

# Township of North Dumfries 2022 Annual Accessibility Status Report



*The TOWNSHIP of*  
**NORTH DUMFRIES**

Adopted by Council: January 30, 2023

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. 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 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan will provide a summary of key accomplishments made towards inclusions in 2022, and look ahead to 2023. The Township of North Dumfries's 2022-2026 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 2022 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 11,500. 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 Corporate 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 six Departments: Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services, Development Services, Engineering and Public Works, Leisure and Community Services; and Fire Emergency Management.

## **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 2022:**

Brenda Robinson (Co-Chair), Teresa McQuillin (Co-Chair), Donna Hartzler, Paula Saunders, Carrie Speers, Jolene MacDonald, Robyn Jackson, Trevor Tamlin, Rob Bender, Heather Clark Harris

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

Ashley Sage, Clerk  
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[asage@northdumfries.ca](mailto:asage@northdumfries.ca)

## **Highlights of 2022**

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- ❖ Ensure accessible and inclusive municipal election and meet all reporting requirements.
- ❖ Ongoing improvements to enhance the Township website such as making more information, services and forms available online.
- ❖ Staff are working to correct outstanding AODA issues on our website, to achieve a fully compliant website.
  - Some legacy PDF documents posted on the Township's website may not be compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA specifications. Staff continue to address the accessibility of PDF documents by removing outdated documents, posting information directly on the website where possible, remediating inaccessible documents, or providing an alternative format for anyone who requests it. Staff are also working to utilize form builder, rather than posting PDF documents online.
  - Accessibility issues remain outstanding in the news module section and staff are looking to purchase an upgrade for this that will help accessibility for this function in 2023. Work on this is ongoing.

- ❖ Building a new tennis/pickleball courts at Schmidt Park, Ayr that will include any inclusive features. Features included barrier free entry and LED lighting.
- ❖ Construction occurred for the provision of four (4) universal barrier free washrooms at Victoria Park. Input from GRAAC was sought prior to the commencement of this project.
- ❖ Sidewalk improvement project at Gibson Street, Northumberland Street to 88 Gibson Street, also on the south side of Inglis Street, from Elliot Street through to Colquhoun Street, which reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair.
- ❖ Two (2) park washrooms were updated to be AODA complaint at Schmidt Park through the incorporation of automated door openers.
- ❖ Installation of a barrier free playground structure and climbing apparatus in Schmidt Park.
- ❖ Development Services (building and planning) worked towards providing more online services that include options for online submissions for various applications. In 2022, Development Services will accept any documents to be submitted online and is working toward further improvements in this area for 2023.
- ❖ Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.
- ❖ Provide ongoing training to staff and provide required training to any new hires.

## **Looking Ahead to 2023**

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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.

- ❖ Upgrade news section of Township website to address accessibility concerns with this module.
- ❖ Continue to utilize form building on the Township website to enhance online form submission processes.
- ❖ Retrofit of barrier free lift at Ayr Community Centre, pending grant approval. This will provide more independence to those using it. This was moved to 2023, as Grant request was unsuccessful in 2022.
- ❖ Retrofit the Ayr Community Centre community hall bathrooms.
- ❖ In 2023 design work for the new Township Office renovation / rebuild will begin, which will include accessible elements.
- ❖ Sidewalk improvement project that reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair. This will be conducted in various locations in Ayr by a panel-by-panel removal and replacement, as necessary.
- ❖ 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, at this time staff intend to replace the play structure in Branchton Park.
- ❖ Trail construction (pending permission from GRCA) – Nith River, Piper Glen Park, to Greenfield Road West which will improve mobility.
- ❖ Schmidt Park improvements – including an accessible trail system throughout the park
- ❖ Freer/Challenger – a new parkette will be added with an accessible trail, half multi-purpose court and play structure

- ❖ Legacy/Broos subdivision – a new park will be added with an accessible trail, multi-purpose court and play structure and a potential splash pad and junior ball diamond.
- ❖ Reconstruction of Township roads, which will help improve the overall usability of the surface and will incorporate any accessible features, as approved in the annual budget.
- ❖ In 2023, the Public Works Depot and Fire Hall (administration area) are expected to undertake a renovation/construction, which will include accessible elements. The Fire Hall renovation includes removal of two existing washrooms and the construction of an universal barrier free washroom facility, and, the installation of an automatic door opener at the main entry door into the facility.
- ❖ Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.
- ❖ Provide ongoing training to staff and provide required training to any new hires.
- ❖ Continue to incorporate accessible features into Township projects when reasonable to do so.
- ❖ 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.