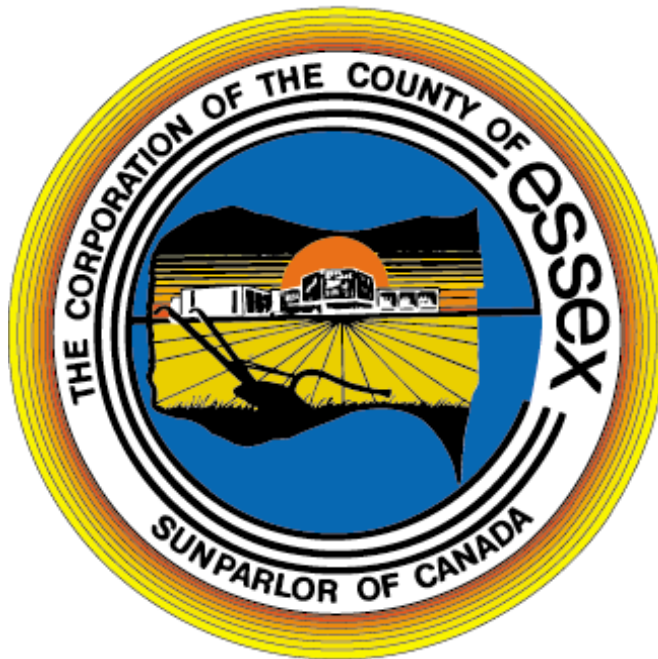


May 2011

CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

Proposed for Adoption – May 18, 2011



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

People with Disabilities in Canada/Ontario

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. Statistics Canada's Participation and Activities Limitations Survey (PALS) provides demographic information on people with disabilities using data collected in the most recent census. The 2006 Census provided essential information on the prevalence of various disabilities and supports for people with disabilities, their employment profile, their income and their participation in society. As a result, it was determined that approximately 4.4 million people in Canada have disabilities, representing 14.3% of Canada's population. Within Ontario, approximately 1.85 million people have disabilities, representing 15.5% of Ontario's population.

National statistics, in 2006, indicate that 43.4% of people aged 65+ have a disability, 11.5% of people aged 15-64 have a disability and 3.7% of children aged 0 -14 have a disability.

In 2006, statistics indicate that 47.2% of Ontario's seniors (age 65+) have a disability. Among the working age population (age 15-64), 12.6% have a disability. Among children (age 0 to 14), 3.8% have a disability.

Projections show that by 2021, seniors with disabilities will outnumber 25-64 year olds with disabilities. In 2026, the majority of people with disabilities will be 65 years of age or older – some 3.05 million people in Canada. ^[1]

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

On December 14th, 2001, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) received Royal Assent. This legislation was created out of recognition of the importance of improving opportunities for people with disabilities in Ontario and in receiving their involvement in identification, removal and prevention of barriers. The ODA requires Ontario government ministries, as well as municipalities and other key broader public sector organizations to prepare annual accessibility plans. Section 11 of the ODA establishes the duties of Municipalities and requires the following:

Municipal accessibility plans

11. (1) *Each year, the council of every municipality shall,*

- (a) prepare an accessibility plan; and*
- (b) either*
 - (i) seek advice from the accessibility advisory committee that it establishes or continues under subsection 12(1), or*
 - (ii) consult with persons with disabilities and others, if the council has not established or continued an accessibility advisory committee under subsection 12(1).*

^[1] Statistics from Ministry of Community and Social Services – Popular Topics
http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/topics/pop_ado_stats.htm

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(2) *The accessibility plan shall address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities in the municipality's by-laws and in its policies, programs, practices and services.*

Same

(3) *The accessibility plan shall include,*

(a) *a report on the measures the municipality has taken to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;*

(b) *the measures in place to ensure that the municipality assesses its proposals for by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services to determine their effect on accessibility for persons with disabilities;*

(c) *a list of the by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services that the municipality will review in the coming year in order to identify barriers to persons with disabilities;*

(d) *the measures that the municipality intends to take in the coming year to identify barriers to persons with disabilities;*

(e) *all other information that the regulations prescribe for the purpose of the plan.*

Availability to the public

(4) *A municipality shall make its accessibility plan available to the public.*

Even though the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) received Royal Assent on June 13, 2005 and is now the law, the provisions of the ODA remains in force until the Act is repealed. The Minister of Community and Social Services has advised that she intends to repeal the Ontarians with Disabilities Act once the regulations for the five standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 are in place. Appropriate aspects of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act will be incorporated into the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 at that time.

This means that public sector organizations including Government ministries, municipalities, hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and public transportation organizations are still legally required to prepare annual accessibility plans and to make these plans available to the public.

The legislative requirement that municipalities having a population of 10,000 must establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee, continues under the AODA.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Following extensive public consultations across the Province in early 2004, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration drafted new legislation

to benefit all Ontarians by establishing a goal of achieving accessibility for people with disabilities by the year 2025. To achieve this goal, the AODA legislates the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards concerning goods, services, accommodation, facilities, buildings and employment. Improvements will be phased in, in stages of five years or less, moving towards an accessible Ontario in 20 years.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, was passed by unanimous vote by the Ontario Legislature on May 10, 2005. On June 14th, 2005 it received Royal Assent and came into force.

The AODA applies to both the public and private sectors. It also applies to the legislative assembly.

