



**Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

# **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**2018 – 2019 Accessibility Report**

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## **The Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

### **2018-2019 Accessibility Report**

#### **History**

On June 13, 2005, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) received Royal Assent. The legislation is “An Act respecting the development, implementation and enforcement of standards relating to accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings and all other things specified in the Act for persons with disabilities.”

Section 14 of the AODA establishes the duties of persons or organizations to which the accessibility standards apply and mandates the following activities:

14.(1) A person or organization to whom an accessibility standard applies shall file an Accessibility Report with a director annually or at such other times as the director may specify.

(2) A person or organization shall make an Accessibility Report available to the public.

Section 29 (1) of the AODA legislation states that “The council of every municipality having a population of not less than 10,000 shall establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee or continue any such committee that was established before the day that section to the Act comes into force.”

Section 14 (5) of the AODA legislation states that “The council of a municipality shall seek advice from the Accessibility Advisory Committee concerning accessibility to municipal properties and services.”

#### **Chatham-Kent Council Commitment to Accessibility**

The Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent remains committed to ensuring that the facilities, services and programs provided by the Municipality are available to all persons regardless of their degree of ability. The process of identifying barriers is constant. New initiatives continue to be identified and have been incorporated in the 2018-2019 Accessibility Report and will continue to be implemented in each subsequent year's Accessibility Report.

**Aim**

The Chatham-Kent 2018-2019 Accessibility Report provides an update on the status of the initiatives identified in the preceding Accessibility Report. It also sets out the initiatives that will be undertaken in 2019 to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers to people, including staff who utilize the facilities, services and programs provided by the Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

**Municipal Jurisdiction Participating In This Plan****Municipality**

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent

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## Population

104,000

## Municipal Highlights

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, nestled between Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron. Chatham-Kent provides easy access to Canadian and United States markets. There are three major US border crossings within a one hour drive. The Greater Toronto Area market is only a three hour drive away.

Driving along our thoroughfares past endless fields of corn as high as your eye, golden waves of wheat bending in the breeze, soy beans planted neatly row upon row and the crystal clear beauty of the two lakes bordering our land makes Chatham-Kent truly captivating.

Held together by agriculture and commerce, the individual uniqueness of our hamlets, villages, towns and cities and the heritage of our people, Chatham-Kent can truly be referred to as a “rural city”.

Chatham-Kent is a great place for business and is proud to be the home to a number of internationally recognized companies.

Residents in Chatham-Kent enjoy affordable homes in safe communities, a rich cultural heritage, active living and one of the most moderate climates in the country.

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent was formed on January 1, 1998, amalgamating twenty-three separate communities. Municipal Council is comprised of one Mayor and seventeen Councillors. The Mayor is elected at large from Chatham-Kent and Councillors are elected from one of six geographical regions (wards) that make up Chatham-Kent. Elections are held every four years.

Chatham-Kent has a diversity of cultural venues throughout the Municipality. The Municipality owns and operates the Chatham Cultural Centre, which houses the Kiwanis Theatre, Thames Art Gallery and the Chatham-Kent Museum. The Municipality also owns and operates the Milner House in Chatham and the Ridge House Museum in Ridgetown, both of which recreate the Victorian age.

The Capitol Theatre is a technologically advanced, state-of-the-art facility, hosting entertainment events and theatrical performances of all types.

Chatham-Kent is home to Chatham-Kent John D. Bradley Convention Centre. The Centre is municipally-owned, but the operation of the facility is under contract.

Chatham-Kent is home to Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site and Buxton National Historic Site and Museum, both important stops along the Underground Railroad. Fairfield Museum features artifacts from old Fairfield Village established in 1792. The Wallaceburg and District Museum combines displays of local artifacts and research facilities.

Chatham-Kent boasts a wide range of recreational facilities such as athletic fields, bicycle, jogging and walking paths, fit parks, playgrounds, skateboard parks, splash pads, tennis courts, picnic shelters, golf courses, arenas, beaches and marinas.

