

Accessibility Status Report 2024



This **Accessibility Status Report** is an annual update on the progress made towards meeting the initiatives outlined in *The County of Brant's 2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*, the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11)*. The County of Brant is required to publicly report annually on the status of the Accessibility Plan.



Commitment to Accessibility

The County of Brant's [2020-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) outlined goals and initiatives that affirm the County's commitment to creating an accessible Brant and advancing efforts in building an equitable and inclusive society that values the contributions of people with disabilities.

The County is committed to the identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers.

By doing so, the County will provide an accessible environment in which employees, residents and visitors with disabilities can access the County's goods, services, and facilities, including buildings, public spaces, information, and communications, in a way that meets their individual needs.

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

2024 Summary of Accomplishments

General Accessibility

- ✓ Maintained and monitored accessibility guidelines and tools to support the implementation and compliance of AODA.
- ✓ Promoted accessibility awareness within the organization as well as in the community through education and awareness campaigns.
- ✓ Hosted employee meetings and public events in facilities and public spaces that are barrier free.
- ✓ Completed a full revision and adoption of County of Brant Accessibility Design Standards.
- ✓ Engaged and consulted with the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee, adding two new members to the Committee.
- ✓ Hosted five in person public engagement events along with online public engagement with the County's Engage Brant platform from May 22 to June 27, 2024 to inform the 2025 - 2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan was developed and adopted by Council.
- ✓ Application to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Coalition of Inclusive Communities was approved.
- ✓ Council adopted the County's first Inclusion Charter, solidifying its commitment to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion.

Training

- ✓ Ensured that employees and volunteers completed mandatory AODA training appropriate to their role. 274 employees completed Accessible Customer Service and Human Rights Training.
- ✓ Continued to enhance knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with County Policies, Human Rights Legislation, and AODA.
- ✓ Provided training and materials for the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee on Accessible Customer Service, Site Plan review and Roles & Responsibilities.
- ✓ Training opportunity provided to staff on "What is a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and How it Applies to my Work".
- ✓ Training completed for staff on the creation of accessible documents, both as a group and 1 on 1 opportunities provided.

Procurement

- ✓ Continued to ensure accessibility criteria are key requirements of the procurement process when acquiring or purchasing goods, services or facilities.
- ✓ Provided tools and resources to assist County employees in meeting accessibility obligations in procurement process.

Information and Communication

- ✓ Continued to notify the public about the availability of alternative formats and communication supports upon request.
- ✓ Continued to have a process for receiving and responding to feedback that is accessible and available in multiple avenues.
- ✓ Continued monitoring and remediation of the County's website content to ensure it meets or exceeds WCAG 2.0 compliance.
- ✓ Maintained Site Improve accessibility score above 90% by continuously monitoring web accessibility.
- ✓ Installation of a hearing loop in Council Chambers and invested in countertop units for Paris, Burford and Brant Sports Complex customer service desks, to improve communication for individuals with hearing loss.

Customer Service

- ✓ Facilitated annual Sensitive Santa visits, in partnership with Sensity, to accommodate 18 children who benefit from a sensory friendly environment.
- ✓ Continued to evaluate County programs and services to ensure inclusion and equitable participation of employees, residents, and visitors with disabilities in County programs, events, and services.
- ✓ Resumed registration and programming for FAIR Brant (Fun, Adaptive, Inclusive, Recreation), the County's adaptive recreation program.
- ✓ Continued to work with and strengthen partnerships with organizations that provide services and programs for individuals with disabilities.
- ✓ Continued to facilitate the Snow Buddies program to assist seniors and persons with disabilities with personal snow clearing assistance.
- ✓ Creation of an accessible and inclusive recreation checklist for staff to reference when creating programs and events.

Employment

- ✓ Review of policies and procedures to identify, prevent and remove barriers to employment and develop opportunities.
- ✓ Provided accommodations, upon request, to all employment candidates, as well as new hires.

Transportation

- ✓ Continued to incorporate improvements for accessibility and path of travel on County streets and sidewalks. Sidewalk widths continue to be upgraded during construction.
- ✓ Continued to upgrade accessible pedestrian signals and include where new crossing is developed as legislated.
- ✓ Continued to install tactile walking surface indicators at all corners during state of repair or rehabilitation projects.
- ✓ Pedestrian crossovers added at the following locations: Maple Ave. in Burford, Grand River St. South, Oak Ave. and Arlington Parkway in Paris.
- ✓ Signalized crosswalk added at Dundas and King Edward St. in Paris
- ✓ Sidewalk upgrades at following locations in Paris:
 - New sidewalk construction on Kathleen St.
 - Sidewalk widened and connections made with new sidewalk on Willow St.
 - Installation of new sidewalk for connectivity to Brant Sports Complex.
- ✓ Addition of approximately 2 km of sidewalk winter clearing.
- ✓ Removal of 270 sidewalk trip hazards completed.
- ✓ Through the launch of the County's new micro public transit system, continued to provide accessible transportation, including offering several methods to book rides to accommodate various needs and abilities of the public.
- ✓ Added an additional wheelchair accessible vehicle to the Brant Transit fleet.

Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces

- ✓ Continued to maintain accessible elements in public spaces through preventative maintenance and regular monitoring.
- ✓ Continued to respond to temporary disruptions when accessible elements in public spaces are not in working order by notifying the public and prioritizing remediation.
- ✓ Completion of a public universal washroom to the Burford Customer Service Office.
- ✓ Accessible renovation to St. George Lawn Bowling Club that included upgrade to accessible parking space, exterior path of travel, addition of a universal washroom and barrier free interior.
- ✓ Installation of drop-down grab bars in the lobby universal washrooms at Cowen Health Hub.
- ✓ Addition of a paved walkway around the play structure to connect with the walking path at Mile Hill Park.
- ✓ Addition of a paved walkway to connect the Darin Ayres Pavillion to the pathway in Lions Park.
- ✓ Completion of paved pathways at Rest Acres Ridge Park, Rising Hill Park, and Oakhill Heights Park.
- ✓ Renovation to the Burford Skate Park included a paved pathway and accessible seating area.
- ✓ Repairs completed to the paved entrances to the Burford Tennis Courts.
- ✓ A new trail head sign was purchased for the Sensory Trail to address the wear and tear as well as replacement of the Braille.



Economic Development and Tourism

- ✓ Inclusion of an Accessible Brant Award category at the County's annual Salute to Brant Businesses event honoring local businesses.
- ✓ Continued to incentivize accessibility improvements through the County's Downtown Community Improvement Plans and investigated opportunities for future programs.

Next Steps

The County of Brant is committed to the prevention, identification, and removal of accessibility barriers. The 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 2025 in consultation with employees, residents and visitors with disabilities, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and County Divisions.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility and will be incorporated by design into the work of all County Divisions. The County's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will coordinate across all service areas to create a shift in the workplace culture with respect to attitudes about accessibility and disability. The County of Brant will demonstrate and maintain accessibility excellence as an inclusive employer, service provider and municipal government.

Contact Information

For more information about the County of Brant's accessibility initiatives or to obtain an alternative format of this document, please contact Accessibility Services.

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