The AODA includes standards that set out the measures, policies, practices and other steps needed to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The standards address the full range of disabilities – including physical, sensory, hearing, mental health, developmental and learning. That is, both visible and invisible disabilities are included. They are mandatory and include time periods for implementing accessibility requirements in stages of five years or less. Standards cover such areas as: accessible buses, safe pedestrian routes into buildings, automatic doors at entrances, lower counter heights at cash registers, large-print menus, accessible washroom facilities, staff training in serving customers with learning disabilities, and adaptive technology in the workplace.

Accessible Standards Development Committees were formed including persons with disabilities, representatives of industries or sectors to whom the standards apply, the Ontario government and others to develop standards. These Committees submit proposed standards to the government for approval as regulations.

Once a standard has been adopted as a regulation, all affected persons and organizations are required to comply within the timelines set out in the standard. The government is taking a modern, transparent approach to enforcement. Organizations covered by standards are obliged to file accessibility reports annually or as required, confirming compliance, and make them public. Spot audits will verify the contents of reports, and there will be tough penalties for non-compliance. To strengthen accountability, the Minister will prepare an annual report on progress in removing and preventing barriers.

In addition, the Lieutenant Governor, within four years of the legislation coming into force was required to appoint a person to undertake a comprehensive review of the Act's effectiveness. On June 12, 2009, Charles Beer was appointed to conduct the first independent review of the act. From September to December 2009, Mr. Beer consulted with a wide range of individuals and groups from across Ontario. On May 31, 2010, Community and Social Services Minister Madeleine Meilleur tabled Mr. Beer's report in the Ontario Legislature. A copy of the Beer report is available at this link: <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/publications/accessibility/accessibility.aspx>. In August 2010, the Ontario Government released their response to the Beer Report. A copy is available at the this link:

http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/OntarioAccessibilityLaws/2005/reviewOfLegislation_letter.aspx

One of the recommendations of the Beer Report, based on input received from people across the Province, was for the need to align the standards. As a result, then government agreed to integrate the information and

communications, transportation and employment standards. In 2013, the Accessible Customer Service Standard will also be integrated with the other three. Most of the changes that will result from the Built Environment Standard, once it is completed, will be reflected in changes to the Ontario Building Code. The rest, however, will also be integrated into this regulation.

The Accessibility Standards Advisory Council advises the Minister on the development of accessibility standards and on education campaigns to help private and public sectors, as well as the general public, understand the goals and requirements of the Act.

Attitudes are one of the biggest barriers facing people with disabilities. Under the AODA, the responsibilities of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario include conducting public education programs on the purpose and implementation of the Act. Among the public education activities are information and training for schools, colleges, universities, trade or occupational associations and self-governing professions to build awareness of accessibility into the educational experience.

Standards Development Committees

Originally, Standards Development Committees (SDC) were appointed to draft Standards in 5 areas. They are:

- Customer Services
- Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Built Environment (buildings, structures and public spaces)
- Employment.

The Customer Services Standard Development Committee was appointed first and the resultant Accessible Standard for Customer Service was enacted as Ontario Regulation 429/07 on July 27, 2007. An accompanying exemption was also filed regarding that standard as Ontario Regulation 430/07. These regulations came into effect January 1, 2008. Public Sector organizations had until January 1, 2010 to comply with the regulation. Private Sector organizations have been given an additional two years to comply. A copy of the Ontario Regulations 429/07 and 430/07 are available on e-laws at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm#BK1.

As mentioned above, the Information and Communications Standard, Transportation Standard and Employment Standard have been integrated into one proposed Regulation. The proposed Integrated Accessibility Regulation was posted for public review from February 1 to March 18, 2011. The government is now considering the feedback provided to determine whether or not changes are required. It is anticipated that the proposed Integrated Accessibility Regulation will be enacted in the summer of 2011, pending government approval.

A draft of the Accessible Built Environment Standard Development Committee was first circulated for public input in 2009. The initial proposed standard was released for public review from July 14, 2009 to October 16, 2009. The committee revised the initial draft standard to reflect the public's input. At their last meeting on May 28, 2010, the committee voted on the standard clause by clause. The final proposed standard has now been submitted to the Minister of Community and Social Services who is considering what will become law and when.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

Since September of 2003, when the first generation Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the County of Essex was adopted by Essex County Council, the Corporation has been making every effort to implement the initiatives approved in the annual Accessibility Plans.

Many physical changes to County owned or operated facilities have been made to remove barriers. As noted in previous Accessibility Plans these have included:

- the removal of the exterior lift at the Essex County Civic Centre and the installation of a new ramp
- relocation of accessible parking at the Civic Centre, including line painting and signage
- the construction of a family washroom on the main floor of the Civic Centre, complete with automatic doors
- renovations to other existing washrooms within the Civic Centre to make them more accessible
- additional automatic doors were installed at the east entrance of the Civic Centre
- ramp to the shade rock garden/fountain at the Civic Centre
- adjustable table in the Civic Centre Cafeteria
- replaced chairs in the Committee Rooms in the Civic Centre with chairs that are adjustable, swivel and have casters
- renovations to County Administration reception desk to improve Accessibility
- continuing renovations to the Sun Parlor Home for Senior Citizens in Leamington to improve the accessibility of that entire facility for the residents and visitors
- renovation of County Council Chambers to remove physical mobility barriers and installation of FM system for audio enhancements

Other accessibility initiatives in previous Accessibilities Plans have included:

- sensitivity training for County of Essex employees to enhance their awareness of accessibility issues and to provide them with knowledge on how to effectively serve people with disabilities and how to remove attitudinal barriers
- the annual Accessibility Workshop, designed to provide a day filled with motivational/inspirational speakers and educators who focus on ways in which to make our communities barrier free-both physical and attitudinal barriers

