



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: April 11, 2023
Submitted by: Sarah Savoie, County Accessibility Coordinator
Subject: Middlesex Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022

Background:

Middlesex County and its Local Municipal Partners (LMPs) are required to collaboratively prepare an annual accessibility status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the goals outlined in the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Additionally, the report must be posted on the County and LMPs websites, per the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* requirements.

The Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report is completed collaboratively by Middlesex County and its LMPs. This reduces the amount of time that the Local Municipal Partners spend fulfilling this requirement. LMPs must send information to the County Accessibility Coordinator, who is wholly responsible for drafting the Joint Annual Accessibility Status Reports. It further provides the public and municipal employees a better understanding of all the accessibility projects and initiatives happening across Middlesex County.

The Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report for 2022 was approved by the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee on March 13, 2023. Upon approval by County Council, the report will be forwarded to Local Municipal Councils to be adopted. Once approved by all Councils the report will be made available to the public via Middlesex County and LMPs websites, in an accessible format.

As outlined in the attached Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022, the County of Middlesex and its LMPs will continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. These efforts will continue to be communicated to County Council and LMP Councils through the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and affiliated Joint Annual Accessibility Status Reports.

Completion of the Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report and posting it online for the public to access is a legislative requirement, and is reported in the Accessibility Compliance Report. 2023 is a compliance reporting year.

Analysis:

Over the 5-year period, on an annual basis, the County and its LMPs are required to provide an update to County Council as well as LMPs Councils on the progress made towards obtaining the goals outlined in the Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2022-2027).

The attached report outlines the measures taken to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and IASR. It details the initiatives undertaken by the County and LMPs in 2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

The Continuous Achievements in Accessibility section outlines the ongoing accessibility initiatives implemented across the County. The Accessibility Highlights of 2022 details the different accessibility initiatives and projects that were completed in 2022 by the following municipalities:

- County of Middlesex
- Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Township of Adelaide Metcalfe
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Municipality of North Middlesex
- Municipality of Southwest Middlesex
- Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Municipality of Thames Centre
- Village of Newbury

Accessibility highlights focus on detailing projects relating to accessibility as it aligns with the IASR requirements. Projects may include, but are not limited to, accessibility construction or upgrades to outdoor play spaces, on and off street parking, recreational trails, sidewalks, washrooms, paths of travel, ramp or elevator access, tactile plates, or the installation of accessible door operator switches, crosswalk buttons and so forth.

Many of the accessibility projects fall under the following categories under the IASR:

- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Design of Public Spaces
- Transportation
- Customer Service

Alignment with Strategic Focus:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus and Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Objectives
Cultivating Community Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and support community wellness through various accessibility projects and initiatives in 2021• Innovate social and community services by implementing changes that accounts for accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities• Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities by making accessibility related changes to Middlesex County Connect
Strengthening Our Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments by ensuring job descriptions and recruitment processes are accessible to all applicants• Attract visitors to Middlesex County by making public spaces and attractions accessible for all
Promoting Service Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations by considering the increased populations of seniors and people with disabilities and introducing strategic initiatives• Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities and bring awareness to accessibility and customer service as it pertains to the IASR through training and improving web accessibility for all County and LMP websites

Recommendation:

THAT the Joint Annual Accessibility Status Report 2022 be approved and forwarded to the participating Local Municipal Partner's for approval.