



# County of Renfrew Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2022 – 2026

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## Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

The County of Renfrew is committed to the development of a community that prides itself on the provision of accessible, barrier free, welcoming and inclusive spaces, while maintaining a customer services focus through its online and in-person information locations.

The County of Renfrew endeavors to make accessibility part of our everyday interactions, and to provide common access to our services.

This multi-year Accessibility Plan is developed to enhance the accessibility of our digital and physical spaces, services, programs and employment practices. We want to ensure that our employees, citizens, and all who live, work and visit our county feel welcome and can access our services when they need to.

The legislated compliance requirements under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation (IASR) are to ensure the principles of accessibility – dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity are considerations in the services we provide.

We work with our colleagues, partners and communities to understand and remove accessibility barriers, and create a truly equitable and inclusive environment for our employees and citizens with disabilities.

Paul Moreau  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Introduction

The County of Renfrew is a rural County in Eastern Ontario; the largest County geographically and has 17 lower-tier municipalities. The County's population is approximately 90,000 people and provides the following services to its residents:

- Administration
- Provincial Offences Court Administration
- Public Works and Engineering (County Roads, bridges and culverts)
- Land Use Planning (County Official Plan)
- Forestry, GIS and County Trail network
- Economic Development
- Ottawa Valley Tourist Association
- Emergency Services (Land Ambulance, Community Paramedicine and Emergency Management)
- Community Services (Housing, Ontario Works and Child Care)
- Long Term Care Homes (Bonnechere Manor and Miramichi Lodge).

**Our Mission** is to deliver high quality services to the residents of the County of Renfrew in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

### Our Vision

The County of Renfrew is recognized as a model rural community, balancing fiscal responsibility and the delivery of services and infrastructure that meet community needs. We have earned this reputation by:

1. Having a strong voice with the Federal and Provincial governments on shared investments;
2. Managing our fiscal picture through sustainable asset management;
3. Identifying efficiencies that allow the County to improve service delivery while meeting the service level expectations of our residents;
4. Enhancing the four pillars of economic development leading to improved quality of life; and
5. Working effectively with the 17 lower-tier municipalities.



This plan briefly reviews recent measures taken to remove barriers, and identifies what actions need to be addressed in 2022-2026 to best address inclusivity and remove barriers to be compliant with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Corporation of the County of Renfrew, facilitated by the Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk. The contact is the CAO/Clerk or Deputy Clerk at:

Corporation of the County of Renfrew  
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## Legislation

In June 2005, the Ontario Government passed the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) setting the goal of a fully Accessible Ontario by 2025. Ontario has set standards in the five areas of customer service, employment, information and communications, public transportation and public spaces (built environment).

The [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) came into effect on January 1, 2008, making them the first to become law under the AODA. This regulation requires all municipalities be in-compliance by January 1, 2010 and all private and not-for-profit sectors to follow by January 1, 2012. Customer Service joins the four other standards as part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11).

The [Integrated Accessibility Standards](#) came into effect on July 1, 2011. This law applies to all organizations – public, private and non-profit sectors. Each of the five areas of the regulation is phased-in through time for each sector. Each Standard provides guidelines and deadlines for organizations in the Province, with one or more employees, to follow and meet. The Accessibility Directorate ([www.Access.ON](http://www.Access.ON)) has created a Guide to Ontario's Accessibility Regulations to assist organizations with planning.

The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) both deal with accessibility, but are two very different pieces of legislation. The Ontario Human Rights Code is an individual complaints-based legislation that addresses discrimination. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation created under the AODA applies to all organizations in Ontario.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to equal treatment without discrimination. The goal of the Code is to provide for equal rights so as, to create a climate of respect where everyone feels part of the community and can contribute fully. The Ontario Human Rights Code requires organizations to accommodate people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) does not replace or affect the legal rights or obligations that arise under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other laws relating to the accommodation of people with disabilities. The IASR establishes a compliance framework that applies to all public, private and not-for-profit organizations with at least one employee. The goal of the AODA and the standards enacted is to make Ontario accessible by 2025.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires that municipalities prepare and maintain multi-year plans to remove accessibility barriers in our respective municipality. The accessibility plan shall address the identification, prevention, and removal of barriers to persons with disabilities, which is accomplished through the use and implementation of by-laws, policies, investment, training, partnerships, consultation, and service delivery of the Municipality.

The County of Renfrew is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario's accessibility laws.

## Employment

The County of Renfrew is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that ensure the process of recruiting, hiring, communicating and retaining employees who have disabilities is effective.

Staff and managers are trained to support the goals of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and understanding employer obligations to provide employment obligations. Barriers in the workplace are identified and policies and procedures at the County of Renfrew are respected and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

A revised Accessibility Policy has been developed with an organizational statement of commitment to meet accessibility and to incorporate AODA 2005 Accessibility Standards for customer service. We will continue to develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the County of Renfrew achieves accessibility through meeting the integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.



## County of Renfrew Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires all municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC).

The County of Renfrew's Accessibility Advisory Committee is comprised of 9 citizen members, 10 lower-tier representatives and one member of County Council appointed as Chair. The County commits to ensuring that 50% of its members have a disability. Members come from different backgrounds and from various areas of the County and have a desire to help those living with disabilities.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee informs Council on ways to remove barriers and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities with respect to County programs, services and facilities.

The County of Renfrew AAC provides advice, recommendations and support to County Council and departments regarding accessibility plans and policies.

## Customer Service

A Customer Services Standard Policy has been developed setting out the procedures and practices to accommodate the diverse needs of all of our residents.

The County of Renfrew has met and will continue to meet all of the Customer Service standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards regulation (IASR) by:

- Training staff and volunteers on providing accessible customer service;
- Ensuring that anyone who provides service on behalf of the County has been trained on providing accessible customer service;
- Ensuring that customers who use assistive devices, support animals or support persons are welcomed;
- Monitoring customer service to ensure we are maintaining and improving upon the level of accessibility we provide in programs, services, and facilities;
- Exploring new technologies that support internal and external customer service.

## Information and Communication

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan has been posted on the County's website and is available in an accessible format.

AODA required that any new websites or web content published after January 1, 2012 are to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) by January 1, 2021. To ensure compliance with AODA, the County of Renfrew introduced a new accessible website on February 1, 2021 and makes every effort to ensure all documents posted to the website are compliant. A disclaimer is also placed on our website to contact the County should a person with a disability require an alternate format.

The County continues to improve the accessibility of all public facing applications, website and web content to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

All public facing service counters are equipped with lower counters and the public can request documents in accessible formats in person or through the website.

The County of Renfrew recently integrated its services:

- In 2019, the County integrated the Renfrew offices of the County's Community Services Department (Child Care Services, Ontario Works and Renfrew County Housing Corporation) into a seamless unit at Renfrew County Place in Renfrew.
- In 2021, the County amalgamated and moved the Pembroke offices of the County's Community Services Department into the County Administration building in Pembroke.

- All facilities were renovated to meet all customer service accessibility standards, by converting public washrooms to universal washrooms and installing wheelchair access and handrails as needed. All doors include cylindrical lever handles and automatic accessible swing doors. Most conference rooms and offices have automatic on off lighting switches for accessibility and energy efficiency.

The County is committed to ensuring that information and communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities, and will make reasonable efforts based upon the needs of the community and upon request within the County's budgetary and time constraints.

The County also invites our community to provide feedback regarding the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities.

We welcome the opportunity to learn and improve through the experiences of others within our community.

### **Additional Information**

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