- partnership to provide a 211 service in Windsor-Essex County providing improved access to community, government, health and social services
- launched eBooks and eAudiobooks through the Essex County Library website
- implemented an employee return to work policy for County of Essex employees
- promoted National Accessibility Awareness Week through wheelchair basketball games in an elementary school
- annual publication of a newsletter providing information on activities of the Accessibility Advisory Committees throughout the region
- development of Accessible Customer Service Policy, Practices and Procedures for services provided by the County of Essex and Accessible Customer Service training for all employees and Council of the County of Essex

The Council of the Corporation of the County of Essex remains committed to ensuring that the facilities, services and programs provided by the County are available to all residents including people with disabilities. The process of identifying barriers is constant. New initiatives continue to be identified and have been incorporated in the 2011 Accessibility Plan and will continue to be implemented in each subsequent years' Accessibility Plan.

Commencing in 2007, the Accessibility planning process was incorporated to more effectively coincide with the budgeting process. Accessibility Plans for the County of Essex will continue to be prepared in conjunction with the annual budget cycle and presented for adoption in March/April of each year.

AIM

The Essex County Accessibility Plan 2011 provides an update on the status of the initiatives identified in prior years' Accessibility Plans. It also sets out the initiatives that will be undertaken in 2011 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities, including staff who utilize the facilities, services and programs provided by the Corporation.

OBJECTIVES

This Report:

- 1) Describes the facilities, policies, programs, practices and services of the Corporation of the County of Essex and the initiatives that have been undertaken within the past year to identify and eliminate barriers to people with disabilities.
- 2) Reviews initiatives the Corporation of the County of Essex included in prior years' Accessibility Plans and provides a status report on the implementation of those recommendations.
- 3) Describes the measures the Corporation of the County of Essex will take in the coming year to implement the approved recommendations of the 2011 Accessibility Plan and to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

- 4) Describes the ways that the Corporation of the County of Essex will make this accessibility plan available to the public.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

Mission Statement of the Corporation of the County of Essex

The County of Essex is a municipal corporation of elected officials and employees working together to meet the challenges of today while respecting our past and preparing for our future.

Municipal Statistics

Essex County is Canada's southernmost county, located on a peninsula of land surrounded by Lake St. Clair to the north, the Detroit River to the West and Lake Erie to the south. The County has a population of over 176,000 and an overall area of 1720 km².

Essex County Council

The Corporation of the County of Essex is an upper tier municipality comprised of 14 members being the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of each of the 7 local municipalities within the County of Essex. One of the 14 County Councillors is elected as the Warden who serves as the Head of County Council.

Service Responsibilities and Financial Obligations

The Corporation of the County of Essex is responsible for providing services that are common to all municipalities in Essex County thereby minimizing the need for duplicate services and administration. These services include transportation services, libraries, homes for the aged, planning, emergency management co-ordination, community services, emergency medical services and general government administration.

As well, the County of Essex is a funding partner for regional services including social services, child care, social housing, public health, economic development, tourism and property assessment.

2011 County Budget

The gross budget expenditure for The Corporation of the County of Essex for the year 2011 is \$124,783,550. The resultant Net Operating Requirement for 2011 is \$70,527,320.

Staffing

The staff complement of the Corporation of the County of Essex consists of approximately 430 full-time employees and 340 part-time employees.

Facilities Owned/Leased by the Corporation of the County of Essex

Essex County Civic and Education Centre

360 Fairview Avenue, Essex, N8M 1Y6

The building at 360 Fairview Avenue (also known as the Essex County Civic and Education Centre) became home to the County Administration offices in October of 1975.



The administrative offices for Essex County Council Services, Corporate Services, Engineering, Human Resources, Planning, Emergency Management Co-ordination, Emergency Medical Services, Community Services and the Essex County Library are all located in the Civic Centre. The County of Essex Council Chamber is also located in this building, as well as a number of Committee Rooms which are utilized by the owners and tenants of the building and other community organizations.

The building was a joint effort between the County Public School Board, the County Roman Catholic School Board and the Corporation of the County of Essex. In January of 1981, the Essex Region Conservation Authority became a partner in the ownership of the Civic Centre.

The capital costs and operating expenses are shared as follows, based on the square footage occupied by each partner:

Essex Region Conservation Authority	7.87%
Greater Essex County District School Board	24.75%
Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board	16.54%
Corporation of the County of Essex	50.84%

The construction and joint furnishing debt was paid in full in 1996.

There are currently numerous tenants in the building. The Essex Power Corporation, the Windsor Essex County Health Unit, the Essex County Federation of Agriculture, the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority, the Media Centre and Transportation Services are all located in the Civic Centre.

The operation of the building is under the direction of the Building Management Committee and is governed by policies established by agreement among the four owners. The Committee is made up of two elected and one or more appointed staff member (s) from each body. The appointed person is a resource person and is not accorded a vote. The Committee meets infrequently during the year (typically two to three times).

Any renovations, alterations or improvements to the Civic Centre must be approved by the Building Management Committee. The Corporation of the County of Essex is not able to unilaterally make changes to the facility.

Many of the barriers identified in the previous Accessibility Plans related to physical accessibility barriers in the Civic Centre.

The latest renovation to improve accessibility in the Civic Centre was in the Council Chambers. As the primary user of the Chambers, Essex County Council has decided to proceed with renovations to the Chambers in 2010, at its own cost. Renovations were completed in March 2011.

