

Township of North Dumfries 2025 Annual Accessibility Status Report



The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES

Adopted by Council: February 9, 2026

Accessible formats are available upon request.

Background and Purpose

In December 2001, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)* was passed by the provincial government. The legislation was enacted with the objective 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 an accessibility advisory committee. 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 included the development of accessibility standards, compliance deadlines, and administrative penalties for non-compliance.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) was created as part of the AODA. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario must 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 regard to the Township's 2022-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan will provide a summary of key accomplishments that were made towards inclusions in 2025, and look ahead to 2026. The Township of North Dumfries's 2022-2026 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 2025 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 12,500. 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, Council has established a Corporate Strategic Plan for the 2024 – 2026 time period.

The Vision Statement for the Strategic Plan – North Dumfries, a growing and welcoming rural community. The Mission Statement – Serving our community to enhance the quality of life in North Dumfries.

The Core Values and Behaviour as outlined in the Corporate Strategic Plan is the value statement of being inclusive. The Township as it makes decisions and conducts its activities will embrace the principle of *inclusiveness*. In this respect the Township will commit to welcome, listen, learn and understand, and foster an environment of respect and a sense of belonging for all.

Organizational Structure

The Township of North Dumfries is comprised of four Departments: Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services, Development Services, Leisure and Community Services; and Engineering and Public Works.

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 to 15 volunteers and/or agency representatives and advises the respective Councils on accessibility issues including their annual accessibility plans.

Township of North Dumfries GRAAC staff representative:

Ashley Good, Clerk
106 Earl Thompson Road
Ayr, Ontario N0B 1E0
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agood@northdumfries.ca

Highlights of 2025

- ❖ The removal of the former barrier free lift was undertaken and was replaced with the installation of an elevator at the Ayr Community Centre. This allows patrons with the ability to utilize the elevator independently.
- ❖ The Township launched a new corporate website that aligns with AODA elements.
- ❖ The Clerks Office undertook training with all staff who prepare reports for inclusion in the Council agenda to ensure documents being uploaded to the website are aligned with accessible document standards.
- ❖ Purchased park furniture for Jim Schmid Memorial Park, Cowan Park and Oakwoods Park. The purchased and installed items included picnic tables with accessible seating, benches with arms, and concrete pads that are accessible. This work program is ongoing into 2026 as well.
- ❖ A redesign of Oakwoods Park was undertaken that included an accessible path around the park, resting benches around the path, shade and picnic tables with accessible seating and an accessible multi-purpose pad. An accessible multi-purpose pad/pickleball court was also installed.
- ❖ Victoria Park playground equipment was replaced. Consultation was undertaken with GRAAC prior to the equipment being installed.
- ❖ Refurbishment of the walking path from Stanley Street to Watson Pond. This project included the removal of old asphalt surface, replacing, and extending the handrail, and applying 50 metres of new asphalt surface on the trail.
- ❖ Sidewalk improvements were undertaken to meet minimum maintenance standards, reduce tripping hazards and improve mobility. The 2025 budget funded approximately 625 metres of sidewalk.

- ❖ The Township service standards include snow clearing and salting of the full municipal sidewalk system (approximately 30 km) within the community. The Township has taken the service inhouse and is completing the work with our own forces to ensure a reliable and consistent service.
- ❖ LED Streetlight replacement of the existing top post fixtures was undertaken to improve sidewalk visibility.
- ❖ All new on-boarded Staff undertook training under AODA Accessible Customer Service and Ontario Human Rights Code to ensure appropriate context and understanding of the Municipality's obligations and to promote the principles of an inclusive community and respect.

Looking Ahead to 2026

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.

- ❖ Ensure an accessible and inclusive Municipal Election and meet all reporting requirements. For the 2026 Municipal Election, internet voting and in-person paper ballots will be utilized. In addition, the Township will be offering for the first time a home vote program for electors who are unable to leave their home due to illness, injury or disability.
- ❖ Play equipment will continue to be reviewed and replaced on a yearly basis, as required. Recommendations are made by staff for which play structures are priority for the following year. For 2026, the replacement of the playground equipment at Hilltop Park is expected.

- ❖ Purchasing park furniture for Township parks, that includes picnic tables with accessible seating, benches with arms, and concrete pads that are accessible.
- ❖ Improvements are scheduled to enhance the audio/visual systems at the Township Council Chambers to better serve residents and improve meeting accessibility.
- ❖ Introduce e-commerce on the Township website to allow members of the public to pay without having to attend the Township Office.
- ❖ Design and construction of a pump track at Schmidt Park is expected in 2026. The project will include any accessible elements, where possible.
- ❖ A multi-purpose court will be constructed in Clyde Park that will include accessible packed limestone surface to the courts and playground, as well as some shade trees.
- ❖ Improvements are scheduled to be completed to Campbell Trail that will improve the usability of the trail through the introduction of an accessible packed limestone surface.
- ❖ Net Zero Arena construction will begin for the North Dumfries Community Complex (NDCC) twin pad project in 2026. This addition will include a new dedicated universal barrier free washroom on the second-floor expansion to service the upper-level seating and multi purpose rooms, and elevated seating accessed by a compliant ramp system to provide appropriate viewing for individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Improvements to the exterior of the Ayr Community Centre (ACC), including improved parking and path of travel to primary accessible entry doors.
- ❖ The Township service standards will continue to include snow clearing and salting of the full municipal sidewalk system (approximately 30 km) within the community.
- ❖ The Township has budgeted \$90,000 (pending capital budget approval) for ongoing sidewalk repairs and upgrades.
- ❖ Provided ongoing training to current and new staff to include AODA training, Accessible Customer Service and Ontario Human Rights Code.
- ❖ Annually, staff will continue to review policies and procedures respecting accessibility, for updates and improvements.

- ❖ 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 Clerks Office to provide any feedback.