

2025 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



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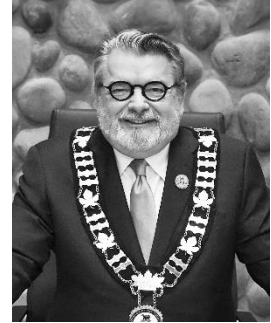
Message from the Mayor, David Bailey

On behalf of the Council of the County of Brant, I am proud to present the County of Brant's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2025-2029).

Our commitment to making Brant an accessible and inclusive community remains unwavering. We understand that true accessibility means actively planning for the diverse needs of our residents and visitors, ensuring everyone can fully participate in all aspects of community life.

As a Council, we are dedicated to removing barriers and creating opportunities for all individuals to experience the best that Brant has to offer. This plan outlines how the County will not only meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, but also how we aim to go beyond the minimum standards to create a more accessible future for everyone.

We are excited to support these initiatives as we continue to work towards our Vision: "A charming, prosperous, and inclusive community. A place to live, work, and thrive."



Message from Chief Administrative Officer, Alison Newton

The 2025-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan reaffirms the County of Brant's commitment to ensuring that accessible spaces, places, and opportunities are available to meet the diverse needs of all residents and visitors. The County is dedicated to making Brant a place where everyone, regardless of ability, can thrive and fully participate.

Our Accessibility Services team plays a key role in this effort, providing support to address accessibility concerns and actively seeking feedback from residents, business owners, and visitors. I encourage everyone to engage with the team, ask questions, share ideas, and learn more about the strides we're making toward a more inclusive Brant.

Thank you to County of Brant Council, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the dedicated County staff for their ongoing support of this initiative. Their collaboration and commitment have been instrumental in driving meaningful progress toward creating a community that is truly accessible for all.



Introduction



Commitment To Accessibility

The 2025-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the goals and initiatives that affirm the County's commitment to creating an accessible County of Brant and advancing efforts in building an equitable and inclusive community that values the contributions of individuals with disabilities.

The County of Brant is committed to achieving and maintaining an accessible Brant for its residents, visitors and employees in a manner that respects a person's dignity and independence while ensuring full integration and equal opportunity, regardless of ability. The County will continue to identify, prevent and remove barriers to provide equal and equitable access to goods, services and facilities, including buildings, outdoor public spaces.

The County is equally committed to supporting County employees through advice, policies, tools, resources, and governance structures to promote an inclusive workplace and support employees in delivering accessible goods, services and facilities.

Background

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, municipalities are required to develop and implement a multi-year accessibility plan. The County of Brant's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the County will advance accessibility in the following areas:

- General Accessibility
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces
- Customer Service

While the County of Brant is compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan focuses on maintaining and monitoring compliance, as well as promoting accessibility by design beyond legislative requirements. This plan covers the period from 2025 through 2029 and includes new and continuing priorities that support the County of Brant in the ongoing identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was informed by County of Brant Residents through public engagement, the ongoing work of the Accessibility Advisory Committee and in consultation with County Departments. It is a document which will be reviewed and updated every 5 years with annual status reports being prepared and posted on the County website showcasing the progress committed to in this plan.

Guiding Principles

The following principles serve to guide the County in actions, decision making and service approaches pertaining to the delivery of goods, services and facilities. The County will respond in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access by following these principals:

- Leadership and Accountability
- Dignity and Independence
- Integration and Equity
- Accessibility by Design
- Innovation and Adaptability
- Collaboration and Engagement

Leadership and Accountability

The County of Brant will strive to lead by example in accessibility excellence. Senior leadership is accountable for advancing accessibility in their areas of responsibility.

The County Will:

- Foster a culture of equality and inclusion within the organisation and throughout the community by challenging assumptions and biases when planning and delivering County goods, services, and facilities.
- Identify and address systemic, procedural and attitudinal barriers.

Dignity and Independence

Goods, services, and facilities will be provided to individuals in a manner that respects the dignity, diversity, and abilities.

The County Will:

- Maintain an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all County employees, residents and visitors.
- Provide services that are free from discrimination in a caring, compassionate and non-judgemental manner.
- Respect the independence of employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities while accessing the County goods, services, and facilities.

Integration and Equity

Goods, services, and facilities will be provided to individuals of all abilities in a similar way, unless an alternative measure is required to accommodate individual needs.

The County Will:

- Ensure that individuals with disabilities can obtain and benefit from the same goods, services, and facilities in an equitable manner.
- Seek alternative measures and accessible solutions for employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities to obtain and benefit from County goods, and services, and facilities.
- Consider accessibility and inclusion during all stages of policy, planning and delivery of goods, services, and facilities.

