



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**

2008 - 2009

This document is formatted for double sided printing. The contents are premised on the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, Province of Ontario, and in accordance with the authority provided herein by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services.

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Executive Summary

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) requires demonstrated action to reduce and remove barriers, not just planning. It will also provide a clear vision with tangible standards to measure results. This will ultimately ensure improved opportunities for persons 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. To this end, the AODA mandates that each municipality prepare an annual accessibility plan ensuring progress and obtaining mandatory standards thus moving towards an accessible Ontario.

This is a joint plan for the period 2008-2009, prepared by the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) of the County of Perth and Member Municipalities. The report describes the measures/achievements over the past reporting period, and the measures that each member municipality will take during the current reporting period, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who use the facilities and services, including Councils, staff, contract workers, contractors and members of the community.

In October 2002, Perth County Council supported the Provincial initiative and, with support of the lower tier municipalities, developed a joint (County-wide) Accessibility Advisory Committee comprised of approximately seven people, of whom the majority are persons with a disability, and which currently meet four times a year. The AAC assumed the lead for creating the accessibility plan for all local municipalities.

In turn in 2006, the Member Municipalities and the County assigned one staff representative each to an Administration for Accessibility Committee (AFAC), an administrative group whose responsibilities include implementing the Joint Accessibility Plan, prepare policies and processes regarding the elimination of barriers, and forwarding recommendations to Council.

As the County, through its creation of a joint AAC, assumed the lead for creating the accessibility plan, it rightly follows that the initiative be supported and coordinated at the County level. The County Office of the Chief Administrative Official has assumed the secretarial role, and has reviewed the status of the initiative.

This report presents the following noted observations and planned actions for 2008 County Council consideration:

1. The AODA does allow two or more organizations to prepare joint plans. However, in doing so, there are a few things to note:
 - a. First, each partner must approve the joint plan,
 - b. Second, partners must put into practice their respective components of the plan.
 - c. Finally, each partner must make the plan public.
2. The AAC should assess the requirements of the new legislation and present a communiqué to the partners on its impact to future accessibility plans.
3. Given the impact of the AODA on the Ontario Planning Act and the Ontario Building Code, the AAC will continue to work with the County Planning Department to formalize a protocol for the AAC's effective involvement on planning matters pursuant to the AODA.
4. The 2008-2009 accessibility plan should endeavour to include a timetable for each municipality's review of the following:
 - a. Site plans
 - b. Building plans of new municipal facilities
 - c. Municipal by-laws
 - d. Municipal renovations, leased offices or other municipal buildings
 - e. External service providers

- f. Purchases – goods and/or services provided by the municipality
 - g. Employment practices and accommodations
 - h. Communications and publications
 - i. Planning practices
 - j. Current capital plan
 - k. Operational policies
5. The AAC should develop a protocol on working with municipal Councils and staff, and of its own self assessment.
6. Each municipality should make a determination on budgeting for accessibility. Some municipalities have a dedicated 'accessibility fund' integrated within their yearly budgeting process to ensure accessibility initiatives are implemented over a specific time period. As an alternative to establishing a dedicated accessibility fund, municipal departments may choose to incorporate accessibility budget planning within their regular budget planning process.
7. A Term of Reference for the AAC has been developed. See Appendix A.

Planning History:

2003-2004 Accessibility Plan	First plan since enabling legislation. Completion of facilities audit.
2004-2005 Accessibility Plan	Designation of Accountability. Implementation of Identified 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, focus on service.
2008-2009 Accessibility Plan	Site Plan Review Process initiated. Establish policies, practices and procedures for customer service standards Budget process set accordingly.

2008-2009 Program Implementation

1. Designation of Accountability

The County Office of the Chief Administrative Official has the designated responsibility for ensuring the overall requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and any future Ontario Regulations associated with the AODA.

Action by: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Timing: March 20, 2006
Funding required: 1/8 FTE for designated employee

2. Training of Staff

Provide education sessions to County and Member Municipal Staff about the provisions of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Action by: Designated Department Lead
Timing: Ongoing
Funding required: Staff Time

3. Policy and Process Development

Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 429/07, develop accessibility policies and processes that address:

- a. Standardized access guidelines for the accessible design and construction of new County-wide facilities and amenities and for retrofitting existing facilities (Accessibility Guidelines developed);
- b. The methodology for identification and review of barriers as detailed in the Accessibility Plan;

- c. A process to review all by-laws, programs, policies, practices and services for the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities;
- d. A system for monitoring progress and budgetary requirements of annual Accessibility Plans goals and objectives;
- e. A timely and efficient process for ensuring continued consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee as required by the AODA and where appropriate to do so.
- f. Develop a protocol with Planning Dept in meeting the requirements of the AODA.

Action by: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Timing: Compliance deadlines of regulations
Funding
Required: Staff Time

4. Implementation of Identified Barriers Identified as “Short Term”

Encourage the removal of identified barriers that have little or no budgetary impact for 2008-2009.

Action by: Directors and/or Managers of individual County and Municipal Departments/business units
Timing: On-going throughout 2008-2009
Funding
Required: Minimal

NOTE: The timing for addressing barriers is pending the provincial development of AODA regulations. Timing will also depend on the nature of the action, which may be phased in over a number of months or years depending on the resources and priorities of the respective department.