There are ten arenas throughout the Municipality for hockey, figure skating and ringette. A variety of sports leagues operate in Chatham-Kent including baseball, softball, hockey, lacrosse, ringette, soccer, football, in-line hockey, volleyball, basketball and a newly formed cricket league. Other popular sports include curling, bowling, lawn bowling and golf.

Chatham-Kent is home to two provincial parks, Rondeau and Wheatley Provincial Park, featuring nature trails, interpretive programs, sandy beaches, camping, fishing, boating, sailing and birding. Several private campgrounds and marinas also operate in the Municipality.

## **Consultation Activities**

### **Target Group**

The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee (C-K AAC) is a working committee of Chatham-Kent Council that provides consultation concerning accessibility in the Municipality.

The purpose of the Committee as it pertains to this report is the identification of barriers in regards to municipal properties and services and to provide recommendations for the elimination of same. The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Committee also provides input into other areas of the Corporation, which may offer accessible services or be impacted by same (e.g. accessible transit, sidewalk accessibility, etc.)

The Committee boasts a membership consisting of a diverse cross section of Chatham-Kent citizens with a wide range of abilities and representation of most assistance and support agencies based within the Municipality.

### **Consultation Activities**

The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee (C-K AAC) meets the third Tuesday of each month to review accessibility needs of municipal properties and services and make recommendations to increase accessibility therein.

The committee takes advantage of opportunities for team development and education to best fulfil its mandate.

The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee's activities of the past year (2018-2019) include:

- Committee continues to monitor sidewalk construction and repairs to assure smooth runs and saw cut joints are used.
- Collected nominations for recipients of the "Accessible Business of the Year Award", "Accessibility Advocate Award" and "Sid Ebare Perseverance Award" that are presented in February.
- On February 20, 2018 the Accessibility Awards were presented at The Oaks Retirement Village, 80 McNaughton Avenue in Wallaceburg. The event was well reported by the media and presented as one of the great things happening in our community.

**The "Dr. Veronica Vaughan Most Accessible Business of the Year Award" was presented to:**

The Oaks Retirement Village, 80 McNaughton Avenue in Wallaceburg.

They created an accessible residence and are dedicated to providing accessible customer service.

**The "Sheila Lindsey-Powers Accessibility Advocate Award" was presented to:**

Daniel Whittal and Rachel Schwarz

Daniel and Rachel were awarded for their dedication to the people of all abilities especially through the Brio Academy.

**The "Sid Ebare Perseverance Award" was presented to:**

Ashley Gialelem

Ashley was recognized for living beyond perceived limitations and being an advocate for people of all abilities.

The award recipient's names were added to the respective plaques which are on display in the atrium of the Civic Centre.

- At the Older Adults Resource Fair in Chatham on February 16<sup>th</sup> and the Blenheim Seniors Fair on June 15<sup>th</sup> the committee set up a display table of our work. The display table included the AAC logo, award plaques, activities display board, feedback sheets, award nomination forms, scooter safety brochures and door prizes. It attracted a lot of interest and informed the attendees about accessibility and the C-K AAC.
- Continue to promote safe use of mobility scooters. The Personal Mobility Device User Safety Tips brochure that was developed and published by the AAC continues to be distributed to users, retailers, care givers, therapists, police and anyone else who may find it useful. It was also included in Chatham-Kent Council's meeting notes for them to best respond to a citizen's complaint.