Transportation Services Facilities

The Engineering, Transportation Planning and Construction Services Divisions operate from offices in Suite 201, on the main floor of the Essex County Civic Centre, 360 Fairview Avenue West in Essex.

The Maintenance Operation Division operates from four year round depots and two seasonal depots.

Year Round Maintenance Facilities:

- Maintenance Depot, 1941 Road 4 E, Kingsville
- West End Depot, 2100 Cty Rd 12, Essex
- West Pike Creek Depot, 11965 Cty Rd 42, Tecumseh
- Tilbury North Depot, 2400 Comber Side Rd, Lakeshore

Seasonal Maintenance Facilities:

- Harrow Yard, 970 Cty Rd 41, Harrow
- Comber Yard, 5805 Cty Rd 46, Comber

All Maintenance Depots have varying degrees of material storage, equipment housing, office and washroom facilities. These maintenance depots are not service locations that the general public would readily visit. Primarily, only roads maintenance staff have occasion to frequent these facilities.

Essex County Library Facilities

The Essex County Library operates a system of 14 branch libraries that provide library materials and services, free of charge, to all residents of Essex County. The Library's mission statement is *to make available to the residents of Essex County reading, viewing and listening materials for general knowledge, cultural enrichment, education and recreation; authoritative and timely information in support of daily living, educational pursuits and intellectual curiosity; and to encourage the youngest members of the community to read and learn.*

Library facilities are provided by the local municipality with one facility located in each of Amherstburg, LaSalle, Leamington and Tecumseh, three facilities in both Essex and Kingsville and four in Lakeshore. While the local municipalities provide the facility for the Library Branches, the Essex County Library Board is responsible for furnishing the inside of the buildings with shelving, furniture, equipment, library resources and employs the staff who deliver all the services the Essex County Library provides.

Library administration offices are located in the lower level of 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex in Suite 101. Administration, computer network services, ordering and processing of library materials are centralized there, so branches can focus exclusively on serving the public during hours that range from 59 hours a week at the largest branches to 12 at the smallest. Only library staff access the library administration offices.

Beginning in 2008, the LaSalle, Leamington and Tecumseh branches began to have Sunday hours in addition to their regular weekday and Saturday hours of operation. Sunday hours are not, however, available during the months of June, July, August and September.

The Essex County Library is funded primarily through the County of Essex. The Library's annual budget totals approximately \$4,238,000 with wages and benefits comprising 64% and library materials about 17%.

A Library Board, appointed every four years by Essex County Council, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, has 4 members from the current County Council. There are 3 lay appointees. The Board is responsible for setting policy and reviewing the overall performance of the Library. The Board's budget is approved annually by County Council.

The local municipalities have been striving to address the physical barriers that exist in some of the older library facilities in order to make the buildings more accessible for all patrons. In some instances, like in the Town of Essex, library branches have been relocated to more accessible buildings. Most recently the McGregor Library was relocated to a new Community Centre, providing a larger, more accessible facility. The Town of Kingsville also opened a new library in March 2010, replacing the inaccessible Carnegie Library.

Over the past several years, the Library has been improving technology to enhance services for all patrons. JAWS software is currently installed on computers at the Tecumseh, Essex and LaSalle Branches. There is a Braille printer at the Essex Branch. SARA, a scanning and reading appliance which makes printed documents accessible for people with low vision or who are blind through magnifying the print or having the document read out loud in 12 different languages, is available at the Leamington Library. Zoom Text, which provides computer access through an enlarged screen, is also available at the Cottam, Kingsville and Ruthven branches.

The Essex County Library Board continues to expand and enhance their on-line library services by providing eAudioBooks and eBooks available for download through their website. As of April 1, the Essex County Library will be offering a free online download music service. People will be able to download up to three songs per week from the Sony Canada Music database. As well, as the online resources available, they have books in large print format and DVD's with closed captioning. For residents who cannot get to a library branch due to medical reasons, staff at their branch will deliver materials. Collections are also sent to local long term care facilities.

Sun Parlor Home for the Aged and Victoria Street Manor



In 1900, the Corporation of the County of Essex approved the development of a Home to care for the elderly within the County. The original Home, located in Leamington, accommodated approximately thirty-five (35) individuals. Over the years, the Home was improved and enlarged. In 1955, a new addition was built providing 57 residential care beds, lounges, a library/boardroom, and administration area. The existing building was completely renovated, providing accommodation for a total of 91 residents. The original building was demolished in 1961. A new wing was completed in 1962 and the capacity of the Home was approved to 225 beds. In 1966, additional beds were created which increased the capacity to 240. Also, at this time, additional office space, an enlarged laundry area, and a shipping/receiving area were constructed. In 1971, the Home increased bed capacity by 52 with the construction of an additional wing. The facility, designed over time to accommodate a bed capacity of 294, was a two-storey building consisting of 96,200 square feet (approximately 2.2 acres).

The present Sun Parlor Home, located at 175 Talbot Street East in Leamington, was completed in early 1992. The Home has a capacity of 206 residents and has 60,000 additional square feet of living space.

While the SPH was designed to exceed accessibility standards from the day when it was constructed in 1992, over the past decade, general wear on some fixtures and furnishings, as well as the increasingly frail nature of the residents, has created accessibility issues. To address these issues, a Home Improvement Committee was formed at the Sun Parlor Home. This Committee continues to investigate options for refurbishing some of the common areas of the Home and is happy to receive suggestions.