Accessibility By Design

A barrier-free environment is intentionally incorporated into the design of all County planning, procurement and implantation of County goods, services, and facilities to address the diverse needs of employees, residents, and visitors.

The County Will:

- Incorporate accessibility in the earliest planning stages and throughout the design, development, implementation and procurement of County goods, services, and facilities to ensure accessibility is not an afterthought.
- Ensure accommodation processes incorporate an approach that recognizes and addresses barriers to accessibility.

Innovation and Adaptability

Seeking new approaches and solutions to accessibility and adapting to new technologies that facilitate increased participation of County employees, residents, and visitors.

The County Will:

- Recognize that accessibility solutions may need to address multiple barriers and that a single solution may not meet or accommodate individual needs.
- Seek to embed an accessibility and inclusion lens towards continuous improvement processes and procedures.
- Investigate technologies, products, and services that will improve accessibility for County employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities.

Collaboration and Engagement

Addressing accessibility barriers requires a collaborative approach and is a shared responsibility of County Divisions, staff, and County Council. Accessible employee engagement and public engagement processes will help the County make more informed decisions and build strong relationships with the communities the County serves.

The County will:

- Commit to ongoing, meaningful engagement with employees and residents with disabilities when designing and implementing County of Brant goods, services, and facilities.
- Consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on decisions related to accessibility planning, as outlined in Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- Ensure that employee and public engagement activities are accessible and available in alternative formats.
- Ensure that County Divisions work together to align and advance accessibility priorities.

General Accessibility



The general requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) require the County to have accessibility policies, a statement of commitment, and a multi-year accessibility plan. The development, implementation and continued maintenance of the corporate policies governing how the County will achieve accessibility have been established, including:

The County of Brant Accessibility Standards for Customer Service was adopted by County Council in 2010. The [Corporate Accessibility Policy](#) was adopted in 2023 and will be reviewed for possible amendments in 2025.

Initiatives

1. Ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services and or facilities. *(All Divisions)*
2. Develop a standardized list for purchasing accessible fixtures, features and equipment. *(Strategic Initiatives, Corporate Services)*
3. Continue to work with vendors and community partners to meet or exceed accessibility requirements. *(All Divisions)*
4. Monitor, update, and maintain the County's policies and procedures to ensure that they align with provincial accessibility guidelines and tools to support the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
5. Provide status updates on the County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee on an annual basis and ensure updates are posted on the County's website. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
6. Promote accessibility awareness within the organization, council, as well as all the communities we serve through education and awareness campaigns. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
7. Host employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are accessible. *(All Divisions)*
8. Continue to engage and consult with the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee to advance accessibility. *(All Divisions)*
9. Continue to embed accessibility into the County's Age Friendly Plan as work proceeds on accessible and age-friendly commitments and recommendations. *(Community Services, Strategic Initiatives)*
10. Embed accessibility and inclusion into the County's next version of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, 2025 *(Community Services, Strategic Initiatives)*
11. Conduct an audit to better understand opportunities for improving accessibility for tourism with the development of criteria about what an accessible destination is. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
12. Continue to promote labour force opportunities to County of Brant businesses through partners such as Community Living. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
13. Promote nominations for Accessibility Award through Salute to Brant and showcase business in the County that make efforts to become more accessible through Accessible Community Examples Salute (A.C.E.S.). *(Strategic Initiatives)*

Outcomes

1. The County will lead by example in accessible practices and encourage business to prioritize accessibility.
2. An organization that fosters a culture of equity and inclusion, that values the importance of accessible practices and access for all.
3. Attract individuals with disabilities to the County and give them the opportunity to explore and access the Country's goods, services and facilities barrier free.

Information and Communication



The Information and Communications Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations, requires the County of Brant to provide all information and communications produced by the organization, including the website in an accessible way and available in alternative formats upon request.

