

Township of North Dumfries 2019 Annual Accessibility Status Report



The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES

Adopted by Council: December 9, 2019

Accessible formats are available upon request.

Background and Purpose

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 in 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 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 2019, and look ahead to 2020. The Township of North Dumfries's 2014-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan can be found on our website (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 2019 Annual Status Report will be made available on the Township's website at 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

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 10,500. 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 2019.

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)

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 2019:

Brenda Robinson (Co-Chair)

Jolene MacDonald (Co-Chair)

Rob Bender

Paula Saunders

Donna Hartzler

Dawn Clelland

Trevor Tamlin

Keri Cameron

Greg Moore

Township of North Dumfries GRAAC staff representative:

Ashley Sage, Clerk

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Highlights of 2019

- ❖ Staff have established a new multi-year accessibility plan. The previous multi-year accessibility plan expired in 2019.

- ❖ A Facility Condition Assessment and Planning Study was conducted in 2019, which included an accessibility audit for six (6) Township buildings. The audit examined the building's interior and exterior environments according to an established set of accessibility criteria's. The audit also measured accessibility criteria's and examined the overall "usability" of a building and its site according to the needs of persons with disabilities. The completion of this will assist in guiding staff on where funding should be allocated for future projects.

- ❖ Continual improvements to enhance the Township website such as making more information and forms available online.
- ❖ A number of resurfacing projects were conducted. This helps to improve the surface and the overall usability for those who may have mobility issues who may use the road for travel. Resurfacing projects included:
 - North Dumfries Community Complex parking lot
 - Hilltop Drive (Swan Street to east intersection of Watson Crescent)
 - Watson Crescent, Hilltop Drive to Hilltop Drive intersections, Reidsville Road, Greenfield Road North to Regional transfer station entrance
 - Greenfield Road, Railroad tracks east to Reidsville Road
 - Gore Road, 200 metres east of Shellard Road to railway tracks
 - Sheffield Road, Morrison Road south to Township boundary line
- ❖ Began work on updating and revising AODA training for staff.
- ❖ Swings set feature was replaced at Victoria Park, Roseville Park and Branchton Park to provide more inclusivity.
- ❖ Sidewalk improvement projects at sections of Church Street, Broom Street, Hilltop Drive in Ayr, which reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair.
- ❖ One (1) new accessible table was added at Clyde Park and another one (1) at Cowan Park, both in Ayr.
- ❖ Two (2) new accessible permanent tables were installed at the new urban plazas part of the redesigned of the cenotaph.
- ❖ Installation of thirteen (13) new barrier free door openers to provide access to washrooms, programming rooms and entry into the arena bowl in the North Dumfries Community Complex. This building receives a lot of daily traffic and is the current location for the Township Administration Office. The installation of the barrier free

door openers will help to ensure that individuals of all abilities have the capacity to access these spaces with independence.

- ❖ Council updated and established a new Corporate Strategic Plan. This document establishes the overall blueprint, vision and goals for the corporation for the term of Council (2018-2022). This outlines items of importance and priority for Council, which includes accessibility.
- ❖ Attended GRAAC meetings and sought GRAAC's input on matters when required.

Looking Ahead to 2020

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.

- ❖ Designs and possible early construction could begin for a new skatepark in Ayr. The skatepark will be state-of-the-art, and will include pedestrian and vehicular maintenance access to the proposed skate park facility from the adjacent parking lot and to the adjacent amenity areas as well as hardscape / softscape landscaping to provide the appropriate setting and transition to adjacent activity areas.
- ❖ Improve access to information and services online. In 2020, the Township will be implementing a recreation and facility booking management software on the Township website that will allow the public to view availability for facility bookings and equipment rentals online.
- ❖ Improve the availability of online forms and ensure PDF's are AODA compliant.

- ❖ Roll out revised accessibility training.
- ❖ Play equipment is reviewed and replaced on a yearly basis, as required. Recommendations are made by staff for which play structures are priority for the following year.
- ❖ Sidewalk improvement project at Inglis Street, Northumberland Street to Colquhoun; and Stanley Street (north side), Northumberland Street to Tannery Street, which reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair.
- ❖ Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.
- ❖ Township will improve the lighting along the pathway in Centennial Park, downtown Ayr. New LED directional lighting will help to greatly improve the lighting and visibility along the pathway. This will greatly assist those who may have difficulty seeing once it gets dark.
- ❖ Begin design work for new Township Office renovation / rebuild, which will include accessible elements to ensure inclusivity.
- ❖ Introducing electronic bid submission for request for proposal/tenders.
- ❖ Continue to incorporate accessible features into Township projects when reasonable to do so.
- ❖ Continue to seek GRAAC's input on matters where required.

Conclusion

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.