- Continue working with the municipal staff Integrated Accessible Standards Committee (IASC) to assure that the municipality meets the requirements of the AODA Accessibility Standards.
- Have representation on the Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board to assure that jobs, education and training are considered for people of all abilities.
- Continue to partner with Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Accessibility Council regarding accessibility concerns at their sites. An AAC member is also a Co-Chair of the Health Alliance Accessibility Council and acts as a liaison between the two.
- The [Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee webpage](#) is maintained on the Chatham-Kent Portal to keep the community up to date on our activities and receive feedback.
- We maintain a C-K AAC Facebook site to keep the community informed of the committee's activities and monitor the needs of the community.
- The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Report and Chatham-Kent AAC Terms of Reference are updated annually for presentation to Council.
- A C-K AAC member represents the committee on the newly formed Age Friendly Committee.
- The Committee gives input to the municipality's CK Plan 2035 document to define the ongoing priority of an accessible community.
- To promote an active community for people of all abilities, we continue to monitor accessibility of trails, bike paths, walking paths, beaches and boardwalks.
- Worked with Chatham-Kent Licensing to respond to complaints of availability of accessible taxis.
- Developed a training manual for Accessibility Advisory Committee members to aid in educating members about AODA requirements
- Some members volunteered to assist the Accessibility Committee for the International Plowing Match that took place in Pain Court in September, 2018
- Provided suggestions and feedback to Chatham-Kent departments regarding accessibility for the following:
  - Chatham-Kent elections
  - Playground unit replacements
  - Trails projects
  - Construction of an accessible washroom in Wallaceburg's Colwell Park
  - Renovations at Provincial Offences Court
  - Renovations at Wallaceburg Arena
  - Driver for Hire by-law
  - Sidewalk access, extensions and placement from curbs

The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee recognizes that the Municipality continues to make progress in working towards a barrier free Chatham-Kent.

The Committee has many suggestions on what public enterprises could do to remove barriers and these suggestions will be included in further reports to Council.

## **History of Initiatives to Identify, Remove and Prevent Barriers in the Organization**

### **Initiatives**

#### **The Municipality of Chatham-Kent Integrated Accessibility Advisory Committee**

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Committee (IASC), a working committee of Chatham-Kent administration; has been created to advise and assist the Municipality of Chatham-Kent in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Chatham-Kent for its citizens of all abilities. This aim shall be achieved through developing, implementing and maintaining policies that govern how accessibility will be achieved through meeting the requirements of the regulation. In addition, the committee must develop, implement and maintain multi-year accessibility plans that outline strategies for removing existing barriers and preventing new ones, and must show how the requirements of the Ontario Regulation 191/11, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" ("Regulation") under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 will be met.

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy and multi-year accessibility plan was published to the Municipality of Chatham-Kent website in 2013 and is updated at least every 5 years.

#### **Parks and Open Spaces**

Parks and Open Spaces is responsible for parks in the communities of Chatham, Grand Pointe, Mitchell's Bay and Pain Court. Maintenance of 92 parks/green spaces, numerous walking trails and pathways, playgrounds, baseball fields, soccer pitches, tennis courts, picnic shelters, splash pads, boat launches, marinas and boat docks. Also responsible for operations and maintenance of 6 active cemeteries and 58 inactive cemeteries.

Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Rotary Park ball bathroom renovation to provide barrier free access to washrooms
- Added an accessible parking space at the dog park in Chatham
- Constructed a fully accessible washroom facility including an adult change table at the Centre for Community Services soccer fields

#### **Recreation Facilities**

The Recreation Facilities section operates 10 arenas, 7 public halls, 7 outdoor pools, 2 indoor pools, 43 rural sport fields, 80 rural parks and a campground.

Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Paved parking lot at Memorial Park in Blenheim

- Installation of engineered wood fibre playground safety bases for improved accessibility at five parks located in the communities of Blenheim, Ridgetown and Wallaceburg
- Thames Campus Arena – installation of buttons to automate entrance to Red Line Room

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Will consult with the public, persons with disabilities and the AAC when constructing or redeveloping outdoor play spaces
- Accessibility will be a priority for any new renovations that occur in municipal recreation facilities
- Thamesville Brunner Centre-change door closures on washrooms, renovate washrooms
- Highgate Hall - install automatic doors to main entrance, change door closures on washrooms
- Wallaceburg Memorial Arena mezzanine-provide elevator access to the second floor
- Bothwell Arena-make handicap accessible viewing area
- Dresden and Bothwell parks-make one park in each community accessible
- Blenheim Arena–install elevator to upstairs hall and automatic sliding doors at entrance
- Wheatley Area Arena–make washrooms accessible, handicap accessible viewing area
- Wheatley Area Community Centre–elevator to upstairs hall
- Merlin Community Centre–make washrooms accessible
- Wheatley and Tilbury Parks–make one park in each community accessible

#### **Public Works Division**

The Chatham-Kent Public Works Division is responsible for maintaining the existing road, sidewalk, water main and sewer infrastructure within the Municipality.

#### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Snow removal from public sidewalks
- Annual inspection and removal of trip hazards (surface discontinuity is two centimetres or more)

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to work with federal rail authorities towards the development of safe rail crossing design criteria particularly for wheelchair and scooter access

- Ensure that information, services and facilities for the public are accessible as required under the AODA requirements.

## **Engineering & Traffic Division**

The Chatham-Kent Engineering & Traffic Division is responsible for the construction of all municipal roadways in Chatham-Kent. This also covers sidewalk construction and replacement.

### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- 4.76 km Sidewalks replaced in Chatham-Kent
- 3.3 km New Sidewalks installed in Chatham-Kent
- 1,229 Trip Hazards repaired in Chatham-Kent
- 127 Accessible sidewalk ramp tactile plates installed according to Ontario Provincial Standards for Roads (OPSD). The plates are intended to be detectable under foot for individuals with low or no vision to alert them of hazards (such as moving traffic).

### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- 2019 will see the continuation of the “New” sidewalk installation program which will include accessible sidewalk ramps.

## Chatham-Kent Intersection Improvements

### Current Accessibility Achievements:

Install audible pedestrian signal and 2 intersections within Chatham-Kent. Realignment of Intersection according to Ontario Provincial Standards for Roads (OPSD) installation of tactile plates and wheelchair accessible pedestrian crossing buttons.

## CK Transit - Conventional Service - Chatham

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent currently operates an area-rated conventional transit service in the community of Chatham.

### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Improved accessibility for CK Transit Conventional via low floor, ramped entrance buses
- System enhancements for CK Transit Conventional via audible and visual stop announcements systems to meet the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Installation of three (3) new CK Transit Solar shelters
- Upgrade five (5) CKTransit shelter locations to improve accessibility

### Next Steps – Addressing Barriers

- Retrofit twenty-seven (27) transit shelters with solar lighting panels for increased security and safety
- Introduction of the Online Portal for loading smartcard fare media.

#### CK Transit - Accessible Services - Chatham and Wallaceburg

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent currently operates two area-rated specialized transit services in the communities of Chatham and Wallaceburg.

Currently, all residents within the communities of Chatham and Wallaceburg who meet the following criteria are eligible to use CK Transit Accessible Service.

Permanent: Applications can be submitted for persons who are physically disabled, the frail or the elderly who require the service due to mobility issues for an indefinite period of time.

Temporary: Applications can be submitted for persons who are temporarily physically disabled due to illness or injury (subject to review if service still required after the expiration date, from a minimum of one month to a maximum of six months).

#### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Improved accessibility for CK Transit Interurban via low-floor, ramped entrance buses
- System enhancements for CK Transit Interurban via audible and visual stop announcement systems to meet the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue educating and providing dispatch sensitivity training for drivers
- Maintain AODA Compliance
- Installation of electronic fare system in the Accessible Transit Service
- Introduction of the Online Portal for loading smartcard fare media.

#### CK Transit - Interurban Service - Chatham, Wallaceburg, Dresden

In late 2007, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent launched an interurban transit system between the community of Chatham, community of Wallaceburg and community of Dresden. This system is a combination accessible and conventional service.

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to review expansion route options
- Maintain AODA Compliance

### CK Transit - Interurban Service - Chatham, Tilbury, Merlin, Cedar Springs

In early 2009, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent launched an interurban transit system between the Community of Chatham, Community of Tilbury and Community of Wheatley. In the spring of 2012, Council approved a route change from Wheatley to Merlin based on ridership and public feedback. This system is a combination accessible and conventional service.