Initiatives

1. Investigate more prevalent ways to notify the public about the availability of alternative formats upon request. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
2. Reintroduce to County employees the accommodation process when requests are made for alternative formats, including the requirement to consult with the person making the request to determine suitable accommodation. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
3. Continue to review and evaluate current website hosting provider and web optimization platforms to ensure WCAG compliance and best practices. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
4. Finalize the development and implementation of Information, Communication & Technology Guidelines to ensure the County is providing perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust information. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
5. Ongoing professional development for County staff on the creation, evaluation and remediation of accessible documents. *(All Divisions)*
6. Evaluate and remediate the County website content and remediate content and ensure that it meets or exceeds accessibility compliance requirements. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
7. The County will continue to ensure the digital process for submitting feedback remains operable, accessible, and responded to in a timely manner and that all staff are educated on the process. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
8. Maintain current compliance with Information and Communications Standard and adjust as standards progress. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
9. Investigate the process for having live captioning available for in person meetings. *(Strategic Initiatives, Corporate Services)*
10. Collaborate with the internal departments to ensure that all necessary software tools for creating accessible documents are acquired and made available to all staff who need them. *(Strategic Initiatives, Corporate Services)*

Outcomes

1. County employees, residents and visitors with disabilities have access to information and communications through accessible websites, digital content, and alternative formats.
2. County employees have the knowledge and tools to provide information in an accessible format.

Employment



The Employment Standard requires organizations to accommodate individuals throughout the cycle of employment, beginning with the recruitment process. The County of Brant is committed to advancing accessibility, diversity, and inclusion of employees with disabilities.

Initiatives

1. Evaluate requirements to successfully fulfill a position to determine what assets need to be included within new job postings. *(Corporate Services)*
2. Continue to support Human Resources in supporting accessible hiring practices. *(All Divisions)*
3. Continue to support the practice of making employees aware that individualized accessible accommodation and emergency response plans can be developed for employees with disabilities. *(All Divisions)*
4. Investigate the requirements and resources needed to develop an Inclusive Hiring Program. *(Corporate Services, Strategic Initiatives)*
5. Continue to encourage participation in training opportunities to further educate and gain knowledge in supporting and identifying mental health. *(Corporate Services)*
6. Regular review of policies and procedures to identify, prevent and remove barriers to employment and development opportunities. *(Corporate Services)*

Outcomes

1. Increased opportunities for employment, and advancement of employees with disabilities within the County organization.
2. Increase the safety of employees with disabilities with the development of emergency response plans and overall education and awareness of mental health.
3. Equitable, clear, and consistent employment policies that remove systemic barriers to ensure individuals of all abilities can participate as job applicants and employees of the County.

Transportation



Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the Transportation Standard outlines the requirements to prevent and remove barriers to public transportation. This includes the physical and operational requirements for both conventional and specialized transportation and the proportion of on-demand taxicabs required in the community.

Initiatives

1. Ensure that the service provider for Brant Transit meets or exceeds requirements for vehicle accessibility. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
2. Continue to offer accessible customer service options to access public transportation information and booking services. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
3. Drivers retained by the service provider for Brant Transit are required to be trained in accessible customer service and receive training in managing accessibility equipment and assistive devices safely. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
4. Research alternative transportation service options, with increased accessibility considerations. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
5. Conduct a review of the demand and use of accessible taxicabs to determine if the proportion of accessible taxicabs remains appropriate for the County of Brant. *(Protective Services, Strategic Initiatives)*
6. Continue to grow the Vehicle for Hire Accessibility Reserve Fund to allow for the development of a programs that support accessible transportation. *(Protective Services)*

Outcomes

1. Accessible options for transportation, both public and private to meet the needs of the diverse population in the County.
2. Safe and accessible public transportation in the County provided by the contracted service provider for Brant Transit.
3. Increased awareness and consideration for accessibility and barrier removal in the County's transportation strategies, planning and policy development.

Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces



This Build Environment Standard has been divided into two parts, one for interiors and one for outdoor components – now referred to as Design of Public Spaces Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Barrier free design for interior elements is encompassed in the Ontario Building Code. Newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces must comply to these standards.