Some examples of improvements over the past few years have been the purchase of a new telephone system that included options for residents' phones with louder volume controls, flashing ringers, programmable phone numbers and larger buttons; new flooring, doors equipped with automatic openers, doorway widenings, replacement of threshold moldings, accessible walkways in the courtyard, the relocation of accessible parking spaces from the side to the front of the building and the installation of some directional signage to reflect the changes.

As always, on an individual resident need basis, the Home makes every effort to facilitate the acquisition of a variety of assistive devices as may be required.

The Sun Parlor Home has also had a volunteer program in place for many years. In 2005, the Home's volunteer program was featured in a video produced by Community Living Essex, entitled "Include Me". Volunteers are always encouraged to participate at the Home through the part-time Volunteer Coordinator and an active Volunteer Auxiliary.

Since September of 1991, the Corporation has also operated a 14 bed supportive housing facility called the Victoria Street Manor. It is located at 184 Victoria St., Amherstburg.

Emergency Medical Services Facilities

The administration offices for Emergency Medical Services (EMS), for Essex County, Windsor and Pelee Island are located on the ground level of the Civic Centre, Suite 115, located at 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex.

Beginning January 1, 2009, the County of Essex took over the delivery of Emergency Medical Services for the entire County. Previously, the County contracted with two private services and one volunteer service for the provision of EMS services throughout much of the County. There are EMS administrative offices and an ambulance base located at 920 Mercer Street in Windsor. This facility is a two-storey structure, not utilized by the general public. The majority of the administrative offices are located on the second floor of the building. While the budget for the renovations of the building in 2004 did not allow for the installation of an elevator to the second floor, additional office space and accessible washrooms were provided on the first floor.

There are currently two other ambulance stations in Windsor which are located at:

- 3180 Jefferson Avenue - The County of Essex leased this property until 2010, at which time it was purchased.
- 2620 Dougall Avenue - The County of Essex has a lease agreement for this facility.

Throughout the County, Ambulance stations are situated at the following locations:

- LaSalle Station – This station is located in a municipal complex and leased from the Town of LaSalle.
- Leamington Station – This was the former Leamington Day Care building and renovated as an ambulance station in 2010. It is owned by the County of Essex.
- Woodslee Station (Lakeshore) – This is a leased station located on Cty Rd 27.
- Lakeshore Satellite Station – This is a leased facility, utilized for the First Response Unit, located 1 km south of Cty Rd 42. This station will be replaced in 2011 with a new station being constructed on Renaud Line. The new station will be owned by the County of Essex
- Tecumseh Station – This station is leased. It is located on Tecumseh Rd, near Shawnee.
- Kingsville Station – This station is located in a joint facility with the Town of Kingsville Fire Station on Division Road. This station is leased from the Town of Kingsville.
- Harrow Station – This is a newly constructed station in 2010 on Queen Street in Harrow. This station is owned by the County of Essex.
- Amherstburg Station – The County of Essex purchased the former AA & M Ambulance Station on Simcoe Street in 2009 and renovated it.

- Essex Satellite Station – The Essex First Response Unit is located at a satellite station at the Essex County Civic Centre.
- Pelee Island Station – This Station on Pelee Island is located in part of the Medical Centre.

These ambulance bases are not service locations that the general public would readily visit. Primarily, only EMS staff have occasion to frequent these facilities however, the new bases and those that have been renovated have been designed with accessibility in mind.

THE ESSEX COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) was established by Council resolution on September 18th, 2002. The Committee consists of 7 members representing the following groups:

- 1 member from Essex County Council
- 2 members who are professionals from the stakeholder community
- 4 members who are people with disabilities

The Director of Council Services/Clerk, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer, County Engineer, Manager Planning Services and other County staff deemed necessary are identified in the Terms of Reference as technical support staff to the Committee.

The following individuals were appointed by County Council to serve on the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) for the term January 1, 2011 to November 30th, 2014:

- Linda Saxon – Chair
- Charlie Wright – Vice Chair
- Robert Bahry
- John Boyko
- Christine Easterbrook
- Anne Marie Fantin
- Therese Lecuyer

Members of both the previous and current Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee (ECAAC) have been instrumental in continuing to identify for the County of Essex, the barriers that they believe should be addressed in the 2011 Essex County Accessibility Plan. Their recommendations have been taken into consideration and to a great extent, are the areas that will be addressed in 2011. As well, they have continued to monitor the implementation of the recommendations identified in the previous Accessibility Plans.

In 2007, the ECAAC reviewed the original Terms of Reference that were adopted when the Committee was originally established in 2002. They were successful in having their recommended amendments to the Terms of Reference adopted by County Council, which has provided the Committee with some clearer guidelines as to their roles and responsibilities.

The Committee continued with the publication of the annual newsletter which they began in 2006. The 2010 newsletter featured contributions from many of the local AAC's throughout Essex County as well as provided some educational information on accessible information, employment resources for

people with disabilities, University of Windsor Disabilities Studies Program and the National Housing Strategy.

The ECAAC provided a very successful 8th Annual Accessibility Workshop in October 2010. The workshop was attended by over 100 delegates and offered 6 informative concurrent workshop sessions and two keynote speaker.

The ECAAC is looking forward to planning the 9th Annual Accessibility Workshop for 2011 and hopes to attract even more delegates.

In 2009, the Chairs of the Essex County and Windsor AAC's began to meet on a quarterly basis to share information on local accessibility initiatives and to benefit from best practices. It is anticipated that those quarterly meetings will continue in 2011.

