242 broken down by Member Municipality as follows:

North Perth – 12,225

West Perth – 8,840

Perth East – 12,045

Perth South 4,132

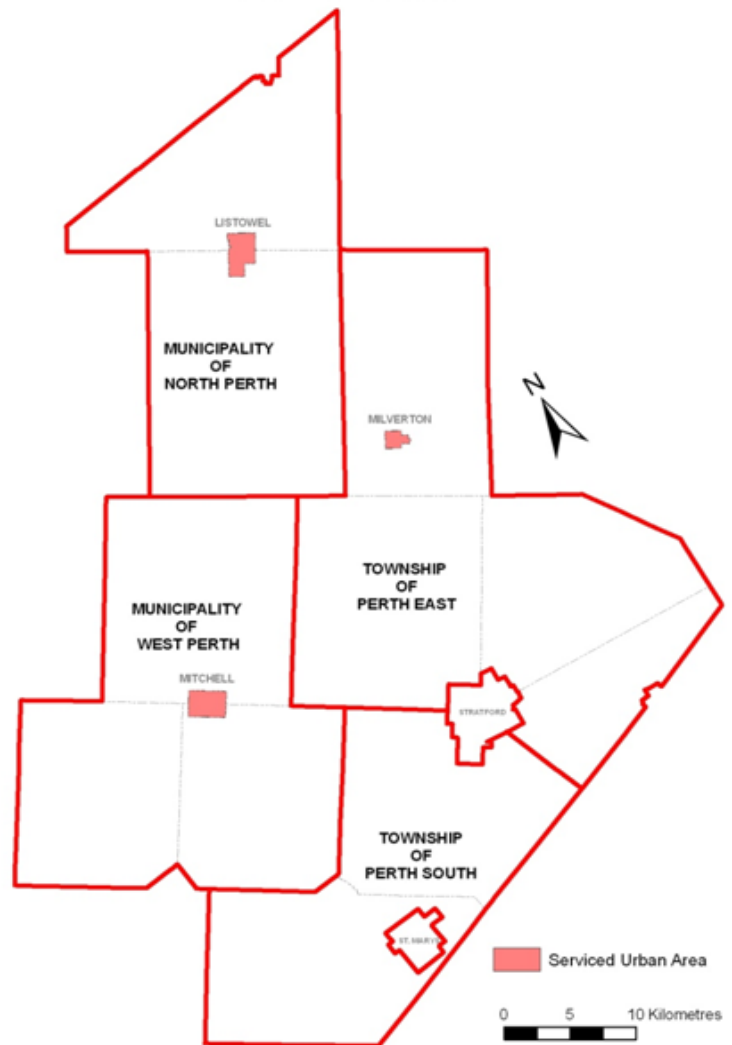


Figure 1 – Map of Perth County

History – Highlights

2003-2004 Accessibility Plan

- First plan since legislated
- Completion of facilities audit

2004-2005 Accessibility Plan

- Designation of Accountability
- Implementation of barriers identified as “short term”

2005-2006 Accessibility Plan

- Development and distribution of AAC information booklet

2006-2007 Accessibility Plan

- Address outstanding action items in accordance to new regulations as they become available
- Budget process set accordingly
- Implementation of Administration Committee

2007-2008 Accessibility Plan

- Budget process set accordingly
- Employee training

2008-2009 Accessibility Plan

- Site Plan Review Process initiated
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- Budget process set accordingly
- Hiring of an Accessibility Coordinator

2009-2010 Accessibility Plan

- Budget process set accordingly
- Accessible Customer Service training
- Accessibility compliance reports complete
- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual implemented
- Site Plan Review

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee provides vision and advice to the Councils of the County of Perth and Member Municipalities to create an inclusive and accessible community.

The role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to:

- Assist the Councils in preparing the annual Joint Accessibility Plan
- Advise the Councils of accessibility issues regarding buildings, structures, and municipal premises
- Work with community groups regarding accessibility issues

Since the Accessibility Advisory Committee first met in 2002, they have participated in the following projects:

- Annual Accessibility Plans
- Accessibility Audit of all municipally owned facilities
- Public Awareness Campaigns

Mission Statement:

Perth County's Accessibility Advisory Committee is committed to eliminating barriers for all persons regardless of ability. We are devoted to raising awareness, improving attitudes and creating full inclusion for everyone.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee currently has eight voting positions which provide full representation for each Municipality within Perth County. The Accessibility Advisory Committee secretariat position is held by Shelby Wilson the Accessibility Coordinator and is a nonvoting member.