Initiatives

1. Integration of the County's updated Accessible Design Standards into the County's Engineering Design Standards and Park's Master Plan. *(Strategic Initiatives, Community Services, Operations)*
2. Finalize full review of all washrooms in the County and evaluate and prioritize needs for upgrades. *(Strategic Initiatives, Community Services)*
3. Always ensure project designs are viewed with an inclusion lens and consideration to maximize accessibility *(All Divisions)*
4. Evaluate and determine priority areas for updating and installing accessible paths and trails, with consideration of adding an accessible trail network. *(Community Services)*
5. Continue to prioritize and retrofit existing facilities to upgrade accessibility to meet or exceed legislated requirements. *(All Divisions)*
6. Install of a new fully accessible playground in St. George. *(Community Services)*
7. Development of Arlington Meadows Park to include universal washroom and barrier free splashpad. *(Community Services)*
8. Development of Gurney Sports Park with consideration in the design process given to barrier free access to sports field and trail. *(Community Services)*
9. Continue to include more elements for inclusive play when installing new or redeveloping playgrounds. *(Community Services)*
10. Accessible elements in public spaces will be maintained through continuous monitoring and regularly planned preventative maintenance. *(Community Services, Operations)*
11. Continue to update and modify sidewalk connectivity through evaluation and prioritized list. *(Operations)*
12. Review of all County owned parking lots and access condition of accessible parking spaces. Signage and painted lines will be updated where applicable to ensure legislative compliance. *(Strategic Initiatives, Operations, Community Services)*
13. During reconstruction, will continue to widen sidewalks and add drop curbs where applicable. *(Operations)*
14. Replacement of asphalt connecting path with concrete sidewalk 2m wide. *(Operations)*
15. Upgrade to sidewalks on West River St. *(Operations)*
16. Improved pedestrian crossings through upgraded pavement markings throughout the County. *(Operations)*
17. Through the County's Safe Streets Plan, will continue to include accessibility considerations and improvements by consulting with the community and Accessibility Advisory Committee. *(Operations, Strategic Initiatives)*
18. Continue to review requests and prioritize upgrades to signage and audible signals at signalized intersections. *(Operations)*
19. Install tactile walking surface indicators during new sidewalk development or reconstruction. *(Operations)*
20. Continue to incentivize accessibility through the County's Community Improvement Plan and investigate future incentive programs. *(Strategic Initiatives)*

Outcomes

1. Continuous improvement to accessibility and barrier removal in public spaces and workplaces in the County of Brant during new design, renovations and redevelopment of existing facilities.

2. Sidewalks and roadways are accessible and facilitate safe mobility throughout the County for residents and visitors.
3. Accessibility will be considered during the planning process, design and development of new or redeveloped projects deployed in the County.

Customer Service



The County of Brant is committed to customer service excellence that is both accessible and inclusive of employees, residents, and visitors. The Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations requires the County of Brant to have policies and procedures in place to support the following areas: use of support individuals, service animals, use of assistive devices, disruption to service notifications, collection of feedback, and training of staff, volunteers, and thirds parties acting on behalf of the County of Brant.

Initiatives

1. Continue to evaluate County programs and services through an inclusion lens. *(All Divisions)*
2. Continue to offer Sensitive Santa and determine opportunities to enhance the event and maximize number of visits. *(Community Services)*
3. Support the deployment of the County's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy. *(All Divisions)*
4. Determine the most appropriate outlet to share information about the County's Fun Adaptive Inclusive Recreation program, to ensure the inclusion and equitable participation of individuals with disabilities in recreation programs. *(Strategic Initiatives, Community Services)*
5. Create an Accessible Special Events Guide to include in the County's Special Events Manual. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
6. Continue to build and strengthen partnerships with organizations that support individuals with disabilities in our community. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
7. Evaluate daytime recreation programs to identify opportunities for adaptations that ensure inclusivity and accessibility for individuals of all abilities and diverse life situations. *(Community Services)*
8. Develop a sidewalk clearance campaign to educate the public on accessibility and the needs of individuals with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of barrier-free paths of travel. *(Strategic Initiatives, Operations)*
9. Create accessible training programs designed for businesses in the County of Brant, aimed at improving their accessibility practices and ensuring compliance with legislative requirements. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
10. Continue to notify the public about temporary disruptions when public spaces or services are not available and prioritizing remediation. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
11. Receive in-person or over the phone feedback and ensure the information is forwarded to the applicable departments for response. *(All Divisions)*
12. Investigate opportunities to develop a Support Person pass program. *(Strategic Initiatives)*
13. Continue to promote disability awareness through public education campaigns. *(Strategic Initiatives)*

Outcomes

1. The County will provide goods and services to individuals of all abilities in an equal and equitable manner by providing accessible customer service.
2. County employees will have the knowledge, tools, and resources to offer accessible customer service.
3. Individuals of all abilities will have access to a variety of recreational programs and events.

Conclusion

The County of Brant is committed to the prevention, identification, and removal of barriers to accessibility. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be monitored by the Strategic Initiatives Department on an annual basis and status updates will be posted on the County's website. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be updated in 2030 in consultation with employees, residents and visitors with disabilities, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Council.

All Divisions in the County are responsible for advancing accessibility initiatives and striving for a more accessible County of Brant. The County of Brant will continue to make accessibility a priority and demonstrate excellence as an inclusive employer, service provider and municipal government.

Feedback

The County of Brant welcomes feedback on the 2025 – 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and the accessibility of services and facilities. Feedback may be provided in person at any of our Customer Service Offices or directly to: accessibility@brant.ca

All feedback is used to improve how we provide goods, services, and facilities and will guide future Multi-Year Plans and accessibility initiatives.