THE ESSEX COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY PLAN WORKING GROUP

The Director of Council Services/Clerk, Mary Brennan is the Coordinator of the Accessibility Plan Working Group. The 2010 Accessibility Plan Working Group consisted of the Essex County Management Team, as well as some senior managers.

Working Group Members	Title	Contact Information
Mary Brennan	Director of Council Services/Clerk	(519) 776-6441 Ext 335 mbrennan@countyofessex.on.ca
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Randy Mellow	Chief, EMS	(519) 776-6441 Ext 300 rmellow@countyofessex.on.ca
Bill MacDonald	Administrator, Sun Parlor Home	(519) 326-1215 Ext 202 bmacdonald@sunparlorhome.net
Bill King	Manager, Planning Services	(519) 776-6441 Ext 329 bking@countyofessex.on.ca
Phillip Berthiaume	Emergency Management Coordinator	(519) 776-6441 Ext 243 pberthiaume@countyofessex.on.ca

The members of the Working Group have each been responsible for the implementation of the recommendations approved in the 2010 Accessibility Plan that fall within their realm of responsibility.

STATUS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED IN PRIOR YEARS ACCESSIBILITY PLANS

Since the adoption the first Essex County Accessibility Plan, Essex County Council has made every effort to implement the approved recommendations. There are, however, some Initiatives that have been identified in prior years' Accessibility Plans and not yet completed. Every effort will be made in the current year to move toward completing the outstanding initiatives.

The following tables recap the outstanding recommendations approved in the Essex County Accessibility Plans from 2003 to 2010 and provide the current status of the implementation of those recommendations:

**STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN
2003/04 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2003/04 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2003/04 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
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ALL INITIATIVES COMPLETED FROM 2003/04 PLAN.

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN 2004/05 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2004/05.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2004/05 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2004/05 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lack of database of persons with disabilities for use by emergency personnel only	To improve emergency services responding to emergencies involving people with disabilities	Develop a database containing information of persons with disabilities	In 2007, continue to work with the public in order to develop additional capabilities of the Reverse 9-1-1 system to enhance services provided to people with disabilities, i.e. a mobilization option whereby the system would call an individual and should the call not evoke a response, someone would be notified to check on that individual.	Further investigation has determined that databases have already been developed through the Emergency Management Coordinators in each of the local municipalities and Social Services in support of their local evacuation plans. For privacy issues, this information will not be duplicated in the Reverse 9-1-1 system.	Being undertaken at local municipal level, but some interest was shown at 2007 Accessibility Workshop regarding the formation of a Disaster Registry for People with Disabilities.	Ongoing – pursue with Emergency Management Co-ordination Group
Lack of Available Transit for people with disabilities in the County	To assist in finding solutions to the lack of available transportation in the County of Essex	Regional Transit System	Will look for opportunities to address this issue , particularly focusing on ensuring there is accessible transportation available in an emergency evacuation situation.	Regional Transit Study commenced in 2009. Funds included in 2011 County Budget for consulting fees to bring forward final report. No funds included for implementation for 2011.	County Administration	Final Report Proposed to be presented in spring 2011.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2004/05 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2004/05 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Inaccessibility of some Essex County Library Facilities	To ensure future library facilities are accessible to people with disabilities	Essex County Branch Library Facility Policy be amended to require new branch library facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities.	Request Essex County Library Board to strengthen the wording of their Branch Library Facility policy to require new branch library facilities, provided by the local municipalities, to be accessible to people with disabilities and to strive to achieve the same standards as published in the Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities.	While no written policies have been established requiring new Library Branches to be accessible, as municipalities renovate or relocate library facilities, they are addressing accessibility issues. The new branches in Essex, Kingsville and McGregor were designed to be accessible.	Essex County Library Board	Ongoing – as local municipalities constructing new libraries. i.e. Kingsville and McGregor
Design of some office furniture and office layouts in general are not completely accessible i.e. reception desks too high, aisles too narrow	To ensure County facilities are accessible for all County employees, Council members, and the general public	Develop Accessibility Design Standards for County facilities so that as buildings are renovated or new facilities constructed or leased, the Accessibility Design Standards would provide barrier free designs	Request Accessibility Advisory Group and Accessibility Working Group to begin to draft Accessibility Design Standards for Essex County Facilities	ECAAC will begin once Accessible Built Environment Standard adopted.	Essex County Accessibility Advisory Group and Accessibility Working Group	Discussed by ECAAC in July/September 2008 – decision to await Accessible Built Environment Standard

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN 2005/06 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2005/06.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2005/06 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2005/06 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
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All Initiatives Completed from 2005/06 Plan.

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN 2007 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2007.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2007 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2007 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Improve ability of persons who are hard of hearing to participate in meetings held in Council Chambers or Committee Rooms in the Civic Centre	To utilize technology to provide better communication for persons who are hard of hearing.	Utilizing FM Transmitters and Receivers	Administration has requested quotations from the Canadian Hearing Society for the acquisition of FM Transmitters and Receivers that would be used in conjunction with the audio system in County Council Chambers as well as portable FM system technology that could be used in any of the Meeting Rooms.	Quotations received in 2007. Deferred to 2010 to be completed in conjunction with Council Chambers renovations	Building Management Committee / County Corporate Services	Completed in Spring 2011