Voting Members

Terry Seiler (Councillor) – Perth County

Marion Sage (Chair) – North Perth

Ethel Sage – North Perth

Judy Givens – North Perth

Judy Nafziger – Perth East

Dennis Manarey – Perth South

Mary McLagan – West Perth

Therese Brodhagen – West Perth

More information about the committee can be found in Appendix A, the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

In 2005, the province took greater action, passing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005 (AODA) on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario will develop mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living. The standards will apply to private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

There have been five accessibility standards developed under the AODA. The following provides an overview of each of the AODA standards:

Customer Service Standard

The first standard to come into force under the act is Ontario Regulation 429-07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, passed January 1, 2008. Through this standard people of all abilities will be able to get the service they need. Currently, the Customer Service Standard is the only standard under the AODA to become law. The public sector organizations, including municipal government, had to comply by January 1, 2010. The private sector and non-profit organizations will need to comply by 2012. All businesses or organizations that provide goods or service to the public or third parties in Ontario are legally required to comply with the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. This standard is aimed at making all services accessible to people of all abilities.

Information and Communication

The information and communication standard aims to help businesses and organizations to produce, provide and receive information and communication in ways that are accessible for everyone. The Information and Communication Standards Development Committee has submitted their final proposed standards to the Ministry for consideration as law.

The final draft proposed standard outlines requirements for:

- Policies and procedures
- Training
- Emergency and public safety information
- Technical requirements, including websites and web content
- Alternate formats, communication supports and services
- Priority area such as health, education, legal, financial and elections

Transportation Standard

The transportation standard aims to help public transportation providers increase accessibility by making sure that public transit vehicles have accessible features. The Transportation Standards Development Committee has submitted their final proposed standards to the Ministry for consideration as law.

The final proposed standard outlines regulations for:

- Accessibility training policies and procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Fares and fees

Employment Standard

The employment standard aims to help employers create equal employment opportunities for everyone regardless of ability. The Employment Standards Development Committee has submitted their final proposed standards to the Ministry for consideration as law.

The proposed standard outlines regulations for:

- Accessible employment policies and training
- Recruitment, assessment, selection and hiring
- Job retention
- Providing individual accommodation plans for employees
- Separation and termination
- Emergency and safety information
- Indicators of progress

Built Environment Standard

The built environment standard aims to help the physical features of a building, room or public space. The Accessible Built Environment Standards Development Committee reconvened in April and May, 2010 to finalize the proposed standard. It is expected that the Committee will submit a final proposed standard in spring/summer 2010.

The proposed standard outlines regulations for:

- Common access and circulation
- Interior accessible routes
- Exterior spaces
- Communication elements and facilities
- Plumbing elements and facilities

- Building performance and maintenance
- Special rooms, spaces and other elements
- Transportation elements
- Recreational elements and facilities (parks and trails)
- Housing

Review of the AODA

The goal of the AODA is to achieve accessibility in stages, allowing organizations to break down barriers over time as part of ongoing business decisions. The government has not yet announced timelines for the release of the remaining standards but has said they will carefully consider harmonization of the standards. The Employment, Transportation and Information and Communication standards will be integrated into a single regulation, making them more flexible for businesses. Perth County and Member Municipalities will continue to strive to be accessible and address barriers. As the Ministry moves towards the compliance dates for the remaining standards and the standards become law the County and Member Municipalities will work towards full inclusion and compliance.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service providers of goods or services must:

- Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- Set a policy on allowing people to use their assistive devices to access your goods and use your services
- Use reasonable efforts to ensure that your policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
- Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on your behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing your policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises owned or operated that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.

- Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
- Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
- Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are temporarily disrupted.
- Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how the goods or services are provided to people with disabilities and how to provide any feedback.

If you are a designated public sector organization, or have 20 or more employees you have additional responsibilities including:

- Document in writing your accessible customer service policies, practices and procedures.
- Notify customers that these documents are available upon request.
- Provide information in the required document(s), when providing them to a person with a disability, in a format that takes into account their disability.