County of Perth Joint Accessibility Plan

Section 1: Municipal Jurisdiction(s) Plan

Municipality:

The County of Perth and its Member Municipalities:

Municipality of North Perth

Municipality of West Perth

Township of Perth East

Township of Perth South

Address:

1 Huron St., Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Key Contact:

Christel Hollinger

Community Emergency Management Coordinator

County of Perth, 1 Huron St. Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

Tel: 519-301-3586

chollinger@perthcounty.ca

Population: 37,266

Municipal Highlights

This plan covers all the member municipal corporations within the County of Perth. Operated within these municipalities are recreation/culture, fire, planning and development, emergency management and public works services. Social Services/Housing/Child Care are provided by the City of Stratford through agreement with the County of Perth and the Town of St Marys. The County of Perth is the designated delivery agent providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) through agreement with the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys.

Administration for Accessibility Committee (AFAC)

An Administration for Accessibility Committee (AFAC) has been established with the purpose to ensure that each municipality is in compliance with the Act, and thus having a legal obligation to undertake the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in order to improve accessibility. On such issues, each municipality will obtain advice from the AAC and will then generate and bring forth such issues to the Councils.

Section 2: Other Organizations and Agencies Participating in this Plan

The organizations participating in this plan include the County of Perth and its Member Municipalities:

Municipality of North Perth

Municipality of West Perth

Township of Perth East

Township of Perth South

As noted, Social Services are provided by the City of Stratford through agreement with the County of Perth and the Town of St Marys. The County of Perth is also the designated delivery agent providing EMS service through agreement with the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys. Given as such, efforts will be made to share information and collaborate with the City of Stratford and the Town of St Marys in those areas identified in this plan which are under the jurisdiction of the respective municipalities.

Section 3: Consultation Activities

Target Group

The target group includes any persons with a disability within the geographic area of the County of Perth.

Consultation Activities

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will attempt to reach many of the disabled groups that could provide input on the barriers that prevent them from achieving accessibility within their communities.

It is recognized that individual municipalities will have other agencies or organizations in their municipalities that they may need to consult.

Section 4: Accessibility Program Review

Complaint Review

It is the intention of the AAC that complaints will be received in writing by the County of Perth, who in turn will forward to it to the AAC. The AAC will contact the municipality responsible to have this complaint investigated and resolved if possible. The municipality will in return advise the AAC on how the complaint was or will be resolved. All complaints received will be recorded by the committee and moved into measurable goals as to whether or not the plan is working. A copy of each complaint is contained and reported in this plan.

See Appendix C – 2008 Complaint Review.

County Council Roles and Responsibilities

- Ensure an annual funding commitment to support the activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Due to Provincial requirements and regulations, this committee's work will be ongoing and will require an annual budget allocation.
- Maintain an ongoing appointment of the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Plan Review

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Status of the set targets to each Municipal Councils will be updated. This will also allow the AAC to review any new Provincial requirements that may impact the status of the targets that have been set.

See Appendix B – 2008 Accessibility Program Review.

Appendix A

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.

Mission/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.

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 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.
- 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 4 years. The terms of the appointments may be staggered on a two-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

Minutes will be taken and distributed by the staff coordinator. Agendas will be assembled and distributed by the staff coordinator in consultation with the Chair.

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

Minutes are of public record and are posted on the County and Municipality's websites.

Meetings

The AAC members will determine a schedule of dates, times and location of meetings, but the Committee will meet no less than four (4) times per year.

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 will be reviewed by the Committee.

Remuneration

An annual honorarium of \$250.00, prorated by meeting attendance, will be provided to each voting committee member.

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

2008 Accessibility Program Review

Barrier by Department	Strategy for removal/prevention	County Status	North Perth Status	West Perth Status	Perth East Status	Perth South Status
<p>GENERAL</p> <p>Policy/Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the accessible provision and inclusion of Customer Service. 	<p>Develop policy, procedures and practices governing the provisions of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. These should be consistent with the following principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with 					
		Under development				

Appendix B

2008 Accessibility Program Review

Barrier by Department	Strategy for removal/prevention	County Status	North Perth Status	West Perth Status	Perth East Status	Perth South Status
	<p>disabilities.</p> <p>2. The provisions of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.</p> <p>3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal</p>					

Appendix B

2008 Accessibility Program Review

Barrier by Department	Strategy for removal/prevention	County Status	North Perth Status	West Perth Status	Perth East Status	Perth South Status
	to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.					
PLANNING Physical/Architectural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the Site Plan review process to ensure that developments being approved under the site plan control process has regard for persons with disabilities. 	Develop a Site Plan Control Guideline document to assist staff in reviewing site plan applications.	Under development.	To be reviewed by Chief Building Officials.	To be reviewed by Chief Building Officials.	To be reviewed by Chief Building Officials.	To be reviewed by Chief Building Officials.

APPENDIX C 2008 Complaint Review

Situation	AAC Action	Out-come
Jan 2008: North Perth Council received a citizen's request to implement a by-law to enforce snow removal from sidewalks within the Municipality of North Perth.	The AAC made a recommendation to North Perth Council to take the request into consideration.	No further action.
Feb 2008: Request from the Listowel BIA to amend standing and mobile sign by-law to allow signs on sidewalks all year-round as opposed to April 1 to Oct 31 only.	An email was sent on behalf of the AAC to the Clerk of North Perth advising that sandwich boards on sidewalks during winter season could pose an accessibility concern as snow decreases the space provided on sidewalks.	North Perth Council denied the by-law amendment.