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2007 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2007 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Improve ability of persons with visual disabilities to read documentation and reports produced by the County of Essex	To develop and implement guidelines for County Staff producing reports and other documentation that will make it easier for persons with visual disabilities to view	Guidelines on contrast of colours for text and background; text size, font, and spacing, margins and columns, and paper finish.	CNIB has provided 'Clear Print' Accessibility Guidelines that will assist in the development of guidelines for all County staff to use.	Adopted CNIB Clear Print Guidelines as part of Accessible Customer Service Standard in May 2009. Additional policies and practices regarding accessible documents will be adopted after Accessible Information & Communication Standard approved.	Management Team	Additional Policies, practices and procedures will be developed by following final approval or Integrated Accessibility Regulation
Improve safety of halls in the Civic Centre for people that are blind or have visual disabilities	To address possible impediments to safe access in the halls due to artwork protruding from walls and not extending to the floor where it can be detected by canes	Place objects (i.e. garbage receptacles) beneath protruding objects to eliminate travel hazards or have stands that extend to the floor constructed	CNIB has provided recommendations on how to address existing situations where objects in certain areas of the halls in the Civic Centre would not be detectable by a cane used by a person with a visual disability. Advise Civic Centre Art Curator of issue for consideration when future art acquisitions are being made.	Investigating options for artwork safety and security improvements in the hallways.	Building Management Committee	Ongoing—researching options – temporary solutions have been put in place in hallways.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2007 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2007 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Improve accessibility of County Council Chambers for persons using mobility assistive devices and/or persons with visual disabilities	To address the barriers to accessibility created by the multi-level floor in Council Chambers	Extend gold contrast nosings highlighting visibility of steps, raise delegation table to main level, and install safety railings.	CNIB has provided some recommendations on improving the accessibility of the Council Chambers without significant renovations at this time.	No action taken in 2009. Grant for renovation costs unsuccessful in 2009. Essex County Council approved renovations to Council Chambers in 2010 budget.	Corporate Services	Council Chambers completed April 2011 – fully accessible

ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE 2008 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2008.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2008 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2008 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
County Website is not meeting W3C guidelines for accessibility	To provide a website that is accessible to all people, whatever their hardware, software, network infrastructure, language, culture, geographical location, or physical or mental ability.	Research and consultation required to ensure new website is developed to meet W3C guidelines and Accessible Communications and Information Standard once approved.	Develop a new accessible website	Web development consultant awarded contract to design new accessible website for launch early in 2010.	Clerk's Department / Corporate Services Department	Launched June 2010. Continue to address accessibility issues of website with developer.

ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE 2009 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2009.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2009 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2009 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lacking technology solutions to make our information and communications accessible in whatever format requested	To investigate technology solutions to meet the requirements of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard (when it comes into effect).	Consultation with private sector vendors and other public sectors with some expertise in accessible information & communications	Having the ability to provide information and communication in a format that is accessible to everyone and to meet the requirements of the Accessible Information and Communication Standard when approved	Consultation with software vendors has taken place. Adobe Professional vrs. 9 training provided to make accessible PDF files. Consultation with Laserfiche developers for proposed solution to Weblink PDF downloadable documents.	Clerk's Department and IT Department	Ongoing in 2011 once final Integrated Accessibility Regulation is approved.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2009 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2009 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lack of County-wide Non-Motorized Transportation Study	To create a vision that supports the establishment of a safe and comfortable environment that encourages people to use non-motorized vehicles for everyday transportation	Development of a county-wide non-motorized transportation Master Plan	Adoption of non-motorized transportation master plan and support from all communities in the region.	RFP has been awarded for consultant to assist with preparation of County-Wide Active Transportation Study in 2009. Public consultations and draft Plan released in September 2010.	County Transportation Services Department And Steering Committee	CWATS final report anticipated in Spring 2011

ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE 2010 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Corporation of the County of Essex has been undertaking the necessary action to address the following barriers in 2010.

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2010 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2010 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lack of activities promoting National Access Awareness Week May 30 to June 5 th , 2010	To promote awareness of the importance of equal access and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life	Arrange activities for County Council to take part in during Access Awareness Week	Council awareness sessions.	Wheelchair basketball game with Council and staff participants took place. Awareness videos presented to County Council.	Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee	May 30 to June 5, 2010

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2010 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2010 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Continued improvements at the Sun Parlor Home for Senior Citizens to improve accessibility	To promote resident independence.	Renovations of resident units – focus on resident room furnishings that will help promote independence.	Replace furnishings in some resident rooms with dressers and cupboards which residents are able to access independently.	Renovations approved in 2010 SPH budget.	Sun Parlor Home	Completed in 2010
Need for improved communication regarding initiatives of AAC's.	Share accessibility initiatives of local AAC's	Seek participation of all AAC's through article submissions	Publish annual AAC YAK Newsletter and seek participation from other AAC's	Published AAC YAK Newsletter	Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee	Completed April 2010
Need for continuing education and awareness regarding accessibility	Continue to promote importance of becoming a barrier free community through the Workshops	Focus on providing awareness of new Accessibility Standards as they become law.	Attempt to increase number of delegates, particularly the business community.	\$4,000 approved in 2010 budget for Workshop. Windsor AAC contributed \$1,500 as well.	Clerk's Department	Completed October 28, 2010

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2010 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2010 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lack of policies related to Accessible Employment and Information and Communications	To meet requirements of Integrated Accessibility Regulation	Development of policies per Integrated Accessibility Regulation	Accessibility Standards Working Group to review Regulation and determine implementation plan.	No final Accessibility Regulations were enacted in 2010.	Essex County Accessibility Standards Working Group	Delayed until Integrated Accessibility Regulation is enacted.
Snow cleared from parking lot at Civic Centre is piled in Accessible Parking Spaces	To educate snow removal contractors at County facilities that accessible parking spots should not be used for snow dumps.	Include wording in snow removal contracts for County owned/operated facilities that accessible parking spots must be cleared of snow completely.	Monitor by physical site inspections and complaints received.	County Administration to include appropriate wording in contracts and to monitor.	County Facility Managers	Completed in 2010