The County of Perth and Member Municipalities promote accessibility through the development of policies, practices and procedures that consider people with disabilities. The County of Perth and Member Municipalities will make reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The County of Perth and Member Municipalities are committed to providing our goods and services in an accessible manner. We do this by:

- Working with the public to find the best way to communicate.
- Working with the public to find the best way to provide our documents and information.
- Inviting customers to use assistive devices, service animals and support persons when accessing our services.
- Letting the public know if there is a disruption to our services.
- Accept feedback on what works well and how we can do better.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 is the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA. The County of Perth and Member Municipalities have met compliance for the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

The County of Perth and Member Municipalities will ensure that all employees, volunteers, students, agents, committee members, Councillors, contractors or others who deal with the public or third parties on their behalf will receive training in regards to the Accessible Customer Service Standards. More information about the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service can be found in Appendix B, the County of Perth Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual Section XI – Policy AAC-1.01.

AODA Standard Compliance Activities Report

Customer Service Standard

Standard Requirement	Activities	Action Taken	Status
Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual	Approved by County Council and Member Municipalities Councils	<p>Policy available to the public on the County website</p> <p>Policy available to all staff on the County's intranet site (SharePoint)</p> <p>Policy included in accessibility package for employee orientation</p>	Completed
Accessible Customer Service Training	Training developed to meet Accessible Customer Service Standard requirements	<p>Training includes all legislated requirements</p> <p>Staff includes: full-time, part-time, volunteers, committee members, Councillors and students</p>	Completed
Initial Training for Staff (2009)	Training delivered to County and Member Municipalities	In person training sessions provided from September to December 2009 to County and the Member Municipalities staff	Completed

Standard Requirement	Activities	Action Taken	Status
Staff Training	<p>Ongoing accessible customer service training made available to staff</p> <p>Training material includes: Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual, quiz, policy sign off form, certificate, attendance sheet, video or brochure</p>	<p>New hires will be trained as soon as possible after hire</p> <p>Training videos with closed captioning for general staff and first responders</p> <p>Training brochures are used to train staff with minimal interaction with the public</p>	Ongoing
Training Required for Suppliers of Goods and Services	Required to sign a compliance form indicating they read the County's policy and are in compliance with Regulation 429/07 Accessible Standards for Customer Service of the AODA	<p>Contractor Accessibility Agreement form needs to be filled out</p> <p>Created guidelines for determining contractor training requirements</p>	Ongoing
Provision for service animals, assistive devices and support persons	Developed as part of the training process and the policy	<p>Staff training covers these provisions</p> <p>Included in the Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual</p>	Completed

Standard Requirement	Activities	Action Taken	Status
Alternative Formats	Promote the availability of alternative formats	Awareness and training incorporated in training material Included in the Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual	Ongoing
Feedback Process	Promote feedback on the delivery of accessible County services Feedback is addressed to the Accessibility Coordinator by phone, email, mail or in person	Documentation is kept by the Accessibility Coordinator Feedback is reviewed and addressed Notice encouraging feedback is posted at all service counters and on the County website	Ongoing
Service Disruption	Educate staff on the importance of service disruption notification Service disruption notifications will be made available	Public is notified of service disruptions Included in the Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual Service Disruption Notices are made available to staff on SharePoint and in each work area	Ongoing
Documentation	Keep records of all training documents	Attendance records, quizzes, policy sign off forms, certificates are maintained by Human Resources/Accessibility Coordinator	Ongoing

2009 – 2010 Accomplishments

Perth County and Member Municipalities implemented a number of initiatives to make facilities, programs and services more accessible. These accomplishments include:

Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Two new citizen members selected due to resignation of two members.
- Committee has full representation for each Municipality.
- Display booth at the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities tradeshow in Stratford.
- Began networking with other Accessibility Advisory Committee's.
- Developed a Mission Statement.

County Wide

- Accessibility Coordinator hired to ensure AODA compliance is met.
- Staff received in person training for Accessible Customer Service from September to December 2009.
- Created training material including videos with closed captioning for general staff and first responders to train staff for the Customer Service Standard.
- Created training brochures for volunteers and committee members with minimal time commitment or minimal interaction with the public.