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to review expansion route options
- Maintain AODA Compliance

### CK Transit - Interurban Service - Chatham, Blenheim, Ridgetown

In early 2010, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent launched an interurban transit system between the Community of Chatham, Community of Blenheim and Community of Ridgetown. This system is a combination accessible and conventional service.

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to review expansion route options
- Maintain AODA Compliance

### CK Transit - Interurban Seasonal Service - Chatham, Mitchell's Bay, Erieau

In June 2010, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent launched an interurban seasonal transit system between the community of Chatham, community of Mitchell's Bay and community of Erieau. This system is a combination accessible and conventional service and runs seasonally from May through September, four days per week.

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to review expansion route options
- Maintain AODA Compliance

## **Asset Management - Building Maintenance**

The Municipal Assets unit maintains over 100 Municipally-owned buildings. Through amalgamation and during the years after, many of the retained buildings were completely renovated. This exercise allowed for most of the retained buildings to be made accessible.

#### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Installed accessible door operators in the washrooms at the Chatham Library
- Upgraded front counter at the Provincial Offences Court to improve security and wheelchair accessibility
- Altered ramp railing at the Wallaceburg Adult Activity Centre to comply with the Facility Accessibility Design Standards

- Repaired trip hazards and heaving pavement along walkway at the Civic Centre

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

The Municipal Asset team is currently in process of reviewing all building safety compliance requirements. This exercise includes the identification of any building accessibility upgrade projects to be prioritized for our future initiatives. Thus, the asset management team continually seeks ways to incorporate accessibility improvements into all ongoing and upcoming lifecycle and capital projects working towards our mandate of keeping all municipal buildings safe and accessible for all members of both staff and the community at large. Projects such as washroom accessibility upgrades at Health and Family Services and replacement of the access ramp at the Merlin Library are just a couple of examples of projects to be completed in 2019.

Also, specific to the Civic Centre, the Asset Management team is preparing a separate report to Council to approve renovations which will address all accessibility shortcomings including those identified by the Chatham-Kent Accessibility Committee meeting minutes from March 21, 2017, which were listed as follows:

- Emergency egress is very challenging for those with disabilities
- The ramp in Council Chambers is too steep for normal wheelchair use
- There is no accommodation for the visually or hearing impaired
- There is no accommodation for those with disabilities who wish to speak at the podium
- Lighting is poor along the stairway
- Steps from the hallway to Council Chambers do not meet today's rise/run requirements
- The public seats are too low and very difficult to get in and out of
- The wheelchair seating area is undersized and difficult to maneuver
- There is no accommodation for a Mayor or Acting Mayor with a disability
- The washroom adjacent to Council Chambers is very difficult to use for those with disabilities.

#### **Public Housing Assets**

Chatham-Kent Housing Assets has a portfolio of 20 public housing projects with 669 units and 2 affordable housing projects with 40 units. The Housing Services Act requires Chatham-Kent Housing Services to maintain 29 modified units in its housing stock.

#### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- With the addition of the affordable housing project at 9 Cecil Street, Ridgetown in 2018, the number of municipal owned modified units has increased to 30

## **Chatham-Kent Housing Services (South):**

### **9 Cecil Street**

- a) Unit #102 was constructed as a fully accessible unit
- b) The building was confirmed to be built as a barrier-free location

Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Continue to respond to individual tenant accessibility needs as required

## **Community Development**

### **Fire and Emergency Services (CKFES)**

CKFES is responsible for and comprised of three operational services as required by various provincial legislations.

CKFES directly provides Emergency Management and Fire Services for the Municipality and administers a contract for EMS by a third party provider throughout CK.

