

Township of North Dumfries  
2022 to 2026: Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



*The TOWNSHIP of*  
**NORTH DUMFRIES**

Adopted by Council: December 13, 2021

Accessible formats are available upon request.



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## Background

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There are currently two active pieces of legislation in Ontario that specifically address accessibility: The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA) and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA).

The purpose of the ODA is to improve the quality of life and experiences of persons with disabilities by identifying, preventing and removing any barriers that may limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in society.

The AODA advances the goals of the ODA by requiring public, private and non-profit organizations to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in order to make the Province of Ontario fully accessible for all persons with disabilities by 2025. Through the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) (Ontario Regulation 191/11), the Government of Ontario has identified key areas for the development of common accessibility standards that are intended to ensure all sectors and organizations can provide fully accessible services and environments for Ontarians. The goal of these standards is to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities in society. Key areas identified under the AODA are Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces.

It is known that everyone is likely to be affected by disability as some point in their lives – whether personally or indirectly through the experiences of family, friends or coworkers. Better access helps everyone. It improves the quality of life for our entire community.

## Statement of Organizational Commitment

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The Township of North Dumfries is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for 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 AODA and Ontario's accessibility laws.

## About the Plan

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The Township of North Dumfries 2022 to 2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines how the Township intends to reach its goal of meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA. This plan includes an overview of the Township's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and to meet the requirements of the AODA and the IASR.

The Township is committed to providing an accessible environment for its employees, residents and all other individuals who utilize its services. The Township is dedicated to creating an inclusive community that promotes the possibility of active public participation and civic engagement of all individuals, including persons with disabilities.

This plan sets new goals and actions to be completed over the next five years. Many of these goals and actions may be ongoing throughout the length of the plan and beyond.

## Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee

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Ontario municipalities with populations of 10,000 or more are mandated to set up accessibility advisory committees and at least 50% of the members must be persons with disabilities.

In accordance with the AODA, the Councils of the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich and the Region of Waterloo Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) have set up the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) to provide advice on accessibility issues.



The role of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee is to assist the participating municipalities in fulfilling the purpose of the ODA and the AODA by providing vision and advice in regards to the identification, prevention and removal of barriers

## Accessibility Requirements

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### Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code ensures that all individuals have access to equal opportunities and rights. It prevents discrimination and unequal treatment against persons with disabilities.

### Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. The purpose of the ODA is to implement accessibility practices, allowing all individuals to fully participate within their community. The ODA requires all municipalities to prepare annual accessibility plans, which outline their commitment for accessible communities.

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act became law on June 13, 2005. The AODA is applied to private and public sector organizations across Ontario. The AODA represents collaboration between various representatives of the private and public sectors and persons with disabilities to develop accessibility standards. The AODA consists of standards that were developed to achieve results in stages during a fixed period of time. The AODA creates mandatory accessibility standards that will identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in key areas of daily living.

### O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards

#### ❖ Information and Communications Standards

These standards ensure that all communication and information distributed by the Township is available in alternative format or with communication supports.



- ❖ **Employment Standards**  
These standards provide accessible employment opportunities for persons with disabilities during the recruitment process and throughout the duration of employment at the Township of North Dumfries.
- ❖ **Transportation Standards**  
These standards enhance the experience of persons with disabilities when traveling on a conventional bus or with Para-Transit.
- ❖ **Design of Public Spaces Standards**  
These standards are critical for new construction projects and extensive renovations, as they eliminate environmental barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces.
- ❖ **Customer Service Standards**  
These standards educate all organizations about the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Multi-Year Accessibility Initiatives 2022-2026

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The Township's primary focus moving forward will be to ensure that we are meeting the requirements of the AODA and the IASR. This multi-year plan represents the Township's response to the requirements of the legislation and our commitment to providing public service in an accessible manner. The multi-year plan was completed in consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC), as well as input from Township Senior Management.

### **Goals and Actions: Customer Service Standard**

- ✓ Accessible Customer Service training for staff, Council and volunteers – provide updated training for staff, Council and Township volunteers on the requirements of the AODA, IASR, the Human Rights Code (*complete – continue to train new staff hired, as required*)
- ✓ Incorporate accessibility and the need of people with disabilities when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities



- ✓ Provide feedback and complaint process in an alternate format, upon request – provide an electronic option compliant with WCAG 2.0 to provide feedback on accessibility within the Township
- ✓ Provide notice of any temporary disruptions to accessible features/facilities
- ✓ Permit service animals in Township facilities unless prohibited by law
- ✓ Accessible Elections (the Clerk is required to plan for the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates during Municipal Elections) – *(ongoing for 2022 election)*

### **Goals/Actions: Information and Communication Standard**

- ✓ Provide information that is produced and controlled by the Township in alternate formats, upon request – develop a list of providers that may be contacted to create/produce alternate formats for documents (ex. Braille, read aloud, translator services), provide ongoing training to staff with respect to the use of plain language in writing, whenever possible
- ✓ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0)
- ✓ Create accessible resources and documents for use online – provide training to staff that prepare documents for use online; create quick reference materials/resources for staff with respect to creating accessible documents, create accessible document templates for staff
- ✓ Provide emergency plans and other emergency alert information in an alternate format, upon request – develop a list of providers that may be contacted to create/produce alternate formats for documents (ex. Braille, read aloud, translator services)

### **Goals/Actions: Employment Standard**

- ✓ Ensure that recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention processes are inclusive and accommodation – develop standard guidelines for performance management, career advancement, workplace accommodation and safe return to work – *(ongoing)*