- The County's Orientation Program includes training on the provision of Accessible Customer Service for new employees.
- Notice of disruption to services form was created for the County and Member Municipalities.
- Perth County has software available that will convert a written document into an audio format which can then be saved to a CD or emailed to the customer.

County

- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual for Accessible Customer Service was adopted by County Council on August 13, 2009.
- In compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- All documents required under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service are available on Perth County's website, and are available in alternative formats upon request.
- A notice encouraging customer feedback is posted at all County of Perth service counters and on the County website.
- Service disruptions are posted on the County website.
- Created an Accessibility page on the County website.
- Constructed an accessible ambulance base in Mitchell.
- Recognized Access Awareness Week for the first week of June.
- Facebook Page "Perth County Accessibility" was created.
- Additional signs installed in the Court House to give customers directions to the lift, washrooms, departments and exits.

North Perth

- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual - Accessible Customer Service was adopted by North Perth Council on September 28, 2009.
- In compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Notice of “how to give us your feedback” is posted on the website.
- Currently renovating the municipal office.
- Listowel downtown core has made improvements to sidewalks and curb cuts.
- Atwood Lions Pavilion was demolished and rebuilt with accessibility improvements being considered.

Perth East

- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual - Accessible Customer Service was adopted by Perth East Council on September 1, 2009.
- In compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Service disruptions are posted on the website.
- Notice of how to submit feedback is posted on the website.
- Perth East Recreation Complex renovations to the change rooms and washrooms.
- Currently undertaking a facilities review which will include accessibility components.

Perth South

- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual - Accessible Customer Service was adopted by Perth South Council on September 1, 2009.
- In compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Notice of how to submit feedback is posted on the website.
- Service disruptions are posted on the website.
- Drainage ditch at the Downie Recreation Complex was filled in to make accessing the soccer field easier.
- As of June 1, 2010 Council agendas and minutes are provided in an accessible manner with larger font size.

West Perth

- Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual - Accessible Customer Service was adopted by West Perth Council on October 13, 2009.
- In compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standard.
- Notice of how to submit feedback is posted on the website.

Projects for 2010 – 2011

In the upcoming year Perth County and Member Municipalities will continue to implement projects to work towards.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Create a logo for the committee.
- Determine how to continue to celebrate Access Awareness Week.
- Continue to review County and Member Municipalities websites to provide updates to ensure they are accessible.

County Wide

- Train all new staff on the Accessible Customer Service Standard as soon as possible after hire.
- Continue to research and implement new standards.

County

- Determine alternatives to promote awareness.
- Continue to update Facebook Page “Perth County Accessibility.”
- Continue to research and monitor provincial legislations and standards. Meet compliance for additional standards as they become law.
- Continue to update website to meet accessibility requirements of W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Court House washrooms being renovated to be fully accessible.

North Perth

- Working towards an accessible election.
- Elma-Logan Recreation Complex renovation and expansion keeping accessibility in mind.

Perth East

- Facilities Review with accessibility components will continue.
- New library being built in Milverton will be fully accessible.
- Working towards an accessible vote my mail election. Prepared accessibility policies and procedures for the election.

Perth South

- Working towards an accessible vote my mail election. Prepared accessibility policies and procedures for the election.
- Repairing and replacing sidewalks including curb cuts and ramps.

West Perth

- Working towards an accessible election. Prepared accessibility policies and procedures for the election.

Future Proposed Projects

County Wide

- Visible alarms in all public buildings.
- Accessible parking spaces marked by post signage and pavement markings including access aisle marked off for all public parking lots.
- Meet compliance for all Accessibility Standards that become law.

County

- Construct a new administration office.

Customer Feedback (September 2009-August 2010)

September 14, 2009

Barrier: Accessible lift too slow

Report: A staff member at the County expressed concern over the lift. Customers who require the lift are taking the stairs because the lift is too slow and requires staff assistance. Customers do not want to trouble staff because they feel they are an inconvenience to the staff member who takes them up or down in the lift.

Suggestion: Encourage customers to buzz for a staff member to assist them on the lift.

Action: Management and Facilities are well aware of this issue and it is being addressed during the facilities review. Once the facilities review is complete and actions are determined, Accessibility Coordinator will ensure this issue is further addressed.