Emergency Management (EM) is a legislated responsibility under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to ensure readiness in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. The program components include: community risk analysis, hazard identification, disaster planning and exercises, response and recovery strategies, as well as managing the Municipality's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

CKFES shall provide emergency preparedness information in an accessible format upon request. In addition, it shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have requested accommodation.

Next Steps to Addressing Barriers:

- Ensure that persons who require accommodation are included in the emergency planning and the emergency communication/education processes and that the information is provided as required upon request.

Fire Services are mandated under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act and are delivered through a composite structure (fulltime & volunteer personnel) and are comprised of four (4) branches: Fire Prevention, Public Education, Training and Suppression.

Through partnerships and direct delivery CKFES provides: community risk assessment, risk-based multi-demographic public safety education programming, vulnerable occupancy consultation, risk-based and customer focused Ontario Fire Code inspection services, fire safety plan approvals, home safety visits, fire investigation services, pre-fire planning of high risk occupancies, and emergency response, specialized rescue and public assistance services. Fire Services has endeavoured to ensure that high-risk occupancies (places where persons sleep) are compliant with the Ontario Fire Code (OFC). It will also refer Ontario Building Code non-compliant issues to the Chatham-Kent Building Division.

It should be noted that municipal buildings that are not classified as residential, care or care and treatment occupancies in Chatham-Kent are considered low risk. CKFES has limited fire inspection resources which are tasked to high risk buildings and legislated responsibilities and therefore these buildings have not been regularly inspected and they may or may not be compliant with the OFC.

CKFES is not aware of any changes or alterations to buildings that it occupies to be more accessible (the exception would be Station 14 in Erieau).

Next Steps to Addressing Barriers:

- Ensure that the CKFire website is AODA compliant
- Encourage the Municipality to ensure that all of its buildings comply with all provincial legislation (Ontario Fire Code and AODA).
- Develop and maintain partnerships and excellent relationships with service agencies throughout the community

## **EMS**

EMS or Land Ambulance Services are the responsibility of single or upper tier municipalities and the standards for service delivery are covered under the Ambulance Act and its associated regulations. The delivery of Land Ambulance Services is through a contract and administered by CKFES through an Assistant Chief of EMS and the Fire Paramedic Chief, as approved by council.

All EMS buildings are owned and maintained by the Municipality and therefore previous comments regarding OFC and AODA compliance would also apply to these buildings.

The contractor provides community health and wellness information through its community paramedicine program and shall provide the required EMS response services to all persons as required.

Next Steps to Addressing Barriers:

- Ensure that there is no service delivery variation in the way that EMS is provided to persons who may require accommodation.

## **Planning Services**

One of the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan is to maintain and enhance new and existing infrastructure to support economic and smart growth opportunities.

Next Steps to Addressing Barriers:

- The Planning Services Division will ensure that consideration is given to eliminating barriers to disabled people in the area of land development and redevelopment. These documents serve to guide development decisions and will contain provisions to assist in ensuring a safe environment for both the disabled and non-disabled to development sites by addressing such development components as automobile and pedestrian traffic movements.

- This will be undertaken both on a general scale and a site specific scale through the process of negotiation with developers and through the use of Site Plan Control provisions of the Ontario Planning Act, ensuring that components of specific developments are inclusive of disabled-friendly features such as ensuring appropriate locations for handicap parking spaces. In addition, the Division will ensure that urban design features implemented through Community Improvement Plans and programs incorporate disability friendly design features in new developments and areas of redevelopment.

## **Police Service**

Chatham-Kent is serviced by a full-time Municipal Police Service. The Chatham-Kent Police Service adheres to a philosophy of Community Mobilization. There is great value in the ability to connect with the citizens we serve by practicing this philosophy on a day to day basis. Our strategy promotes a holistic approach to public safety and well-being. The use of technology, prevention and collaborative efforts are necessary to assist in promoting community wellness and enhancing the quality of life for our citizens.

Our citizens play an important role in partnering with us to keep our community safe. We continually look forward to working with our citizens to improve our community and achieve our mission of making Chatham-Kent the safest community in Ontario!