- ✓ Accommodate current employees who have, or acquire a disability – review and update current guidelines for individual accommodation plans – *(ongoing)*

### **Goals/Actions: Design of Public Spaces**

- ✓ Recreational trails and beach access routes – ensure that persons with disabilities are consulted when new trails are developed; and ensure that any new trail signage includes information about the technical aspects of the trail (length, slope, rest areas)
- ✓ Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas
- ✓ Outdoor Play Spaces – ensure that all new and redeveloped outdoor play spaces consist of an area that includes play equipment that enhances the play opportunities and experiences for children and caregivers with various disabilities; ensure that persons with disabilities are consulted with regards to features of the park – *(ongoing – annual replacements)*
- ✓ Exterior Paths of Travel; ensure that the technical aspects are followed (ex. width, surface, slope, height of overhead obstacles, tactile walking) *(ongoing)*
- ✓ Accessible Parking
- ✓ Maintenance to ensure that existing public spaces are in good working order and condition – continue to conduct regular health and safety inspections to identify any need for repair/improvement – *(ongoing)*
- ✓ Identify and plan for the removal of barriers in Township owned spaces – the Township must have procedures for dealing with preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in public spaces – to meet this requirement, the Township shall apply best practices in the preventative maintenance of accessible elements with periodic checks such as: annual inspections, or more frequently; after storms or events that might affect accessible elements; as part of any reports of vandalism or complaints; shall apply best practices in the emergency maintenance of accessible elements with active response when notified, as well as monthly



health and safety inspections will identify and report any issues –  
(ongoing)

- ✓ Identify and plan for temporary disruptions when accessible elements required are not in working order. Procedures for when disruptions occur that will impact the accessibility of goods, services or facilities provided by the Township will include notice being given to the public indicating: 1) description of the service disruption; 2) Reason for the disruption; 3) anticipated duration of the disruption; 4) alternate routes, facilities or services, if any that are available and; 5) contact information. Notice will be given by posting the information at public entry points, key locations around the service disruption, posted on the Township's website or by such other method as is reasonable –  
(ongoing)
- ✓ Compliance with the *Ontario Building Code Act* – the Township's Chief Building Official ensures compliance with accessibility requirements of the Building Code

### **Goals/Actions: General**

- ✓ Ensure that the Township is compliant with Provincial Accessibility Legislation – Township staff will continue to monitor and follow amendments to accessibility legislation and report to Council as necessary
- ✓ Compliance Reports to be filed with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario – Township staff will complete compliance reports for the Province, as required
- ✓ Accessibility Plan Status Report – Township staff will report to Council annually, by January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year on the status of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

### **Other Planned Accessibility Initiatives**

#### **2022 Planned Action Items**

- Ensure accessible and inclusive municipal election and meet all reporting requirements.
- Investigate possible upgrades that could be made to the news module on the Township website that will enhance accessibility.



- 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. Ongoing staff training will continue in 2022 to address inaccessible older documents on the Township's website.
- Retrofit of barrier free lift at Ayr Community Centre, pending grant approval. This will provide more independence to those using it
- Retrofit the Ayr Community Centre community hall bathrooms
- Building a new tennis/pickleball courts at Schmidt Park, Ayr that will include any inclusive features, as required.
- Renovation/construction is expected for a barrier free washroom at Victoria Park. Input from GRAAC will be 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.
- Two (2) park washrooms to be updated to be AODA complaint at Cowan Park and Schmidt Park.
- In 2022 design work for the new Township Office renovation / rebuild, which will include accessible elements.
- Development Services (building and planning) working to provide more online services that include options for online submissions for applications.
- Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.

### **2023 Planned Action Items**

- Sidewalk improvement project that reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair
- 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 equipment at Hilltop Park.



- Trail construction – Nith River, Piper Glen Park, to Greenfield Road West which will improve mobility.
- Reconstruction of Township roads, which will help improve the overall usability of the surface and will incorporate any accessible features  
These projects include:
  - Bute Street
  - Hall Street, from Northumberland Street to Main Street
  - Manley Street, from Northumberland Street to the east terminus of the road
  - MacDonald Street, from Manley Street to Gibson Street
- In 2023, the Public Works Depot and Fire Hall (administration area) are expected to undertake a renovation/construction, which will include accessible elements.
- Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.

### **2024 Planned Action Items**

- New play equipment is reviewed and replaced on a yearly basis, as required. Added to new subdivision, however recommendations are made by staff for which play structures are priority for the following year.
- Sidewalk improvement projects
- Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.

### **2025 Planned Action Items**

- Sidewalk improvement project which reduces tripping hazards and improves mobility for those in a wheelchair.
- 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.
- Ayr icehouse park construction, which will make the area accessible and available for public use.
- Road surfacing projects.



- Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.

## 2026 Planned Action Items

- Road resurfacing.
- Sidewalk new construction / missing links – various locations.
- 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.
- Annually, staff will review policies and procedures as they pertain to accessibility and update and/or make changes if required.

In 2019 the Township had a Facility Condition Assessment and Planning Study conducted, 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. 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. These audits that were completed have been attached as Appendix A to this report and will assist in guiding staff on where funding should be allocated for future projects.

## Comments / Feedback

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The Township of North Dumfries is committed to ensuring that accessibility is considered throughout our services, facilities and business operations. Your feedback is welcome and helps us to identify other areas for improvement. Please contact us with your questions, ideas or comments:

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## Appendix A – Accessibility Audits

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North Dumfries Community Complex

Ayr Fire Station

Roseville Community Centre

Ayr Public Works Depot

Ayr Community Complex

Ayr Library