September 14, 2009

Barrier: Washrooms lacking accessible entrance – no power button

Report: Staff member addressed concern that the washroom door does not have a power button and may be too heavy for people to open.

Suggestion: Install accessible power button on washroom entrance door.

Action: Accessibility Coordinator spoke with Facilities Manager. Facilities Manager was not sure if installing a power button was the best solution to the problem as it would cause issues with the length of time the button requires the door to be open and the lack of space.

September 14, 2009

Barrier: Follow-up on hearing and sight impaired options at the intersection of Highways 23 & 8.

Report: An Accessibility Advisory Committee member requested a follow-up on the status of an item in West Perth on the 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan – the exploration of hearing & sight impaired options at the intersection of Highways 23 & 8.

Suggestion: Have audible signals installed at intersections.

Action: Accessibility Coordinator spoke with Accessibility Contact at West Perth on September 15th. He indicated that at the time, they could not find any standards from the Ministry of Transportation on what to install, and some of the municipalities they spoke to had not found the audible signals useful or had problems with them. They decided to wait until further standards were available.

Accessibility Coordinator relayed the information to the Accessibility Advisory Committee member and upon that member's request will conduct research to find out what other Municipalities have in place and what recommendations and best practices are out there.

Accessibility Coordinator sent information from other Municipalities using successful audible signals to the Operations Manager on November 4, 2009 who replied to say that they would wait for standards to be established. The information was relayed to Accessibility Advisory Committee member.

November 24, 2009

Barrier: Getting from the accessible lift through the courtroom to get to traffic court

Report: A customer attending traffic court required the lift one of our staff members took them up to the third floor. But when they arrived the courtroom was in use there was a young man wearing a black gown standing outside the door. Our staff explained that the customer needed to go through the courtroom to get to traffic court, but the young man was resistant to this request and asked that they go down the stairs, around, and back up the other staircase. Our staff explained that they had just come from the lift and there was no way they could walk down the stairs, and so the young man did let them through, however, the customer felt like an inconvenience and burden.

Suggestion: Make court staff are aware of the fact that we need to respect our customers and realize that for some the only option of getting to traffic court is to go through the courtroom.

Action: E-mail sent to the Crown's Office the same day to make her aware of the situation and suggest a reminder to court staff that we need to respect our customers with disabilities and recognize that for some of them using the lift and going through the courtroom is the only option they have to getting to traffic court.

Conclusion

Perth County and Member Municipalities will continue to work towards an accessible community for all citizens by removing and preventing barriers. As standards become Regulations, we may need to change or implement additional projects to the Accessibility Plan as required. We will continue to break down barriers and comply with the accessible customer service standard. Once other accessibility standards become law we will comply and work towards improving attitudes and creating full inclusion for all persons regardless of ability.

Appendix A

Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Definitions

“Barrier” means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical barrier, architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice;

“Disability” means,

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on 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

“Municipality” means the County of Perth, the Municipalities of West Perth and North Perth, and the Townships of Perth East and Perth South.

“Councils” mean the elected Councils of the Municipalities.

Objective

To fulfill the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 by providing vision and advice to the Councils of the County of Perth and Member Municipalities to create an accessible community.

Mandate

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) shall advise and assist Municipalities in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Municipality for citizens of all abilities including persons with disabilities. The AAC shall promote accessibility within the community to increase education and awareness. This aim shall be achieved through the review of municipal policies, programs and services and the identification, removal and prevention of barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Mission Statement

Perth County's Accessibility Advisory Committee is committed to eliminating barriers for all persons regardless of ability. We are devoted to raising awareness, improving attitudes and creating full inclusion for everyone.

Required Duties

- Advise Councils annually, as required by the Act, regarding the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of the Municipalities' annual accessibility plan.
- Advise Councils on the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a building, structure or premises, or part of a building, structure or premises, that Councils purchase, construct or significantly renovate; for which the Councils enters into a new lease; or that a person makes available as municipal capital facilities under Section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001.
- Review in a timely manner and advise Councils on the accessibility of site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act.
- Advise on existing and proposed procurement processes of the Municipalities with respect to the accessibility for persons with disabilities to the goods or services being purchased.
- Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.
- Review matters referred to the Committee by Councils and make recommendations as appropriate.

