

# Township of North Dumfries 2017 Annual Accessibility Status Report



*The TOWNSHIP of*  
**NORTH DUMFRIES**

Adopted by Council: January 29, 2018

Accessible formats are available upon request.

## **Background and Purpose**

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In December 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) was passed by the provincial government to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. provincial government to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. Under the legislation, all municipalities, with a population greater than 10,000, are required to establish accessibility advisory committees. In addition, the legislation stipulates that the majority of committee members must self-identify as a person with a disability. As such, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) was established by Regional Council on August 12, 2003. This Joint Committee of the seven area municipalities (the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich and the Region of Waterloo, the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo) provides vision and direction to members of Council and staff as the participating municipalities develop plans to remove barriers and improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

In June 2005, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was enacted into law. The Act is more comprehensive and prescriptive than the ODA and its requirements apply to the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. The Act requires the development of accessibility standards, compliance deadlines, and administrative penalties for non-compliance. Moreover, the fundamental purpose of the AODA is to ensure that Ontario is universally accessible by 2025.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) was created as part of the AODA. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunity to participate in everyday life.

The IASR is broken down into five standards:

- General Requirements
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transit
- Design of Public Spaces

The purpose of this status report is to make the public aware of the Township of North Dumfries's progress with regards to our 2014-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan will provide a summary of key accomplishments made towards inclusions in 2017, and look ahead to 2018. The Township of North Dumfries's 2014-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan can be found on our website ([www.northdumfries.ca](http://www.northdumfries.ca)). Accessible formats are available upon request.

**The Township of North Dumfries is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free Township for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in the Township. With this plan, the Township is proud to present its findings and report on the development of strategies to remove and prevent future barriers for people with disabilities and the aging population.**

The 2017 Annual Status Report will be made available on the Township's website at [www.northdumfries.ca](http://www.northdumfries.ca). It will also be provided to anyone who requests a copy, in addition to providing accessible formats upon request.

## **The Township of North Dumfries**

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As the Township of North Dumfries continues to grow, Council and staff are committed to creating and maintaining an accessible and inclusive community for all residents.

The Township of North Dumfries consists of primarily rural areas, in addition to a variety of small villages including Ayr, Clyde, Branchton,

Reidsville and Roseville. The population of the Township of North Dumfries is approximately 10,000. The Council of the Township of North Dumfries is governed by a Mayor and four Ward Councilors.

In order to meet the needs of the Township's growing population, now, and in the future, the Township enacted a strategic plan in 2015.

Township of North Dumfries's Vision: North Dumfries, one of southwestern Ontario's most desirable rural communities honours its culture and heritage; where citizens and leaders strive to improve the quality of life for all residents in a sustainable and secure environment.

Township of North Dumfries Mission Statement: Preserving and enhancing quality of life in North Dumfries through the exceptional delivery of Municipal services.

### **Organizational Structure**

The Township of North Dumfries is comprised of five departments: Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services, Development Services, Community Services and Fire and Emergency Services.

## **Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)**

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The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) is an advisory committee serving the Region of Waterloo and the respective Councils of the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. Staff representatives of each municipality participate in a joint recruitment process annually to fill GRAAC vacancies and each Council passes a resolution to appoint new members. GRAAC is made up of between 11 and 15 volunteers and advises the councils on accessibility issues including their annual accessibility plans.

### **GRAAC Members for 2017:**

Sharon Giles (Co-Chair)

Carrie Speers (Co-Chair)

Paula Saunders

Jolene MacDonald

Rob Bender

Gail Brunsdon

Dawn Clelland

Donna Hartzler

Andrew Tutty

Mike Shipley

Keri Cameron

Greg Moore

Brenda Robinson

**Township of North Dumfries GRAAC staff representative:**

Ashley Sage, Clerk

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## **Highlights of 2017**

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- New play structures built are AODA compliant.
- Trails to the play structures have been constructed to be fully AODA compliant.
- The Township clears snow accordingly on all municipal sidewalks (approximately 27 linear km)

- The new Township website has been launched to the public that is fully accessible. Ongoing updates will continue to be made to enhance the availability of information made available to the public.
- The Township office was relocated to a new facility in 2015 that has many assessible features. The building was built in 2011 with many accessibility features including automatic doors, an elevator to the second and lower levels as well as visual fire alarms. Ongoing updates are continuously made to the building to continuously enhance accessibility in the building.
- Township Council has approved the use of internet and telephone voting for the 2018 municipal elections. This will greatly enhance accessibility, as it relates to the electoral process.
- The Township has hired a Facilities Supervisor. This is a newly created position that is responsible for the upkeep of Township buildings.
- Township staff have completed the AODA Compliance Reporting required for 2017.

## **Looking Ahead to 2018**

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The Township of North Dumfries is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. The Township recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. The Township is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements.

- Staff is committed to improving accessibility for the upcoming scheduled municipal elections. Township Council has approved the use of internet and telephone voting for the 2018 municipal elections, which will greatly improve accessibility for eligible electors.

- With the changes in staff that have occurred, staff are intending to review policies and procedures and make any necessary changes (if required).
- Continue to enhance the Township's website.
- Continue to incorporate accessible features into Township projects when reasonable to do so.
- Review training for Township staff and to incorporate AODA training as a component of the onboarding process for new staff hires.
- Continue to seek GRAAC's input on matters where required.

## **Conclusion**

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Council and staff continue to work towards creating a universally accessible community by systematically removing barriers for persons with disabilities.

Feedback on the accessibility of Township facilities, programs, and goods and services is always welcome. Please contact the Corporate Services department to provide any feedback.