Barrier	Objective Identified in 2010 Plan	Means to remove /prevent	Remedy Identified in 2010 Accessibility Plan	Remedy Approved	Responsibility to Complete	Status or Completion Date
Lack of reference for need to plan accessible communities in County Official Plan	To increase the awareness of the importance of planning for accessibility in community developments	Address wording during development of second generation County Official Plan	In the County of Essex Official Plan review process, incorporate statement reflecting Section 1.0 of Provincial Policy Statement "Building Strong Communities:", section 1.1.1 re: improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly by removing and/or preventing land use barriers that restrict their full participation in society. An increase in accessible affordable housing should be addressed.	Inclusion of language addressing accessible planning to be included in second generation County Official Plan.	Planning Services	Anticipated completion of second generation County Official Plan by end of 2011

Accessibility initiatives to be undertaken in the 2011 Accessibility Plan

The Corporation of the County of Essex will undertake the following accessibility initiatives in the 2011 Accessibility Plan.

Access- ibility Initiative	Objective	Means to address Accessibility Issue	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Annual AAC YAK Newsletter	Share accessibility initiatives of local AAC's and provide information on resources available on various accessibility issues	Seek participation of all AAC's through article submissions	Feedback received from other AAC's	ECAAC member time	April 2011	Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee
Participate in National Access Awareness Week	To promote awareness of the importance of equal access and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life	Arrange activities for County Council to take part in during Access Awareness Week	Increased awareness of what challenges barriers create for people with various types of disabilities.	Wheelchair Basketball game between Council/Staff and students/Teachers. Production of video demonstrating accessibility success and failures within the region.	May 29 to June 4, 2011	Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee

Access- ibility Initiative	Objective	Means to address Accessibility Issue	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Annual Accessibility Workshop	Continue to promote importance of becoming a barrier free community through the Workshops	Forum to increase awareness on timely accessibility topics.	Attempt to increase number of delegates, particularly the business community.	\$4,000 approved in 2011 budget for Workshop.	October 2011	Clerk's Department / ECAAC
Policy Develop- ment for new Accessibility Standards	To develop required policies and conduct staff training when Integrated Accessibility Standard becomes law.	Begin to review the Integrated Accessibility Standard and begin to address policy development and training requirements	Developing an implementation plan early in the process will assist the Corporation in meeting compliance deadlines once the Standard become law.	It is unclear at this point whether any external resources will be required. It is anticipated that the AccessON and AMCTO Accessibility Toolkit websites will provide resources to assist with any policy development and training requirements.	2011	Accessibility Standards Working Group

Access- ibility Initiative	Objective	Means to address Accessibility Issue	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Review of Draft Accessibility Standards	To provide input into development of remaining Accessibility Standards	ECAAC review draft standards and make submissions during public review periods	Acknowledgement from Accessibility Directorate of comments received	ECAAC and Administrative Staff	2011	Clerk's Department / ECAAC
Essex County Library to Update JAWS software to newer version	To provide screen reading software that is current in Essex County Libraries	Purchase updated JAWS software	Increase usage or ease of usage by library patrons	Essex County Library staff. Approved in 2011 budget.	2011	Essex County Library
Provide Braille Labels when requested	To provide a method of making Braille labels for signs, etc.	Purchase of Braille label maker	Ease of use of Braille label maker by people who do not read braille	Order from on-line assistive devices store for under \$40.00	January 2011	Completed

Access- ibility Initiative	Objective	Means to address Accessibility Issue	Performance Criteria	Resources	Timing	Responsibility
Repair holes in asphalt of parking lot at Essex County Civic Centre	To make the parking lot safer and more accessible for people with mobility disabilities by repairing the holes and uneven asphalt	Re-asphalting Civic Centre Parking Lot	Elimination of uneven asphalt surface in parking lot	Re-asphalting not included in 2011 Civic Centre budget. Try to address by spot repairs of holes in 2011 and include contribution to reserves for future resurfacing of entire parking lot	Spot repairs in summer 2011	Building Management Committee
Review County Purchasing Policy	To ensure good and services purchased by the County of Essex are accessible and will not create barriers to people with disabilities	Review wording of County Purchasing Policy	The accessibility of goods and services is considered prior to purchasing goods and services by the County of Essex	Accessible Customer Service Standard	2011	Corporate Services

Review and Monitoring of the Process

The Working Group will review the progress of the initiatives undertaken in the 2011 Accessibility Plan on an on-going basis. Progress reports from the Working Group will also be provided to the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Feedback from the Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee on the progress of the initiatives will be reported to Essex County Council through their Committee minutes.

In November of 2011, the Working Group will provide County Council with an evaluation and status report of the initiatives that were identified in the 2011 Accessibility Plan, as well as prior years' Plans. This evaluation will be included as part of the 2012 Accessibility Plan.

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee will also complete their own evaluation of the status of the 2011 Accessibility Plan and provide County Council with a 'report card' reflecting their findings.

Communication of the Plan

Copies of the Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the County of Essex will be available at the County of Essex Administration Office located at 360 Fairview Avenue West, Essex, Suite 202 and at all branches of the Essex County Library. The Plan will also be posted on the Essex County website www.countyofessex.on.ca once approved. Copies of the Plan will be available in alternate formats upon request, i.e. in large print, in Braille, e-text.