Other Duties

- Advise Councils to address issues for the inclusion of persons with disabilities relating to the provision of transportation, housing, employment, culture and recreation in order to achieve an accessible community for all residents including persons with disabilities.

- Consult with persons with disabilities, community groups and organizations representing persons with disabilities in order to capture and communicate emerging issues to Councils.
- Refer issues, make recommendations or suggestions for action to appropriate groups, agencies, committees and organizations in the community to address barriers that affect persons with disabilities.
- Monitor, advise, consult and report findings and recommendations with respect to government directives and regulations related to the status of persons with disabilities.
- To network with other communities to create opportunities for improved accessibility.
- Make recommendations with regards to by-laws and policies for the Municipalities.
- Review and make recommendations on barriers faced by persons with disabilities to existing facilities owned, leased or operated by Municipalities.
- Support, encourage and be an ongoing resource to the Municipalities, agencies, individuals and the business community by educating and building community awareness about measures for improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities, through the removal of physical barriers and education to overcome attitudinal barriers to make the Municipality accessible and livable for all people.
- Review, as needed the terms of reference of the Perth County AAC and recommend changes. Changes must comply with AODA 2005 and require the ratification of Councils.

Membership

The AAC will be comprised of a minimum of seven volunteer citizen/layperson members, as appointed by Councils. A majority of the members shall include persons with disabilities representing the interests of citizens with varying disabilities. These committee members shall reflect the cross disability nature of AODA 2005 definition of “disability”, but where such representation is not feasible, no volunteer will be discriminated on the said basis that they don’t fit the cross disability nature requirement. Members may also include a County elected official, parents or caregivers of a person with a disability, or citizens at large interested in disability issues, but who may also be a person with a disability.

In order to avoid potential conflict of interest, municipal employees with disabilities are not eligible to be voting citizen/layperson members of the AAC.

Representatives

Staff coordinator(s) are represented in a non-voting capacity and will provide advice and resources.

Length of Term of Appointments

The length of term of appointments for voting members of the AAC, after the initial term, shall be four (4) years. The terms of the appointments may be staggered on a two (2) year period to avoid expiry of terms for all members at the same time.

Meeting Chair

A committee chair will be elected annually from committee members to preside over meetings and committee business.

Minutes and Agendas

Agendas will be assembled and distributed by the staff coordinator in consultation with the Chair. Agenda circulation will be made to all committee members and related staff, electronically and hardcopy agendas will be made available at the meeting.

Reports of proceedings will be managed in accordance with Municipalities' records management practices.

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and distributed by the staff coordinator. Minutes will be circulated to all committee members with the next agenda. Minutes are reviewed by committee members at the following meeting. Minutes are of public record and are posted on the County and Municipality's websites.

Special Activities

The AAC may educate and promote awareness about accessibility. The AAC may attend or participate in activities and events in order to create opportunities for improved accessibility. Special activities include public awareness campaigns, tradeshow booths, workshops, networking with other communities and groups by attending their meetings and participating in accessibility initiatives within the Municipality.

Meetings

The AAC has four (4) regular scheduled meeting times a year in March, June, September and December on the first Thursday of the month. The committee will meet no less than the four (4) regular scheduled meeting times and no more than six (6) times a year. The committee has the option of determining additional meeting times or attending special activities as the additional two (2) meeting times on top of the four (4) regular scheduled meetings.

Meetings will be open to the public except if the subject matter being considered is within a category defined in Section 239 (2) or (3) or the Municipal Act, in which case the meeting may be closed. When a matter is considered in a closed meeting, members shall maintain confidentiality of the subject matter pursuant to municipal practices.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority, being 50% plus one, of the voting members appointed to the committee.

Voting

Members will work toward a consensus model for decision making, if this is not possible a simple majority vote will be held.

Absences

If a committee member is absent for three consecutive meetings without notice or justifiable reason, their membership may be reviewed by the Committee.

Remuneration

Each voting committee member will receive Perth County Committee half-day pay per meeting attended.

Travel expenses will be paid as per County of Perth policy for attending all meetings and special activities.


Working Groups

The AAC may establish, as required, working groups to research and make recommendations to the AAC with respect to specialized issues assigned to such working group by the AAC.