- Continuous review of all Police buildings within the Municipality to eliminate barriers for the disabled.
- The Communications Center infrastructure is being upgraded to NG 911 (Next Generation), allowing for Text 911 calls for service and stands ready for technological advancements in years to come (ie. Video 911). This allows a variety of ways for citizens with special needs to access emergency services when required.

Next Steps to Addressing Barriers:

- Educate and promote disability awareness both internally and externally
- Continue to maintain and build community relations with agencies and citizens with special needs.

## **Community Human Services Department**

### **Child Care and Early Years**

Current Accessibility Achievements:

- Met with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to get approval for playground renovations at the Chatham EarlyON Child and Family Centre located at Queen Elizabeth School in Chatham.

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- EarlyON Child and Family Centres are located in area schools, and meet the accessibility requirements. Spaces and services will continue to be monitored to ensure continued compliance

### **Employment and Social Services**

#### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- While the new Employment Resource Centre public space and services have been reviewed to ensure that all resources are accessible to individuals with disabilities, the space and services will continue to be monitored to ensure continued compliance.

### **Housing Services**

As the Service Manager for social housing in Chatham-Kent, the Municipality administers a housing base of 1,592 rental units. The Housing Services Act requires that the Municipality maintain at least 63 accessible units in its social housing stock; 29 of these units are to be in the municipally-owned housing stock, and the remaining 34 units are in the stock owned and operated by the other 11 private non-profits and two private non-profit cooperatives funded and program-administered by Chatham-Kent.

#### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- 2018 Building Condition Assessment Reports completed on all social housing stock funded by Chatham-Kent, including updates to accessibility features of all modified units, buildings and sites.

#### 1. **Chatham Hope Non-Profit Housing Inc.**

- a) **Arthur Drive, Chatham** – See next steps noted below:

##### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- The built-in change table is the last order to complete as noted in last year's report. To be completed as a 2018-2019 initiative.

#### 2. **Clairvue Housing Co-operative Inc.**

Installed slab handles for all interior and exterior doors, changed the washer and dryer to front load machines, upgraded the one remaining floor to laminate vinyl planking.

#### 3. **UrSite Property Management (New Beginnings Housing Project)**

- a) **Park Avenue East, Chatham**- Completed bathroom accessibility upgrades as needed.
- b) **King Street E, Chatham**- Completed bathroom accessibility upgrades as needed.

**Next Steps Addressing Barriers:**

- c) Continue to maintain a complete detailed database of all special needs/modified units.
- d) Maintain waiting lists for special needs applicants.
- e) Continue to respond to individual tenant accessibility needs as required.

**Long Term Care**

Riverview Gardens is a municipally-administered Long-Term Care facility for 320 residents. This state-of-the-art facility, which opened in 2006, meets current accessibility standards.

**Public Health**

Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit provides health promotion, protection and prevention services to the residents of Chatham-Kent from a central location in Chatham. A satellite clinic is also located in downtown Chatham, providing access to public health services for clients with limited access to transportation. The Health Unit provides services throughout Chatham-Kent in client's homes, community centres/agencies, establishments, and schools. The programs are universal in design, scope and delivery of services.

**Chatham-Kent Public Library**

Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL) operates 11 libraries: Bothwell, Blenheim, Chatham, Dresden, Highgate, Merlin, Ridgetown, Thamesville, Tilbury, Wallaceburg, and Wheatley.

**Current Accessibility Achievements:**

- Accessible washrooms on the first floor of the Chatham Branch
- Accessible board package, board policies
- Special populations sensory storytime
- Height-adjustable circulation desk installed at the Wallaceburg and Merlin branches
- Height-adjustable ergonomic desks for IT staff, Manager of Public Services

**Next Steps Addressing Barriers:**

- Accessible washroom at Ridgetown and Highgate branches
- Accessible shelving at all branches
- Make self-release station for public printing at Chatham branch accessible
- Continue to expand existing accessible material as requested including expansion of e-book and audiobook formats
- Expand home service offerings to patrons unable to physically visit the library
- Promote and offer free training to patrons on accessible software and devices available at all library branches

- Continue to invest in accessible computer stations
- Continue to invest in assistive devices to improve accessibility to information
- Enable online library card renewals to allow residents and patrons the ability to access library materials without coming into the library to renew their card

## **Finance, Budget & IT Services**

### **Information Technology Services**

#### Information & Communications

##### Current Accessibility Achievements:

- The Council Calendar, Agendas and Minutes application including compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation was completed in 2018.
- Initiated Council Meeting 'live' streaming pilot, including closed captioning of archived meeting videos.
- Conducted training of website content managers on making website content accessible.
- Implemented audit tools to ensure compliance of website content.
- Technical team members attended training on accessible website design and auditing.

##### Next Steps Addressing Barriers:

- Complete an upgrade to the Municipal and Community Jobs application, including compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation in 2019.
- Upgrade website compliance from WCAG Level A to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.

## **Human Resources & Organizational Development**

Mandatory AODA training is required for all who participate in the recruitment process or interviews.

Mandatory AODA training is required every three years for all hiring managers.

### **Customer Services**

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent will comply with all appropriate legislation and will ensure policies, practices and other steps are carried out to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

In 2013 Human Resources & Organizational Development (HROD) in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and Ontario Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) developed and completed a training curriculum for all managers/supervisors and administrative staff directly involved in recruitment activities. This training continues to be

a mandatory requirement for all new employees responsible for recruitment during the orientation process. Mandatory AODA training is required every three years for all hiring managers.

The following Commitment Statement was also approved in 2013:

“In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), the Municipality of Chatham-Kent (Municipality) is an equal opportunity employer committed to providing:

- A diverse workplace
- Fair and accessible employment practices
- Individualized accommodations to support employees with disabilities
- An inclusive and accessible environment for all persons

The Municipality values the unique abilities each employee brings to the workplace and is committed to providing an environment that attracts and retains talented individuals. We strive to deliver a seamless, consistent, and rewarding employment experience.

The above commitment statement will be included on all municipal job postings and referenced in applicable corporate policies.

The Workplace Accommodation Process for Non-work Related Medical Conditions policy (not covered by Workplace Safety Insurance Board) is reviewed on an annual basis. A new policy entitled, “Workplace Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities” has been developed that outlines the responsibility and process of identifying employees who require assistance in the event of an emergency situation. This new policy will be implemented in early 2019.

Communication/training strategies are being developed to ensure all employees are fully aware of their rights with respect to accommodation. There will also be on-going discussions with employees during their annual performance management and career development review process.

### **Municipal Governance**

The Municipal Elections Act, section 12.1 states a clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Also, the clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. And within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public.

The 2018 Chatham-Kent municipal election was conducted with accessibility needs in mind. A plan was prepared and made available to the public throughout the election process. The report to the public will be made available by the end of the year (2018).

### **Accessible Taxicabs**

There are currently no licensed accessible taxi cabs or vehicles for hire. The Vehicle for Hire By-law was approved by Council on June 18, 2018. The new by-law replaced the Taxi By-law.

Accessible vehicles for hire and private accessible vehicles for hire are included in the Vehicle for Hire By-law. The new by-law exempts accessible vehicles for hire licensed by another municipality, and permits private accessible vehicles for hire provided they meet by-law requirements. This provides the opportunity for an individual with an accessible vehicle to provide accessible conveyance services, if licensed to do so.

The AODA imposes certain conditions on the taxi industry such as:

- (a) owners and operators of taxicabs are prohibited from charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip; and
- (b) from charging a fee for the storage of aids or mobility assistive devices.

These requirements have been incorporated into the new by-law for all vehicles for hire.

Note: For more information or alternative formats of this document, please email: [CKrecfacilities@chatham-kent.ca](mailto:CKrecfacilities@chatham-kent.ca)