Working groups may draw upon members from the AAC and may include individuals who are not members, such as municipal staff, as well as outside resource members as necessary. This may include from time to time the advice or participation of individuals or organizations with a particular area of expertise.

Appendix B

Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual

	County of Perth Accessibility Policy and Procedures Manual		
Section XI – Policy ACC-1.01	Accessible Customer Service		
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Policy Statement


The County of Perth is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and visitors. To do this, the County of Perth must recognize the diverse needs of all of the County's residents and visitors by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As a provider of goods and services, the County of Perth is committed to ensuring its goods and services are provided in an accessible manner.

The County of Perth will promote accessibility through the development of policies, practices and procedures that consider people with disabilities. To do this the County of Perth will make reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, practices and procedures address **dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.**

Principles

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- i) That goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.


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- ii) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- iii) Persons with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy '**disability**' is defined according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as:


- i) 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, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability,

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- iii) learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols of spoken language,
- iv) a mental disorder; or,
- v) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

For the purpose of this policy, a ‘**service animal**’ is defined as either:

- i) A “guide dog,” as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act; or
- ii) A “service animal” for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or,
 - b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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For the purpose of this policy, a **‘support person’** is defined as:

- i) another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.


For the purpose of this policy, **‘staff’** is defined as:

- i) employees, volunteers, agents and others working for the County of Perth.

Procedures and Practices

1. Communication

- i) Communication with persons with disabilities will be conducted in ways that take into account their disability.
- ii) The County of Perth will ensure staff who communicate with customers and third parties are trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- iii) The County will offer a variety of communication methods for people to access its goods and services to allow individuals to select the

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method most accessible to them; e.g. telephone, email, mail, in person.

References

Appendix A: Accessibility Guidelines for Communicating with Customers with Disabilities

2. Format of Documents and Information

- i) Upon request, the County of Perth will provide County documents (e.g. forms, print materials, bills, etc.) or the information contained within the documents in formats that take into account a person's disability.
- ii) The County of Perth will consult the person requesting the document to determine what a reasonable accessible alternate format of the document or information would be.
- iii) When staff receive a request for alternative format they should fill out *Form A: Request for Information and Assistance in an Alternative Format* and submit the form to the Accessibility Coordinator. The Accessibility Coordinator will work with the Director of the department of origin to fulfill the request.


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- iv) The time frame attached to the conversion process will vary depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents will be returned in a timely manner with consideration of these factors.
- v) Should documents contain information required by the customer sooner than the conversion will be ready; the information will be communicated in a way that is accessible to the customer.
- vi) Customers will not be charged fees for documents in alternative formats that exceed the fees charged for the document in its original state.

References

Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines for the Formatting of Documents and Information

Form A: Request for Information and Assistance in an Alternate Format


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3. Assistive Devices

- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County of Perth.
- ii) Should a person with a disability be unable to access the County's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the County of Perth will ensure the following measures are taken:
 - a) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual; and
 - b) Identify alternative services and how a person with a disability can access the services, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- iii) Further, the County will ensure staff are trained on the use of all assistive devices available for their customers at the location(s) in which they provide service.


References:

Appendix C: Assistive Devices Instruction Manual

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4. Service Animals

- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on all areas of the premises owned or operated by the County of Perth that are typically open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- ii) In the case where a service animal is excluded from the premises by law, the County will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods and services. This could include:
 - a) offering the person with a disability a safe place for their animal to remain while obtaining goods or services, along with personal support in obtaining the goods and services; or
 - b) offering goods and services at an alternate location that allows for service animal accompaniment

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5. Support Persons

- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person to remain with that support person on all areas of the premises owned or operated by the County of Perth.
- ii) If a fee is required for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the County of Perth will waive the fee for support persons.
 - a) All advertising indicating the fee amounts will also indicate that fees do not apply to support persons.
 - b) Members of the public should notify a staff member about the presence of a support person.
- iii) When attended by a support person, consent from the person being supported must be obtained prior to disclosing confidential information.
- iv) Support persons may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in some situations.
- v) The County of Perth reserves the right to request a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

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6. Disruption to Services

- i) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services (e.g., lifts, elevators, accessible washrooms, particular entrances, ramps) and if there is a disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the County of Perth will give notice of the disruption to the public.
- ii) Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available (see Form B).
- iii) Notice will be given by posting *Form B: Disruption to Services*, containing the above information, on all entrances of the facility undergoing disruption, as well as at the specific site of service disruption within the building (e.g. beside the elevator doors). Information will also be posted on the County of Perth website (www.perthcounty.ca). If deemed appropriate and time permits, planned disruptions of services may also be published in local newspapers and broadcast on local radio stations.
- iv) Ensuring the posting of Form B at the facilities will be the shared responsibility of the Facilities Supervisor and Facilities Maintenance.

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The Facilities Supervisor and Facilities Maintenance will also have the responsibility of providing a copy of Form B to the Technology Services Department who will be responsible for posting its contents on the County website.


- v) If a temporary service disruption of the website is planned, advance notice to the extent possible, keeping with the conditions of this section of this policy, will be provided.
- vi) Notice will be given as much in advance as possible; however, in the event of an unplanned service disruption, notice will be given as soon as feasibly possible in the manner described in this section.

References:

Form B: Disruption to Services

7. Feedback Process

- i) The ultimate goal of the County of Perth is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on the County's services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

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ii) Feedback regarding the way the County of Perth provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator, via:

Phone: 519-301-1979

Email: accessibility@perthcounty.ca


Mail: Accessibility Coordinator

Corporation of the County of Perth

1 Huron Street

Stratford, ON N5A 5S4


- iii) A response will be provided within 30 days, in the same manner as the comment or concern was received.
- iv) Concerns may also be discussed in-person by bringing them to the attention of the staff serving you, requesting to speak with a manager, or arranging an appointment with the Accessibility Coordinator.
- v) When a comment or concern is received by the Accessibility Coordinator, they will notify the Director responsible for the department. The Accessibility Coordinator will aid the Director in developing a resolution.

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- vi) If deemed appropriate, a concern regarding the provision of accessible goods and services may be directed to the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee for recommendations on how to address the comment or concern.
- vii) If agreement on the resolution of a concern cannot be reached between the appropriate Director or designate and the complainant, the matter will be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer for disposition.
- viii) If the Chief Administration Officer is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to the concern, the complainant has the option of presenting the concern to County Council for final disposition.
- ix) A notice encouraging feedback (see Appendix D: Customer Feedback Notice) will be posted at all County of Perth service counters and the County website (www.perthcounty.ca) and full copies of the feedback process will be available upon request. Staff will draw attention to the request for feedback for customers unable to read the notice.


References:

Appendix D: Customer Feedback Notice

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8. Training

- i) The County of Perth will ensure that all employees, volunteers, agents and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, or who are involved in developing policies, practices and procedures that govern the provision of the County's goods and services will receive training on the accessible provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- ii) The training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, the requirements of *Regulation 429/07 Accessible Standards for Customer Service*, the requirements of this policy, and instruction about the following matters:
 - a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
 - b) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
 - c) How to use equipment or devices available on premises owned or leased by the County of Perth otherwise provided by the

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County of Perth that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and,

- d) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by the County of Perth.
- iii) Training will be provided as soon as possible after hire, incorporated into the existing orientation process as an additional component led by the Accessibility Coordinator (this includes volunteers and students).
- iv) The County of Perth will log and maintain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was complete.
- v) The training of County Councilors will occur at the lower tier level.
- vi) Committee members who are not a part of staff or council (citizen members) will receive training as soon as possible after appointment.
- vii) Contractors who meet the criteria outlined in 8.i will provide the County with documentation indicating that training in accordance with the requirements of regulation 429/07 has been provided to all of their staff working for the County of Perth (*refer to Form C and Appendix E: Guidelines for Determining Contractor Training Requirements*).

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- viii) Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.


References:

Form C: Contractor Accessibility Agreement

Appendix E: Guidelines for Determining Contractor Training Requirements

9. Documentation and Review

- i) A copy of this document will be kept in electronic form and available on the County of Perth's intranet for employee's reference, as well as available to employees in other formats upon request.
- ii) A copy of this document will be available to the public on the County's website (www.perthcounty.ca), as well as available in alternative formats upon request, as outlined in section 2 of this document.
- iii) Review and amendments of this document will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Coordinator, in consultation with the CAO.

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10. Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination